

## No Expiration

Acts 18:1-17

June 21, 2020



### Coffee/Question

What promise do you repeatedly come back to?

Sooke Baptist Church  
Sunday, June 21, 2020, 10am  
Facebook Live Stream and YouTube

## **Acts 18:1-17**

**Read v.1.**

What do we know about Corinth?

- Corinth was a Roman colony built by Julius Caesar in 46 BC.



- It was the capital of the province of Achaia.
- When Paul visited it had become the most important city in Greece.



- Due to its strategic location on a narrow isthmus between the Aegean and the Adriatic Seas, the city became a thriving commercial center.



- Corinth was filled with shrines and temples, but the most prominent was the Temple of Aphrodite (goddess of love) located on top of an 1800-foot promontory called the Acro-corinthus.



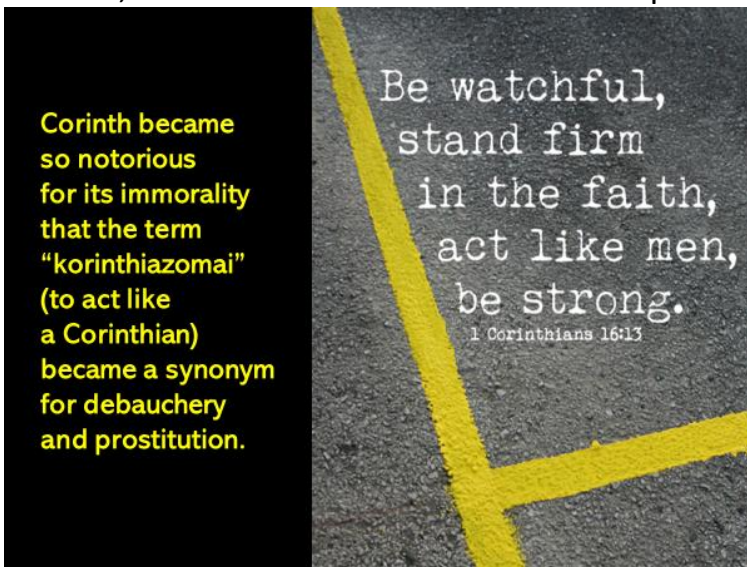
The Temple of Aphrodite



The Acrocorinthus



- The worship of Aphrodite involved having sex with one of the temple's 1,000 consecrated female and male prostitutes.



Corinth became so notorious for its immorality that the term "korinthiazomai" (to act like a Corinthian) became a synonym for debauchery and prostitution.

Be watchful,  
stand firm  
in the faith,  
act like men,  
be strong.  
1 Corinthians 16:13

This is why you will find in the two letters Paul wrote to the church at Corinth important instructions on how believers were to live morally in a culture saturated by depravity.

### Read v.2-3.

Why did Luke include these details?

- To inform the reader that Paul was a tentmaker – a skill that he depended on to provide for his material needs.

But there was another reason.

- Dr Luke wanted his readers to know... this was when... Paul met Aquila and Priscilla.

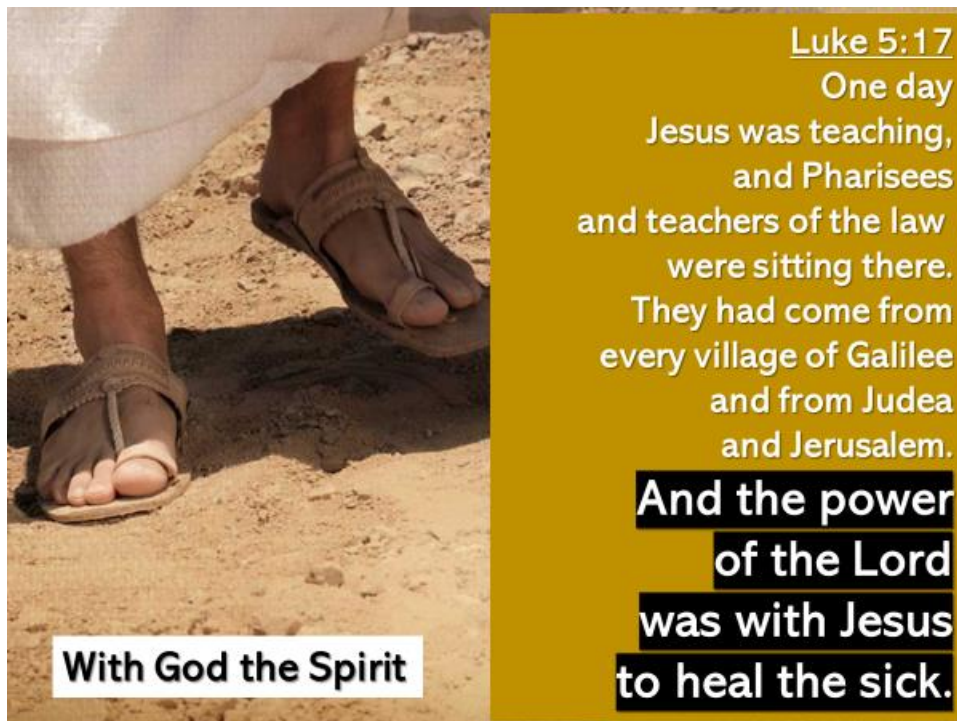
Why had this couple come to Corinth?

