

GOD'S WILDFIRE

#5 Acts 13-20

Introduction:

- Church is expanding rapidly.
- Saul is renamed “Paul” and becomes the main character in Acts.
 - In Acts 26:17b-18, Paul speaks of God’s call on his life:

Acts 26:17b-18 *I am sending you to them (Gentiles) to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.*

- Three areas of his mission:
 - Speaking / reasoning
 - Clash of Kingdoms (freeing people from the power of Satan)
 - Forgiveness and growing strong in God.

1. Speaking / Reasoning:

- Each community has its own flavour.
 - Each church has its own flavour.
 - Churches need to influence their community – NOT the community influencing the church.
- Key Churches of Acts:

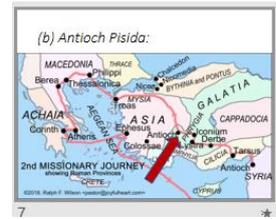
(a) Antioch

- Pastors, prophets and teachers
- Worship & fasting practised (Acts 13:1-3)
- Holy Spirit said “*set apart Barnabas and Paul*”.
 - How did the Holy Spirit speak?
- Antioch sent people all over the known world through their commerce, port, and governing centre.
 - The church there became a sending church.



(b) Antioch Pisida

- Seeking, open community
- Paul & Barnabas were invited to speak (Acts 13:15)
- People there couldn't get enough of the Word
- No miracles recorded.



(c) Berea

- People of “noble character”
 - Qualities of high moral principles and ideals



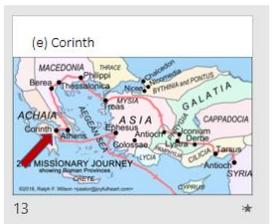
(d) Athens

- Endless debates
- Cynical nature



(e) Corinth

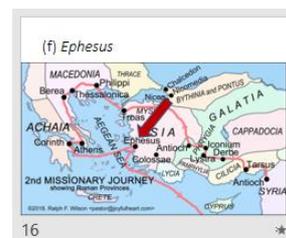
- Multicultural, multifaith, multi-racial, independent, strong minded
- Paul knew that Corinth would be a challenge.



Acts 18:9-11 *One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.*

(f) Ephesus:

- Significant church



2. Clash of Kingdoms:

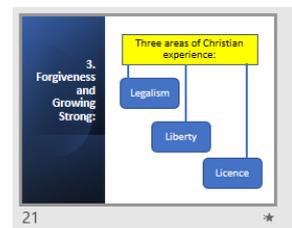
- Power of Satan brings bondage; power of God brings freedom.
- Miracles demonstrate God's power over Satan
 - Sorcerer blinded (Acts 13:10)
 - Lame man healed (Acts 14:9-10)
 - Paul stoned to death and raised as believers gathered around him (Acts 14:2)
 - Slave girl freed from a spirit of python (Acts 16:18)
 - Paul and Silas' prison release (Acts 16:22-36)
 - Extraordinary miracles (Acts 19:11-12)

Acts 19:18-20 *Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.*

- 50,000 drachmas = millions of dollars today
- People were turning from the power of Satan to the power of God.

3. Forgiveness and Growing Strong:

- Three areas of Christian Experience:
 - Legalism
 - Liberty
 - Licence



Acts 15:5 *Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.”*

- Age old question:
 - Saved by works?
 - Saved by faith + works?
 - Saved by grace through faith?

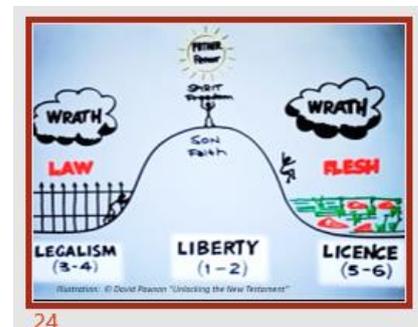
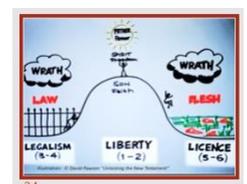


ILLUSTRATION:

Acts 15:28-29 *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*

- Notice – no religious days, laws or festivals were mentioned.
 - Things mentioned were practiced in pagan worship.
 - They were culturally accepted.
 - ILLUSTRATION again....



- How do I discern what is appropriate?
 - If it is already written, there is your answer.
 - Spirit-filled people are free to choose.

Conclusion: What would Jesus do? (Take Him with you...)