

# The Mission In Europe and Asia Minor

Acts 18:23-20:38

Key Verse: 20:24

**“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God”**

Starting from Acts chapter 18 verse 23 Paul starts his third mission journey and sets the goal of strengthening all the disciples which is different from his first two mission journeys where the goal was to preach the Gospel. Paul starts from Galatia and Phrygia for his mission journey, meanwhile a Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus where Aquila and Priscilla stayed after the parting with Paul at the end of his second mission journey. Apollos was a man with good knowledge of the old testament and was teaching about the Lord, but he only knew the baptism of John. His one flaw was that he didn't know about the good news that Jesus died therefore replayed all of our sins and rose from the dead three days later defeating death . Aquila and Priscilla heard him in the synagogue speaking boldly and they invited Apollos to their home and told him about the good news. From this event I can learn that no human can be saved without the knowledge of the good news and that this knowledge is therefore the most important thing a person can have.

After that, Paul continues on his journey in Ephesus and there he finds some disciples and asks if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed but they replied saying that they have never even heard of the Holy Spirit, then Paul asks them "Then what baptism did you receive?" they answered with "John's baptism". Paul then explains them that John's baptism is a way of one repenting of their sins and regretting what one has done and further explains about the good news about Jesus Christ. Then the disciples got baptized in the name of Jesus and received the Holy Spirit then and there. This event even more emphasizes of the strength and the wonders possible with the knowledge of the good news.

Afterwards, Paul entered the synagogue in Ephesus and for three months he spoke about the kingdom of God, but some of them refused to believe and started to appose Paul and criticized the Gospel Way and with that Paul realized that this wouldn't lead to anything good so Paul left, took the disciples and separated them from the crowd and had daily bible studies in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. In this event Paul sets a standard of achieving fruitful ministry through bible studies. The disciples have to be separated from the crowd to avoid useless arguments that don't lead to anything good and have to be put in a specially designated place where people have to come because when people have to leave their home and go somewhere they think twice before leaving which is why most of who come will be the ones who want to learn and that's always a good thing because teaching people who don't want to learn is a waste of time . And a bible study with a person should last at least 2 years in order to bare good fruit. And this is backed up by the fact that all of the Jews and Greeks who lived in Asia heard about the Word of God after two years of bible studies. During those two years many people repented and openly confessed their evil deeds. Even the people who had practiced sorcery brought their books and

burned them publicly. The total value of the burnt books added up to 50 thousand drachmas and the modern equivalent of that money is considered around 6 million US dollars.

After some time, Paul decides to go to Jerusalem through Macedonia and Achaia and finally visit Rome so he sends two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia. As he stayed in Ephesus a silversmith gathers the other craftsmen and tells them that Paul's actions can greatly damage their business and they decide to start a riot in Ephesus. This leads to many people interfering with Paul's mission but Paul still tries to encourage some disciples, many people begged him not to venture outside however, so he didn't. And in the end, the city clerk had to calm the people down because he was going to get in trouble because of this riot. From this event I can see how the sinful nature of mankind can sometimes interfere with God's plan. And I can see Paul's determination to teach and encourage disciples despite everything life throws at him. I also see a small example of God using the sinful nature of people with power to fulfil His plan, in this case without Paul's or anybody's interference the city clerk himself calmed the city down in order not to get in trouble.

Paul then sets out to Macedonia then to Greece and stayed there for three months, encouraging disciples. Paul then wanted to sail to Syria but couldn't because the Jews made a plot against him. Then Paul changes his plan and goes back to Macedonia and then Paul moves to Troas. While he was teaching there one man that was listening to him on the window fell asleep. Because of this he fell down from the 3rd floor and he was picked up dead. Paul threw himself on him and said that he is alive. After talking till daylight he left and the young man was taken home alive. Then Paul goes to Assos on foot and meets with Luke and they sail to Miletus together. In Miletus Paul sends a message to the elders of the church in Ephesus and when they arrive he gives them a farewell speech describing his attitude towards them, saying that he was always with them and wasn't selfish. He worked for God with humbleness and with many tears and whilst being in persecution because of the sinful minds of the Jews. Paul also says that he taught them everything they needed to know. Paul then describes his attitude towards his mission, saying that he considered his mission as the most important and only thing to do in his life. Acts 20:24 says "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God". He continues to say that he valued the mission more than his own life and he wanted to finish his mission with happiness which means he wanted to do the mission and he didn't feel like it was a burden on him he also says that he receives his mission directly from God. Through this part of the speech I learned the value of having a good attitude towards your mission and your sheep and I got a great example of what that attitude should look like.

