

The Open Door of God's Providence

1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12

Introduction:

- A. These two passages deal with the will of God and the work of one of the greatest preachers to have ever lived, Paul. It was during this time that the gospel was preached to the entire world (Col. 1:23).
- B. But Paul was never satisfied to rest on his past successes. He was continually seeking to take advantage of yet another opportunity to teach the "Good News" and to change the hearts of men.
- C. As we look at these passages, we find certain things that are still relevant to us today.

I. God's Opportunities Become Man's Responsibilities

- A. A great "door" is opened
 - 1. Greek word "thura" is defined as a gate or a porch.
 - a. Means an entrance by which one enters
 - b. Look at Rev. 3:20
 - 2. Paul was excited about opportunity of entering someone's world to bring them into God's
- B. The "door" was effectual
 - 1. Greek word for effectual is "energes"
 - a. English word "energy"
 - b. Not only willing to be physically involved, but emotionally involved as well
 - 2. For us to understand his eagerness, we must see what he saw, feel what he felt and hope for that which he dreamed
 - 3. Jesus saw the lost as being misguided souls who needed care and direction in life - Matt. 23:37
- C. The "door" was an opportunity to evangelize
 - 1. Dealt with the social outcasts - 1 Cor. 6:9-11
 - 2. Ministered to both Gentiles and Jews - Col. 4:3
 - 3. As a body of God's people, we cannot close our eyes and hearts to those who need Christ the most and become nothing more than religious country clubs catering only to the privileged few - Matt. 28:18-20

- D. The “door” offered a large audience
 - 1. The Christians at Ephesus needed to be grounded in the faith as well as the heathens needed to be taught of God
 - 2. Paul sought and took advantage of every opportunity made available
 - 3. The church is the upholder of truth; therefore, we must be about our Father's business - 1 Tim 3:14-15

II. *The Providence Of God*

A. What is Providence?

- 1. Providence is, “the foreseeing care and guidance of God” - Psa. 37:25; Phil. 4:19; 2 Tim. 3:11
- 2. H. W. Beecher said, "Everything that happens in the world is part of a great plan of God."

B. Providence and God's presence

- 1. Jesus promised that He would be with Paul during his trouble-plagued ministry - Acts 9:16
- 2. Before His ascension He reminded his disciples that he would ever be with them - Matt. 28:20
- 3. We must be mindful of the fact that God is always near when we seek to do heaven's will

C. Providence and God's purpose

- 1. God is a being of order and purpose
 - a. Does not aimlessly exert his power and will upon humanity just to have something to do
- 2. Church is the result of God's eternal purpose - Eph. 3:10-12
 - a. Means that God intricately placed all the pieces into place
- 3. God prepared Paul to preach the gospel to the world with no exceptions whatsoever - Gal 1:15-17
- 4. The church is God's voice in the world
 - a. Was established to glorify God and to proclaim his saving message
 - b. Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 3:15-16

D. Providence and God's power

- 1. Kingdom would come with power - Mk 9:1
 - a. Miraculous power - Acts 1:8; 2:1-4
 - b. Emotive power - Acts 2:36-37

2. Paul, as well as the other apostles, were endowed with a miraculous outpouring of God's grace which proved them to be the ambassadors of our Lord Jesus - 1 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 5:20
3. Being that the miraculous moments have long since ended - 1 Cor 13:9-10
 - a. Our power lies within the Gospel of God - Rom 1:16-17
 - b. Must motivate us unto righteous living and soul saving - Gal. 2:20
4. Paul, sustained by God, was ready, willing and able to preach the Gospel of peace when and wherever he had an opportunity to do so

III. *There Are Many Adversaries*

- A. "Adversaries" (antikeimai) means, "to lie opposite to." It is to be against something or someone.
 1. Being a Christian will bring one into conflict with the world and its standards
 2. Knowing that opposition awaits, we must prepare our hearts for the defense and deliverance of the Gospel - Phil. 1:17; 1 Peter 3:15
- B. Adversaries that awaited him
 1. Religious Prejudices
 - a. The Temple of Diana was located there - Acts 19:24-35
 - b. The church was often maligned in the mind of many - Acts 28:20-22
 - c. Paul was seen as being mad with his newfound religion - Acts 26:24
 2. Gross Immorality
 - a. Ephesus was filled with opportunities for wantonness
 - b. Christians were encouraged to live clean, correct lives - Eph. 5:11
 - c. Paul kept himself pure before God and man - 1 Cor. 9:27
 3. False Teachers

- a. These teachers were from within the fold - Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 9:3
- b. We must keep this one thing in mind
 - 1) We are in a battle to win the hearts and souls of man
 - 2) We must oppose every pointer and principle that turns one from Christ unto the devil - 2 Cor. 6:14
- C. Same adversaries await us today
 1. During ridicule and rejection, we, like Paul, must continue to march to the sounds of our commander Jesus Christ

Conclusion:

- A. The world is full of people who are lost in sin. The problem is that most of them don't even know it. Our God has sent us into the world to seek the lost (Matt. 9:37; Mk 16:15). Will we go?
- B. Paul knew that with God's orders there came responsibility. But he also knew there came God's power, protection and His daily providence. Do we also understand this?
- C. In the mind set of an old Negro spiritual, "Get right church and let's go home" Amen!