

Bible Story 13: PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

SCRIPTURE: Acts 18:23-28; 19:1-41; 20:1-38; 21:1-16

MEMORY VERSE(S): Hebrews 12:1b-2a, Acts 20:24, Acts 20:35b or Philippians 1:27

BIBLE STORY:

Paul stayed awhile in Antioch of Syria, where his home base church was located. Then Paul began his third missionary journey. Luke, Timothy, and other church leaders were with him at different times during this journey.

Paul traveled west, revisiting and encouraging the believers in the regions of Galatia and Phrygia.

At the same time, an intellectual Jewish Christian named Apollos was in the city of Ephesus teaching about Jesus. The Christian couple Priscilla and Aquila invited Apollos to their home and taught him even more about the way of God. Apollos left the city, going west across the sea to Corinth, the capital city of Achaia. As Apollos spoke, he very effectively proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

Traveling southwest, Paul arrived in the city of Ephesus, where he stayed for two years. Paul spoke boldly about Jesus. The believers were baptized in Jesus' name. God enabled Paul to do very special miracles for His glory. People touched Paul with such items as handkerchiefs, scarves and aprons. Then they would go and touch sick people with these items and the sick were healed! Many people came to believe in Jesus. The Word of God spread and grew powerfully throughout Ephesus and surrounding regions.

The Holy Spirit of God led Paul to make preparations to return to Jerusalem. Paul wanted to get there before the religious holiday, the day of Pentecost. Afterwards, he wanted to go to Rome.

Around this time, the silversmith Demetrius caused an uproar in Ephesus. The silversmith gained money by making silver shrines of their city's temple of their goddess Artemis. The silversmith said to his co-workers, "*We are losing money. A man called Paul is persuading the people that there are no gods made with human hands. Because of Paul's teaching, the glory of worshiping our goddess at her temple may be taken away!*" They were angry and shouted, "*Great is our goddess of Ephesus!*" A riot started as more people joined them. However, most of the people who were shouting didn't even know what it was about. Finally, the city clerk quieted the crowd and dismissed the people. Afterwards, Paul encouraged the believers in Ephesus and left.

Paul sailed west, crossing the sea. Paul traveled throughout the regions of Macedonia and Greece. At each place, Paul encouraged the believers.

Paul sailed east and crossed the sea, arriving at Troas. Paul preached on a Sunday to a group of believers in a room on the third floor. Paul kept preaching until midnight, knowing that he was leaving the next day. As a young man was listening to Paul preach, he was sitting on a window frame and went to sleep. He fell out the window to the ground and died. Paul went down to the young man and laid on him, hugging him. The boy's life was restored!

Paul sailed southeast and arrived at the seaport Miletus. Believers from Ephesus arrived and Paul explained that he would not see them again. Paul said, "*I have shared with Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles) how they must repent, turning away from disobeying God to obeying God, and have faith in the Lord Jesus. We must help the weak. Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Now I must finish the task God has given me.*" After many tears and a prayer, Paul continued traveling southeast toward Jerusalem.

Along the way, a prophet warned Paul that his hands would be bound as a prisoner. Paul replied, "*I am ready not only to have my hands bound but to die for Jesus.*"

Finally Paul arrived in Jerusalem.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: *(Ask questions appropriate for your group of listeners.)*

PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. How can you apply this story to your life?

GENERIC QUESTIONS:

1. What do you like about the story?
2. What is there in the story that you do not understand?
3. Who are the main people in the story?
4. What problems did the people face? What happened?
5. Have you had any similar problems you would like to share? What happened?
6. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. Everywhere Paul went he shared Jesus and encouraged the believers. Priscilla and Aquila helped Apollos know more about Jesus. What are some ways that we can share Jesus with others?
2. What miracles did God do through Paul?
 - What are some special things God has done in the lives of people today?
 - Has God done some special things in your life? What has God done in your life?
 - When God does something special in our lives, what should we do?
3. Why was the silversmith upset at Paul? What happened?
 - Some people joined in the riot even though they didn't know what it was about. How should we react if a riot begins or danger occurs?
4. What does Jesus mean, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*"?
5. What happened to the young man who was sitting on a window frame as Paul was preaching?
 - What safety precautions should be taken for home safety and occurrences of a fire, an earthquake, and bad weather, such as lightning storms, tornados, flooding, typhoons, etc.?
6. What did the prophet tell Paul would happen to him in Jerusalem?
 - What did Paul reply back to the prophet?
 - How should we react when we know that we'll be ridiculed or persecuted for sharing Jesus?

LIFE LESSONS: (Choose Life Lessons appropriate for your group of listeners.)

1. Every Christian should share Jesus with others.

Everywhere Paul went on his missionary journeys, he shared Jesus with others. The couple Priscilla and Aquila helped Apollos know more about Jesus. Seek opportunities to share Jesus with family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc.

2. God enables people to do great things for His glory.

Through God's power, God enabled Paul to speak boldly about Jesus, heal the sick, and restore life to the young man. As a result, God was glorified and many people came to believe in Jesus. Trust in God to give you the ability to serve Him and do great things for His glory.

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES: (Choose an activity or activities appropriate for your group of listeners.)

PRAYER:

Option 1: Prayers for Group of Listeners

- Ask the group for prayer requests concerning themselves, a family member, friend, etc.
- Take the opportunity for the leader or volunteers from group to pray for these individual requests.

Option 2: Prayer Walk

- Pray for your neighbors. Ask listeners to walk around their neighborhoods, if it's safe, and silently pray for their neighbors as they pass their homes. All children should be accompanied by an adult(s).
- Ask your group to meet at a school on a designated time and date to pray for those at the school. Be sure to first get permission from the school to do this, setting the time and date. Example:
 - At the bus stop and parking area, pray for the bus and vehicle drivers and passengers.
 - At the entrance, pray for safety for everyone in the school and the security people.
 - At the school office door, pray for the principal and all the school staff.
 - At doors of classrooms, library, computer labs, etc., or as you walk down the hallways and pass these doors, pray for the teachers and students in those rooms.
 - At the lunch room door, pray for the kitchen staff and the food that will be prepared.
 - At the entrance to the auditorium, pray for the programs that will be presented.
 - On the playground and sport areas, pray for safety for the students and staff as children play, students practice sports, and sport events that will take place.

At the end, be sure to thank the school staff for allowing them to pray for their school.

Option 3: Prayer Diary

- Prepare a **Prayer Diary** for each person who attends your meetings.
- On first sheet of paper, write **PRAISES** and draw two columns from top to bottom.
 - 1st Column write: Date of praise
 - 2nd Column write: Praise for something God has done
- On second sheet of paper, write **REQUESTS** and draw three columns from top to bottom:
 - 1st Column write: Date of the prayer request
 - 2nd Column write: Prayer request
 - 3rd Column write: Date and how prayer was answered
- Hand out these two sheets of paper to each participant. (*If affordable, use small notebooks.*)
- Explain that this is a **Prayer Diary** for each of them to use privately. No one else will see it.
- Ask them to take the **Prayer Diary** home with them.
 - As God does something special, they are to write under **PRAISES** the date, and praise and thankfulness that they give to God.
 - As they have a need for prayer, they are to write under **REQUESTS** the date of the prayer request and the prayer request.
 - When God answers a prayer request, write down the date and how their prayer request was answered. Encourage them to thank God for answered prayers.
- Explain that praying is talking with God. God hears the prayers spoken silently or out loud.
- Encourage them to use the **Prayer Diary** as they pray, so they will remember their prayer requests and how God answers prayers.