From this passage I decided to take the world mission more seriously and value it above my own comfort or desires just like Paul. I want to learn how to teach the gospel with boldness and clarity, making sure others fully understand the good news of Jesus. I also want to commit to Bible study more deeply and learn more about the bible. I will try to talk about Jesus to my friends no matter the situation, instead of giving up when things get difficult. And I want to serve with joy not because I have to, but because I know this mission was given to me by God himself.

I also wanted to write about my spiritual condition currently. I thought a great deal about my spiritual condition trying to understand it better and trying to think of how I can explain it and here's what I came up with: I would define myself right now as a believer who has a lot of questions. What I mean by that is that I believe that God exists, that he sent his only begotten son Jesus and that Jesus died for our sins and that he rose from the dead three days later and I am certain of that. But when I study the bible I get questions, for example on the bible study of Romans chapter 7 after reading the bible and after thinking and listening I got the question "Then which law is in my mind?", "What kind of sins do I do, the sins that lead to death or the sins that don't lead to death?", "Am I certain that I will be in heaven when I die?", "Am I willingly sinning with my mind or is it just my sinful flesh sinning?" and questions like that and in my opinion the fact that I'm asking these questions is normal but the fact that I can't answer them with certainty is the problem. I want to answer one way but my actions do the other way, and I don't want to say things that my actions don't back up. That's why this shows me that I can't call myself a true Christian yet. However, even though I cannot answer these questions I can answer another one with certainty, "Am I fighting the spiritual battle?" - Yes! And that's why I will do what my key verse Mathew 7:7-8 says to do "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." So I will continue to ask God to give me true faith and help me answer these questions and remove these doubts. So until then I cannot call myself a true believer and that is what I mean when I say "I am not a Christian yet." So I ask all of you to pray for me to receive the true faith from God.

I also wanted to say that it is entirely possible that it was God's plan for me to have problems with my documents and for me to come here, to Bonn UBF to be even more encouraged by everyone here to change my life of sin, of lies and of the thoughts and habits that have quietly corrupted my heart and mind, and become a man devoted to God like my mother intended when she named me Samuel.

Going back to Paul's farewell speech in chapter 20 after our key verse 24, Apostle Paul tells the Elders of the church in Ephesus that after this he will not see them again. Later, he tells them to be good shepherds and to watch over the flock because people who bad people will come to them like wolves and try to draw away disciples after them. So in verse 32 Apostle Paul says that he entrusts them to God and to the Word of his grace which means to the pure biblical teaching which is able to protect them from all deceptions. Here I learned my way of knocking on the door is studying the bible and learning about the pure biblical teaching and when I do that I will be able to answer my questions.

I want to say again that Paul's words in Acts 20:24 show clearly that he valued his mission more than his own life. For him nothing not suffering, persecution, or even the threat of death could stop him from finishing the mission he received from God. I want to learn how to make God's mission the most important thing in my life too. I want to be able to say like Paul that nothing moves me, not because I'm strong, but because the mission God gave me is greater than anything else. This is the kind attitude I want to have towards the mission.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for this bible passage and I pray that I may receive the true faith and help me pour that faith into action and I pray that you may help me study the bible and answer

my questions. Thank you for this opportunity to come to Bonn UBF and learn more about God from the bible. I pray ... in ... Jesus' ... name. Amen.

One word: Through the Word of God I will continue seeking true faith and knocking on the door knowing with certainty that it will be opened one day.