Because the emperor, Caesar Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome.

However, in this difficult circumstance, God was working for good...for their expulsion from Rome was the means by which they met Paul and became ministry partners with him.

This impresses upon us the pattern of how Jesus himself operated in this world when he lived here; a pattern that he replicates in his followers.

**Let's consider first the relational partnership Jesus had with God the Spirit and God the Father.**



At his baptism... “the Holy Spirit had descended on Jesus in bodily form like a dove.” Luke 3:22

God the Spirit was with Jesus...every day and in every situation...providing him with power from heaven to teach, to heal and to interact.

Jesus also was in partnership with God the Father.

After healing a man who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years, Jesus was severely criticized by the religious leaders because this miracle of healing had been done on the Sabbath.

Jesus' answer to his critics explained his relational partnership with the Father. He had done what he had done because this was what the Father was doing.

### With God the Father

*John 5:17, 19, 20*

Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working . . . “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

It was a partnership based on love – the Father loves the Son.

It was a partnership of equals - the Father showed Jesus what he was doing.

Not only was Jesus in a ministry partnership with the Father and the Spirit, he also forged a relational partnership with “the Twelve,” and... a number of women, both named and unnamed, who travelled with him as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God.



Luke 8:1-3

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.

The Twelve were **with him**,  
<sup>2</sup> and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; <sup>3</sup> Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

Since his return to heaven, Jesus continues to build relational ministry partnerships between himself and his followers... like the partnership he has with God the Father and God the Spirit; and like the partnership described here in Luke 8.

This is what Jesus meant when he said to his disciples the night before he was crucified...

John 15:5

"I am the vine;  
you are the branches.  
If you remain in me and I in you,  
you will bear much fruit;  
**apart from me  
you can do nothing.**

Just as Jesus did nothing apart from the Father and the Spirit...

John 5:17, 19-20

Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working....I tell you the truth,

**the Son can do nothing by himself;**

he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. <sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these."

...it is the the same for us....the Father and the Son lovingly show us what to do, and then the Spirit provides us with the needed grace and power from heaven to follow through.

This is why the gifts of the Spirit .... are distributed as they are.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

**<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.**

<sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of languages, and to still another the interpretation of languages.

**<sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.**

The Spirit deliberately gives each believer a portion of grace which when put together with the giftings of grace of other believers... provides a local church with everything it needs.

And if something more is needed?  
If a measure of grace is missing?  
What does our passage for today teach us?

When something more is needed...God will bring that something more in a person  
...whom he moves to the place where they are needed...in order to enter into a  
relational partnership with others already there.

This is what Jesus did with Aquila and Priscilla... and Paul and Silas and Timothy.

And is this not what Jesus has done here in Sooke?

**Read v.4.**

Reasoning from the Scriptures in a synagogue was something Paul did no matter  
where he was.

Dr. Luke reminds his readers of Paul's intent in doing so.

Paul endeavored to persuade...to convince his listeners that Jesus of Nazareth  
was the Messiah and to then urge them to act accordingly – to believe in Jesus  
and to receive him into their life.

**Read v.5.**

Until Silas and Timothy came, from Sunday to Friday Paul made tents.

Then on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, he reasoned in the synagogue.

But when Silas and Timothy came...Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching.  
Why was that?

Did Silas and Timothy take over the tent-making?

Or had Paul sold a sufficient number of tents to give him enough income to focus  
exclusively on preaching for a while?

While Dr. Luke doesn't answer that question, two other NT passages do.

And the answer impresses upon us another way in which the Holy Spirit builds  
relational ministry partnerships.



### Philippians 4:15-19

<sup>15</sup> Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, **when I set out from Macedonia**, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup> **for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.** <sup>17</sup> Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment and have more than enough.

**I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.** They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

The church at Philippi regularly sent substantial financial help to Paul.

