

Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word

Never Give Up!

Acts 18:1-18

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Feb. 23, 2020

“This is the lesson: never give in, never give in...in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in...Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy...Do not let us speak of darker days; let us rather speak of sterner days. These are not dark days: these are great days...and we must all thank God that we have been allowed, each of us according to our stations, to play a part in making these days memorable for the history of our race.”

-Winston Churchill, Oct. 29, 1941

I. Don't Be Surprised If You Hit a "Season" of Feeling Depleted or Depressed

If you decide to live for Jesus and on mission for His kingdom—instead of just living for your own “little kingdom”—then you'll hit seasons where you feel depleted and depressed in a way that other Christians don't.

Paul is overwhelmed with physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion. In his humanity, he begins to experience some of the same discouragements that we do.

1 Corinthians 2:3 “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.”

II. Don't Start Thinking You're the Only Christian Left Where You Are

Paul is at one of his lowest points. He is physically tired, emotionally spent, and spiritually overwhelmed, while being surrounded by 200,000 strangers packed into the corrupt city of Corinth.

God has some sweet surprises for us sometimes that are found in hard places.

Acts 18:2-3 “And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.”

God was sovereignly working long before Paul arrived in Corinth! Paul finds a Christian couple here who went on to become some of his closest, lifelong friends.

Romans 16:3-4 “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life...”

God might have someone like that for you in the midst of those hard circumstances, or He might want you to be someone like that for someone else.

III. Don't Stop Trusting God in the Midst of Overwhelming Circumstances

Trusting God is more than a feeling. It's a mindset—in the midst of hard circumstances—that changes what you think you can do next and what you choose to do next.

A. Keep Doing What You Were Doing Even When You Don't Feel Like It

Acts 18:4 “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.”

Paul pushed past the fact that he wasn't feeling it and did what he'd always done.

This word “reasoned” or “dialegomai” in Greek refers to a dialogue or a conversation back and forth.

Paul didn't just talk. He asked questions and then he listened to their answers to know what he should say or ask next.

Questions you can use to get a spiritual conversation started:

- What do you think happens when you die?
- Do you have any thoughts about God?
- Have you ever read the Bible?
- Who do you think Jesus was?
- What do you think the core message of Christianity is?
- What do you think the difference is between religion and true spirituality?
- Did you know that good people still go to hell?
- Why do you think we're here and what is our purpose for life?
- That's an interesting belief. I'm wondering how you came to that conclusion?
- If you died today and stood before God – which you will – and He asked you, “Why should I let you into My heaven?” what would you say?

B. Keep Looking for Opportunities in the Midst of Opposition

Don't just give up and shut it down as soon as you run into opposition.

In **verse 6**, “...they opposed him and blasphemed” or “reviled.”

In **verse 7**, Paul goes next door to the synagogue and starts meeting in the house of a man named Justus.

Acts 18:8 “Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”

When you feel ready to quit, meditate on the promises God's given us:

Acts 18:9-10 "Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; **for I am with you**, and no one will attack you to hurt you; **for I have many people in this city.**'"

Hebrews 13:5-6 "... 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"

Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Isaiah 43:1-3 "...Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior..."

Let's keep doing what He's called us to do because He's already done what only He could do in dying for lost men and women all over the world.

See Revelation 5:7-13