



The Bread of Champions

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“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. 12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, 13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. 16 And he drave them from the judgment seat. 17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things. 18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow” (Acts 18:9-18).

I read somewhere that problems are the bread of champions. Their very lives and goals attract problems, and the drive to overcome them fuels their energy. In this study we learn that:

- 1) Paul was clearly instructed by God to continue preaching in Corinth “... for I have much people in this city” (vs 9,10). His stay in Corinth was in direct obedience to God’s revealed will, and yet it was in that very place that trouble sparked. Problems and troubles are not always synonymous with being out of the will of God or disobedience.
- 2) The problem started when “... the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat...” (vs 12). These were the very people that should have known better to embrace the Gospel but they allowed their traditions to alienate them from the truth.
- 3) Their accusation was based on ignorance bias and misinformation - “... This fellow per-

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suadeth men to worship God contrary to the law” (vs 13), whereas Paul was following Jesus who declared that He came not to destroy but to fulfil the law. These elements still constitute the primary cause of many persecutions and insurrections in contemporary times.

- 4) When Paul was about to defend himself “Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters” (vs 14-15). Gallio could see through their veiled accusations, and instead of going along with their lies to placate them, he courageous drove them away from the judgement seat (vs 16). Sanity is preserved when judges go after the truth rather than embrace lies and misinformation to placate error.
- 5) When their legal effort failed, they took the law into their hand and “took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat” (vs 17) to which Gallio turned a blind eye. This must have been a retaliation for Sosthenes allowing Paul to preach in the synagogue. When they could not get Paul directly, they went for his associates.
- 6) The trouble ended, Paul continued for a while, and then took leave of the brethren to travel to Syria (vs 18).

As surfers learn to ride waves, so must believers learn to see their problems as bread for champions and stepping stones for progress.