



Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 18:1-4

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Summary

Both of these readings are concerned with the church in Corinth, but from two perspectives: before its founding and after.

Unlike the reading about the founding of the church in Thessalonica, these readings have almost no conflict, at least not on the surface, or right away. Ultimately, they show us how easily and quickly we divide ourselves into camps of faithful. For them it was claiming to be followers of different teachers, and for us we have different denominations. Here we see how little things sometimes change in this church of ours.

Prayer

Christ of new beginnings, you inspire us to walk roads that are unknown, and you do so by kindling within us the passion for our faith. Work in and through us as we deepen that faith and explore the ways that we can follow you more closely. AMEN

The Story Behind the Words

- ❖ How does the story of the founding of the church in Corinth differ from the founding of the church in Thessalonica?
- ❖ Why were the Jews ordered to leave Rome?
 - Why might their being ordered to leave Rome make some more receptive to Paul's message?
- ❖ How does Paul's greeting to the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:1-9) compare to Paul's greeting to the church in Thessalonica?
- ❖ What was Paul's trade?
 - How does his "trade" lend itself to his ministry?

The Characters

- ❖ Who is Aquila?
 - Why is it important for us to hear, even briefly, his story?
- ❖ In the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, he mentions the names Apollos and Cephas. Who are these people?
 - What significance did they have in the early church?
- ❖ Where do you see yourself in this reading?

What is the Word saying to us?

- ❖ Where do you see conflict in either of these readings?
 - What is the source of that conflict?
 - Why do you think people are disagreeing in this way?
- ❖ What are other issues of conflict in the early church?
 - Why do you think they mattered in those days?
 - How do they relate to the conflict we see within our own denomination, and across denominational lines of Christianity?
- ❖ What do these readings say, if anything, about religious tolerance in the first century?
 - What can we say about religious tolerance today??

Where do we go from here?

- ❖ How can we encourage conversation and relationship between groups with different ideas in the church?
 - Why is this work important for the future of the church?
- ❖ What are some ways we have overcome differences and disagreements in the United Church of Canada?
 - When have we struggled with those differences?
- ❖ What does Paul say in his letter to the Corinthians that we should hold on to as modern Christians?
- ❖ What are some examples of deeper unity in Christ despite differences in the church over the course of history?
 - When have the differences been too much?