### 2 Corinthians 11:9

And when I was with you and needed something, **I was not a burden to anyone**, for the brothers who came from Macedonia **supplied what I needed.**

**I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so.**

God financially provided as he did for Paul...through the Philippian church...in order that he might seize the opportunity that was there in Corinth....and so advance the work of the gospel.

Is it not remarkable...how Jesus brings people and churches together in relational ministry partnerships?

This is what he has done it with us – in the partnership we have with El Redil Sur to help in the establishing of a new church in the city of Caldas!  
The financial help that we send to them is intended to assist Cesar be able to work exclusively in the preaching of the gospel!

It is also remarkable that in the case of the church at Philippi, which was a young church, the Holy Spirit was building into their spiritual DNA, this understanding that every believer and every local church is on mission with Jesus.

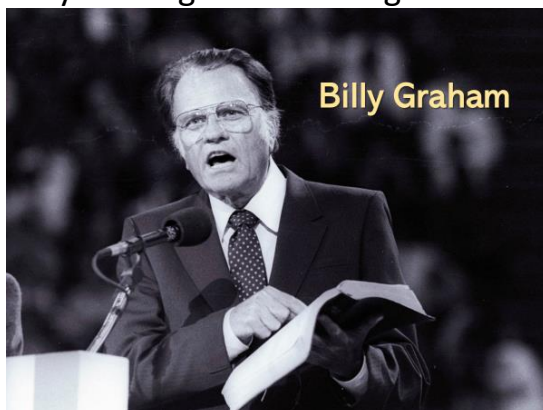
While followers of Jesus are obviously concerned about the specific people where they live, it is the Spirit who puts into the hearts of Jesus' followers, a concern for other peoples in other nations.

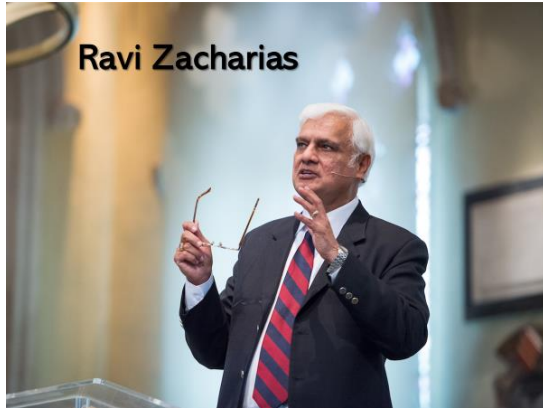
It is not an either/or matter.  
It's not either Sooke or other places.  
It is both.

**Look again at v.5.**

What picture comes to your mind when you hear this verse describe Paul preaching and testifying?

Do you imagine him being like a Billy Graham or a Ravi Zacharias?





Ravi Zacharias

It is important for us to hear how Paul described himself.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

**<sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.**

<sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

Does this surprise you about Paul?

That he felt weak?

That he experienced such intense fear that he actually trembled?

What got Paul up and out the door each day?

What kept him throughout the day... approaching people to engage them in conversation... instead of finding a sunny spot at a local café?

His answer may also surprise you.

## 1 Corinthians 9:16

**“...I am compelled to preach.  
Woe to me if I do not preach  
the gospel!”**

This is why Paul went out into the marketplace... and preached Jesus Christ and him crucified.

As he did... the power of God the Spirit was with him... and used the truth Paul spoke to convict the hearts of those who listened to him, persuading them to repent and granting them faith to believe.

Does this not encourage you?

God does not expect you and I to be fearless... nor are we to feel fearless...before we open our mouths and speak the gospel.

The practice of God typically is to use someone ordinary... in order to put the emphasis on the extraordinary message of the gospel.

What Jesus told Paul, and Paul's inclusion of this in his second letter to the Corinthians confirms this.

## 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

<sup>9</sup> ...[Jesus] said to me,

**“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”**

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so **that Christ's power may rest on me.** <sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.

**For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

Where was Paul's competency found?

In the grace and in the power of Jesus.

In his weakness Jesus showed himself strong; in his lack, Jesus was more than enough.

As it was for Paul...so it is for us.

We will go back to this in just a moment.

### **Read v.6.**

We may not fully appreciate what Paul's actions meant, but his Jewish audience understood him.

Paul had done everything he could for those listeners.

He had been faithful to tell them the news of their Messiah.

He had patiently answered their questions.

He had graciously responded when they attacked.

In this regard he had fulfilled his obligation to Jesus and to them.

The consequence of their decision to reject Jesus... was now on them.

This is what Paul meant when he said, “Your blood be on your own heads!”

This phrasing is also found in Ezekiel 33.

Is this something we are to do?  
No and yes.

