



# Unstoppable

## Introduction:

In Acts 18 we see the environment in which the church of Corinth was birthed. Despite multiple challenges and great opposition, the gospel took root and the church in Corinth began to grow. We conclude from this that the gospel of Jesus Christ is unstoppable, even in tough societies, which means that the gospel will advance in our city too.

## Today's Scripture Text

Acts 18:1-11

## Sermon Points

The gospel is unstoppable as it advances:

### #1. To and Through a Diversity of People

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-4

Paul had been a stringent Jew, who purposefully went about persecuting Christians until God saved him and he himself became a Christian. When he arrived in Corinth, he teamed up with a Jewish married couple, who were from Pontus (Turkey) but had been living in Rome, from where they had to flee, due to the Emperors edict against Jews. All three of them, foreigners, were now trying to make their living as tent-makers in the immoral, diverse city of Corinth. They had no social advantage there whatsoever, and yet in their simple and difficult circumstances, they made great inroads for the gospel and built a diverse church.

- ♠ Why do you think this picture of Paul, with his two refugee friends, making inroads for the gospel, challenges us so much?
- ♠ Why do you think that it is important to see clearly here, that their diversity was not an obstacle to the gospel, but actually a picture of its power?
- ♠ Do you ever use the excuse that your life is just too challenging right now to focus on advancing the gospel? How does this passage challenge that view and what do you think it is challenging us to consider?

### #2. In the Midst of Persecution and Suffering

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:2

Priscilla and Aquila were refugees, having fled from an incredibly swift, brutal and cruel expulsion by Emperor Claudius. They lost everything and were forced to leave their community and support system behind them.



It must have been painfully difficult, and yet God used this persecution in order to scatter the church. It may have appeared to outsiders that God had abandoned them, meanwhile, he was using the circumstances to get the gospel to lost nations, one of which was Corinth. And so he used their broken hearts and circumstances to bring about something significant and beautiful. God not only uses our lives when things are going well, he very often uses us for his kingdom when things are going terribly.

- ♠ How do you think Priscilla and Aquila must have felt, having been forcibly removed from their home because of their faith?
- ♠ Why is it so hard for us to imagine that God is doing something significant behind the scenes in the midst of our painful and unfair life situations?
- ♠ In looking back, can you see any evidence of God's power working behind the scenes in the midst of your past difficulties? How does that encourage you to persevere now when times are tough?

### #3. Because of the Centrality of Christ

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:5

Despite the challenges, Paul focused on preaching Christ, because that is what the gospel is about. When everything else around us is up in the air, Christ is and always will be central, because he lived, died and rose from the dead.

### #4. Because God Empowers and Drives It

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:9-10

Paul experienced so much opposition. It must have been tempting, at times, to wonder if he was vaguely on track. God spoke to Paul to remind him that the gospel was His plan, and that he needed to continue with the plan to preach, even though things didn't look good. This reminds us that when things are circumstantially tough, we need not give up, but to continue, and trust that God is working his plans out behind the scenes. In Paul's case, God was saving people and building his church in a crazy city. This passage is a huge encouragement to us, as we continue to be faithful to the preaching of the gospel and its reach beyond our walls into the nations around us. We can safely assume that God has many people in our city, that he is still planning to save, and that in our faithful plodding, we get to be part of that.

- ♠ Why was Paul able to continue preaching despite the hostile environment he was in?
- ♠ If you knew for sure that God was planning on saving ten more people through our church this year, do you think it would encourage you to persevere in your serving, giving and building community, even when things are tough?
- ♠ How does this passage encourage us in our endeavor to plant churches and serve that mission faithfully in the future?



## #5. Our Response

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:8 & 11

This ever-advancing gospel demands a response through:

1. Belief and behavior – all throughout the book of acts, the response is the same: Believe and Obey. Obedience is the natural response to our belief. Once we have believed, our first response is to obey the command to be baptized, as the identification with the global church that we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. And following that will be the lifelong pursuit of obedience to Christ in our thoughts, attitudes and behaviour.
2. Through enduring in the work of making disciples – Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months because the gospel was advancing and he could play a role in that. We too have a role to play in the advancing of the gospel. Some of us give up far too easily and we need to hear the encouragement that the gospel is advancing here too. Some of us may be feeling challenged to stick when we want to give up and move on.

- ♠ Why is obedience to Christ directly connected to our belief in him?
- ♠ Why is obeying Christ, in his command to be baptized, really important?
- ♠ If you believe in Christ, but are currently living a life of disobedience, what is he calling you to do?

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- ♠ **Take-Home:** In what way is God asking me to respond to this message? Who should I share this with, and to whom will I be accountable?