

Conversions In Corinth

Joe Slater

Paul's ministry in Corinth (Acts 18) shows how he accomplished the task of world evangelism that Jesus had given to the apostles. "Preach the gospel to every creature," Jesus had commanded. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:15, 16a). Proclaiming the good news of salvation through Christ is still our job today. Let us benefit from Paul's example:

He had **the right method**. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4). Paul reasoned with people and persuaded them. He made his case for Christ with sound, logical arguments. Then he called upon his hearers to believe and obey. Persuasion may include an element of emotion, but appeals to emotion are appropriate only after the truth has been established by sound reasoning.

Paul was **no bigot**; his audience included both Jews and God-fearing Greeks (Gentiles). We, likewise, should be reasoning with and persuading people regardless of race, ethnicity, economic status, and other social factors.

Paul also **knew when to quit**. "But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles'" (v. 6). Continuing to preach to the synagogue crowd would have been like beating the proverbial dead horse. Jesus Himself had told His apostles not to waste their time and energy on people who reject the gospel (Matthew 10:14). As much as it hurts, we, too, must curtail our efforts with those who have heard but refuse to believe and obey. Multiplied millions have never heard the good news – we must turn our attention to them.

Due to the diligent work of Paul and his companions, "many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized" (v. 8). They heard because Paul reasoned and persuaded. They believed because "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). They were baptized because that is the essential response to the gospel that Jesus and the apostles taught. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16a); "Repent, and . . . be baptized . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

Let us, like Paul, reason with everyone who will listen, and persuade them to obey the gospel!

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But Who Said It?

You can't just quote the Bible indiscriminately. I remember the story of two lawyers during a trial. One thought he would make a great impression on the jury by quoting the Bible, so he said concerning his opponent's client, "We have it on the highest authority that it has been said, "All that a man has he will give for his life."

But the other lawyer knew the Bible better. He said, "I am very much impressed by the fact that my distinguished colleague here regards as the highest authority the one who said, 'All that a man has he will give for his life.' You will find that in the book of Job, and the one who uttered it is the devil. And that is whom me regards as the highest authority!"

--Ray Stedman (via Jacksonville, AL)

Enjoyed The Sermons?

At the close of a Gospel Meeting a lady told the preacher, "I really enjoyed every sermon. They were like water to a drowning man!"

Those Pesky Chiggers

A famous explorer set out to explore a part of South America, but was forced to abandon his journey due to an unforeseen obstacle. He was equipped to defeat any leopards, serpents, or crocodiles he might face; but what made him turn back wasn't a large, fierce creature. In fact, it was really small. The thing that forced him to give up was the millions of "chigoes," better known as "chiggers." These bugs are so tiny that they even bear the name "no-see-ums." Someone even wrote a poem about these critters:

Here's to the chigger,

The bug that's no bigger

Than the end of a very small pin.

But the itch that he raises

Simply amazes,

And that's where the rub comes in!

It is not always that different with our Christian lives. It may not be the "big" sins that cause us to throw in the towel. Sometimes it's the "little" ones we don't even see coming until they are all over us. We typically guard ourselves against things like drugs, stealing, and murder; but when it comes to lying, deceit, and hatred, we don't see them as that big of a threat. In all honesty, sin is sin. We need to make certain that we are not allowing any of it to find a place in our lives. So whether you view something as a "big" sin or a "little" sin, anything that is contrary to the will of God is a sin, and we must guard ourselves against it.

--Luke Bower (Abilene, TX) via Old Paths