To do exactly as Paul did.... would not be understood by the people of our culture. So no, shaking out our clothes and telling people their blood is on their own heads, would for sure be misunderstood.

But might there, come a point with someone to whom we are proclaiming Jesus...when we've done all we can? when we need to step back from them?

It doesn't mean God has given up on them.  
Nor does it mean that we cease to care and never pray for them.  
But it may be that we have to release them and trust God to bring someone else alongside of them.

While that person still breathes, there is hope that they might yet turn to the Lord and be saved.

God's pattern is to use many individuals in his pursuit of those who are lost. Paul would later remind the Corinthians of this – using an agricultural metaphor – some plant, some water, some reap – see 1 Corinthians 3.

But there is also a warning here.

It is an indication of human folly to put off responding to God.  
It is a grievous insult to God and a foolish act of presumption – for no one knows how long they will live and whether God will again mercifully reveal himself.

**The mercy of God  
is great.**

**But his patience  
is not unlimited.**

When the Spirit of God opens one's mind and heart to understand the truth of Jesus and his love grips one's heart...that is the moment to turn one's life towards God.

**Read v.7-8.**

Shifting his ministry focus to the Gentiles, didn't mean Paul never again spoke to a Jewish person.

Titius Justus was a God-fearing Gentile.

Crispus was the leader of the synagogue.

And there were many Corinthians who came to believe in Jesus whose background had been pagan.

The church in Corinth was this beautiful mixture of people from different ethnicities, as well as, cultural and spiritual backgrounds who had become one in Jesus Christ.

**Read v.9.**

Corinth was a spiritually challenging and difficult place to proclaim Jesus and to build a church.

This is what makes the Lord's appearing to Paul in a vision so incredible.

There is no greater encourager than our Lord Jesus.

- Jesus encourages his people through his Word.
- Often, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus brings someone... alongside a follower of his in order to speak truth and hope into their spirit...that is exactly what they need to hear...at that very moment.
- And then sometimes, as was the case with Paul, because the opposition is so intense and fierce, or the need is so great.... Jesus reveals himself in a vision.

Paul needed to understand that Corinth was not Philippi or Thessalonica nor Athens.

He need know that what Jesus purposed to do in Corinth required Paul's presence for an extended period of time.

Do you realize what this says to us?

Jesus provides his people with guidance...as it is needed.

The details always are more than adequate.

But they were not always explicit.

Why do you think that was?

Some instructions are not required until...a specific moment arrives.

Some strategies are meant to be worked out in dependence upon the Holy Spirit and in cooperation with other believers.

While it was short, what Jesus said to Paul was exactly what Paul needed to hear.

- **Keep on speaking – do not be afraid, do not be silent.**
- **I am with you – no one is going to attack and harm you**
- **I have many people in this city.**



There was... great opposition in Corinth.  
Jesus did not downplay the situation.

- Rather he assured Paul – not that he wouldn't be attacked but that when attacked he wouldn't be harmed.

The message of the Bible is that God uses his holy angels to guard his people.  
But his angels are not the only means.

**Read v.12-17.**

In this situation Jesus used the court and the proconsul to protect Paul.

- Paul needed the assurance from Jesus that he was where Jesus wanted him to be. This is why Jesus told him to keep speaking.
- Paul needed the reminder that Jesus was with him.

For it would seem that the opposition had worn Paul down and had left him vulnerable to the lie of his spiritual adversity... that God had forgotten about him.

“I am with you” is a much-repeated promise of God to his people.

[Genesis 26:24](#)

That night the Lord appeared to Jacob and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for **I am with you**; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

[Genesis 28:15](#)

**I am with you** and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

[Joshua 3:7](#)

And the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that **I am with you** as I was with Moses.

[Isaiah 41:10](#)

So do not fear, for **I am with you**; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

[Isaiah 43:5](#)

Do not be afraid, for **I am with you**; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.

### Jeremiah 1:8

Do not be afraid of them, for **I am with you** and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.

### Jeremiah 1:19

They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for **I am with you** and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.

### Jeremiah 15:20

I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for **I am with you** to rescue and save you,” declares the Lord.

### Jeremiah 42:11

Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the Lord, for **I am with you** and will save you and deliver you from his hands.

### Jeremiah 46:28

Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant, for **I am with you**,” declares the Lord. “Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.”

### Haggai 1:13

Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people:

“**I am with you**,” declares the Lord.

### Haggai 2:4

But now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord. ‘Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work.

For **I am with you**,’ declares the Lord Almighty.

### Matthew 28:20

**I am with you** always, to the very end of the age.”

Regardless of the circumstances which we face in our life, God promises to be with his own— ie. Psalm 23.

