



Cultures in Conflict, Session 3 Ray Vander Laan

WHY LEARNING COMMUNITIES?

To become better and better disciples of Christ TOGETHER so we can face **anything** through...

1. Deeper learning of Biblical truth
2. Stronger “iron sharpening iron” relationships

Ephesians 4:12–16 (ESV) ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Remember... it's all about putting God's truth into action in everyday lives

OPENING CONVERSATION

SESSION 3, “Turning Weakness Into Strength”

1 Peter 2:12 (ESV) ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

➔ **God uses “desert places”**

Galatians 1:11–18

DISCUSSION POINTS

- ✓ What are “desert places?”
- ✓ What are examples of “desert places?”

➔ **Paul goes to Corinth**

- ✓ In weakness, fear and trembling

- ✓ A decadent Roman colony

1 Corinthians 2:1–5

Isaiah 29:14 (ESV) therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.”

➔ Erastus, exception to the rule

1 Corinthians 1:26–29

We know 2 things about Paul's ministry in Corinth:

1. He came in fear, trembling and weakness
2. The people who believed were almost all “unimportant” with Erastus as the exception rather than the rule

So what is going to come from this mission by a man who is discouraged and collecting a community who in eyes of Corinthians, who wouldn't amount to anything. **So what will come of it when God begins to use human weakness to show His strength**

DISCUSSION POINTS

- ✓ What does it look like to be “weak, fear and trembling?”
- ✓ Sometimes what we consider failure is God training us.
- ✓ Was it right for Paul to be discouraged and feeling weak?
What is the right response when we feel that way?
- ✓ How can we view “undesirables” as God does?
- ✓ What was the difference in Paul's approach in Corinth after Athens? Why?

➔ Paul's mission in Corinth – build a temple for God to live with His people

The mission in context – Paul commissioned by Jesus Himself to be a light to Gentiles. We've learned that mission didn't start with Paul, or even Jesus. Jewish people wore tassels because way back at Mt Sinai God had said that they would be “for Me a kingdom” to extend God's reign every time they obeyed Him. A kingdom of priests – their mission was to put God on display to a broken world.

At Sinai God said that He would strengthen, encourage, **empower** them by living among them. It happened in the Tabernacle then the Temple.

Then came Pentecost when God created a new temple – the community of faith. (Acts 2)

Paul will specifically call the believers at Corinth God's temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (ESV) Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

➔ **God provides Aquila and Priscilla**

Acts 18:1–4

Think about Paul arriving in Corinth – **alone**, owns nothing but few tent making tools. Meets two Jews who are already believers and had already set up a tent making shop. They take him in and become house church to him.

➔ **Paul goes to the Jews, then to the Gentiles**

Acts 18:7–8

➔ **God encourages Paul**

Acts 18:9–11

➔ **Weakness turned to strength**

Think of it this way: Paul came there in weakness. Many of first believers were the weak in all kinds of ways. **God LOVES to use human weakness**

Hebrews 11:34 (ESV) quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **were made strong out of weakness**, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

When you discover your weakness you become strong

Paul's weakness was turned to strength in this city. AND IT WORKED. A church, a colony, the temple of the Holy Spirit was established right among the temples of pagan gods!

➔ **Our hope in weakness**

Our hope is that we recognize our weakness – that when we are weak, when the minority, when the community of nobodies who are willing to put God on display in all of our weakness, His glory is seen. Here's the record book: it's the slave, the former slaves, the unknowns, it's YOU and ME – **in weakness, the power of God! He loves to use the weak**

➔ **Application to us**

In the moments when you are discouraged, wait for your Priscilla and Aquilla... wait for God to speak to you, "Don't you quit on Me!"

But there will also be moments when you need to BE Aquilla and Priscilla to someone else – to open your heart and home and life to lift someone else up who's discouraged. When you do, as His Name is known, a Temple is built in every city where it happens

And the Kingdom Comes...

1 Peter 2:12 (ESV) ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- ✓ What does it mean for Christ-followers to be God's Temple? What are the practical implications?

- ✓ If you were in Paul's place – alone, feeling weak and discouraged, how important would it be for God to send people like Aquila and Priscilla to you?

- ✓ What can we take away from God coming to Paul with the message in Acts 18:9-11?

- ✓ What does it really mean that God uses weakness?
What are Biblical and current life examples?

- ✓ What are your takeaways about responding to discouragement?

- ✓ Others

TAKEAWAYS...



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