

Youth Teaching Resources

June 3, 2018



Season After Pentecost: The Perils of Pauline ... Thinking (May 27-July 8)

2 Corinthians 4:5-12 (RCL 4:5-12) – “Treasure Sharing”

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:5 (RCL 4:13-5:1) – “We Don’t Lose Heart”

2 Corinthians 5:6-17 (RCL 5:6-10 [11-13], 14-17) – “By Faith, Not Sight”

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 – “Living Oxymorons”

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

Treasure Sharing

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

We have the choice to either darken the lives of our students, or to make their life brighter. It may seem easier to dampen their spirits and control what they are doing, but this may also darken their outlook on life. Your students are trying to discover who they are and what they are about. If you suppress this within them, they will turn away. On the other hand, if you give them opportunities to discover who they are and what they are about, they will begin to shine as they live into who God has called them to be.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip “Billy Meets Gizmo” from *The Gremlins*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) How does Billy react to Gizmo?
- 2) Why do the lights have to be dimmed?
- 3) What other creatures are more comfortable in the dark?
- 4) Do you function better in the light or in the dark?
- 5) How you be a light to more people?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading 2 Corinthians 4:1-12. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Where is Corinth located and what impact did its location have on the church as it got started?
- 2) What gives Paul hope?
- 3) What was Paul's purpose? Why might others think Paul is about himself and not God?
- 4) What parallels does Paul draw with Genesis 1 and this passage?
- 5) What was Paul willing to do in order to share the love of Christ?

If you group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) How did trade impact the rise of the church in Corinth?
- 2) How can we date the travels of Paul?
- 3) What was going on at the church at Corinth for Paul to write to them?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Why was Corinth such an important city?

Transformation

Conclude your session by distributing different colored highlighters to the group. Challenge the group to use their highlighters and write different ways they can be the light of Christ to the world around them on the pasteboard that is around the room. When the students have had time to write their responses on the poster board, turn out the light and shine a flashlight on the poster board. The words that were hard to see, should be shining brightly now. Turn the lights back on, and facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What words did you write on the poster board?
- 2) What did you think as you wrote words that were then hard to see?
- 3) How does this activity mirror life?
- 4) What two things, that were written on the poster board, will you choose to do this week?

Close with a prayer thanking God for Jesus Christ, the light of our lives.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

A strategic location—Being at the narrowest point of an isthmus between two seas, Corinth was an ideal location for trade. Goods could be brought into the port of Cenchreae through the Saronic Gulf from the Mediterranean side of the isthmus, then off-loaded and carted



across the narrow land corridor on a stone track called the *diolkos*, then loaded onto other ships at the port of Lechaion and sent into the Corinthian Gulf. This allowed for faster and safer access to western ports than sailing around the entire Peloponnesian peninsula. Some smaller ships could be put on a wheeled cart and dragged across entirely.

A canal was dug in the 19th century, allowing relatively small ships to sail directly through the isthmus (see photo).

Corinthian history—The Corinth that Paul knew was built upon the ruins of an ancient Greek city called Ephyra. As a leading Greek city, it had survived much of the Roman world’s expansion including the Peloponnesian Wars (461-446, 431-404) and the Corinthian War (395-387), but it was destroyed in 146 BCE by the Roman proconsul Lucius Mummius, who razed the city, killed the men, and sold the women and children into slavery. Mummius did such a thorough job that Corinth lay in ruins for a century, until Julius Caesar ordered that it be rebuilt in 44 BCE and populated it at first with former slaves who were granted both freedom and land as a reward for military service.

Corinthian immigrants—The edict of Claudius mentioned in Acts 18:2 is also known from other sources including the writings of Josephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius. Josephus, a Jewish-Roman historian who would have been a contemporary to the event, said the edict took place in the ninth year of Claudius’ rule. Suetonius, who was born after the events, researched and wrote biographies of Rome’s first 12 emperors.

He said of Claudius: “He expelled from Rome the Jews constantly making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus.” (Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25; from Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* [Liturgical Press, 1983], 138–39).

Scholars typically assume that “Chrestus” is an alternate spelling for “Christus,” but it is not clear whether Claudius was concerned with Jews who were agitating against Christ-followers, or if the work of Christian missionaries had led to an uprising.

Digging Deeper *continued*

A Corinthian date—Paul’s first visit to Corinth is the most securely dated encounter in his known missionary career. The account in Acts 18 says that Paul was brought before proconsul Lucius Junius Gallio (Acts 18), a brother of the famed rhetorician and writer Seneca the Younger. An inscription found in Corinth independently dates Gallio’s rule to either 50-51, 51-52, or possibly 52-53 CE. When Paul was brought before Gallio on charges of unlawful activity, Gallio dismissed the charges, showing little regard for the concerns of the Jews (Acts 18:12-17).

The Corinthian church—The word Paul uses for church is *ekklesia*, the root of our English words “ecclesiology” (the study of the church) or “ecclesiastical” (relating to the church or its clergy). The word, which means “gathering,” was typically used in Greek versions of the Old Testament to translate *qahal*, used to describe the congregation of Israel during the wilderness wandering or in gatherings at the temple.

The church at Corinth was known for dissension, sniping, and misbehavior by the membership. When I was in seminary, professor Malcolm Tolbert once quipped that it must have been a Baptist church, because the only way for a church to get in such bad shape was to have total freedom, and to totally misuse it!

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Why was Corinth such an important city?

Aside from its strategic location as a commercial center, Corinth played other roles as a city of major importance during the first century.

Politically, Corinth was the center of Roman government for the province of Achaia, giving it significance that stretched far beyond the city limits.

Economically, Corinth was considered the “Fourth City” of the Roman Empire, and thus a prosperous place where wealthy and influential people would be commonplace.

Ethnically, Corinth was an eclectic, cosmopolitan city, no longer Greek, but settled by many former Roman soldiers who were given land, along with immigrants from all over, including Jews from the diaspora. The city was known as a rowdy place, famous for its immorality and wantonness. The phrase “to Corinthianize” has been used to mean “to become immoral.”

Religiously, Corinth harbored a variety of belief systems, including adherence to the old Greek gods, to the Roman gods, mystery religions, Judaism, and an incipient form of Gnosticism that would prove to be a serious threat to the early church. Idolatry was common, and citizens were encouraged to participate in the imperial cult and worship the Roman emperor. Temples to Poseidon-Neptune (Greek and Roman names for the same god), Aphrodite-Venus, Demeter-Ceres and Kore-Persephone were established, along with temples to Apollo and Asklepius. Eastern and Egyptian deities also had adherents in the city. Thus, Christians in Corinth had to contend with many well-established and very tempting religions. Issues raised in the letter provide evidence that rituals of their pagan neighbors had a strong influence on the church’s worship.

These various factors, plus Corinth’s location as a travel hub with easy access to Europe, made the city a particularly strategic one not only in a political and economic sense, but for the spread of the gospel.



The remains of a temple to Apollo, built in a prominent part of Corinth.