But in our passage for today, this promise is particularly stated in the context of mission.

- “I am with you Paul as you speak my gospel.”
- “I have brought you here and will be with you Paul, because I have many people in this city who will be rescued from their sin.”

When Jesus’ church is on mission with him, this declaration and promise made to Paul becomes ours as well.

- It is humbling – who are we... that the God of the universe would be present with us here in Sooke?
- It is encouraging – the God of the universe is present with us.
- It is perspective changing – Jesus has many people in Sooke and nothing and no one can stop our Savior searching after them and drawing them to himself.
- It is inspiring – the God who raised Jesus from the dead, provides through his Spirit the power we need to speak the gospel, in spite of our fear and trembling.
- It is faith building – in our weakness Jesus is strong.

In response to this vision, what did Paul do?

**Read v.11.**

As we wrap up let me leave you two points of connection.

1. As it was with Paul and team, Jesus intends for you and I to be his answer to someone else's spiritual longings as they would, in the words of Paul from Acts 17:27, "seek God and reach out for him and find him."

Paul was brought by God to Corinth.

You and I have been brought by God to Sooke.

And he purposes to do a work through this church.

2. When it comes to serving Jesus, our safety is not necessarily the Lord's first nor his priority.

He will guard us and be with us.

That however, doesn't mean he won't lead us into risky or difficult, even dangerous situations.

But when he does, this is our confidence: nothing will touch us that hasn't first passed through his hands.

Wherever Jesus leads us, whatever task he gives to us... he promises to be with us.

And he assures us that we can do all things through him.

In the time of the OT there was a man named Mordecai who had a cousin named Esther whom he had raised as his own when she was orphaned. Through remarkable circumstances Esther was chosen to be the queen of Persia and Media.

When Mordecai uncovered a plot that would have resulted in the death of all Jewish people who lived in the kingdom, he urged Esther to plead with the king for the lives of her people.

Esther was fearful to do so.

But Mordecai encouraged her to act and to speak.

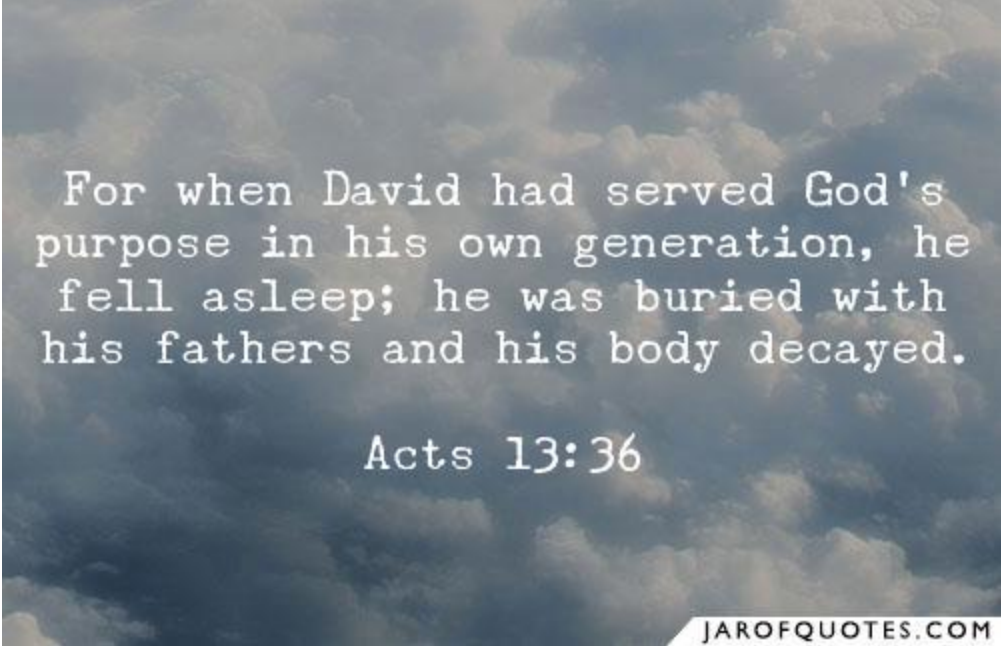
He said, “Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” Esther 4:14

Was Esther the only one to whom this phrase applied?

Or is it a general Biblical principle – relevant to all who follow God?

Are we where we are... positioned as we are... “for such a time as this?”

I believe every follower of Jesus serves God's purpose in their own generation.



For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.

Acts 13:36

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I believe each of us...like Esther...like David...like Paul...like Priscilla and Aquila... are where we are... when we are... in order that we might do the things God has given us to do.