

Acts 16, During his second missionary Journey Paul wanted to go to Asia but the Holy Spirit prevented him

Paul received the vision of a man from Macedonia (Greece) begging him to come to Europe instead

Paul set sail from Troas to Neapolis (the port of Philippi)

The theme of Paul's letter to the Philippians was twofold

- Friendship
- Joy

Acts 17 Paul came to Thessalonica

We see here the same pattern of persecution at the hands of the Jews

Acts 17:10, So Paul goes to Berea

- Then Athens

Acts 18:1 Paul goes to Corinth in southern Greece

Paul remains in Corinth for a year and a half (**Acts 18:11**)

- and there he writes this letter to the Thessalonians
- 50 to 51 AD
- Shortly afterward he writes the 2nd Letter

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the supernatural virtue of hope

While we were in Acts 18

- We looked at Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians
- The virtue of Love

Acts 18: 18-23

Paul set sail from the southern port Cenchreae across the Aegean sea

Why does Paul cut his hair and take a vow?

- Some say Paul was hurrying to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover
- In AD 53 Passover fell on March 22
- Sea travel as a rule began no earlier than March 5f
- at this time of year can be very treacherous
- Thus the vow – “O Lord get me to the Feast safely and in time.”

He stopped in Ephesus

- Priscilla and Aquilla (whom Paul befriended at the beginning of Acts 18 in Corinth) remained in Ephesus

Priscilla and Acquilla remained in Ephesus until the end of 55 (1 Cor 16:19)

- But in 56 they returned to Rome

Acts 18: 22

- Paul went on to Caesarea in Judea

Then to Jerusalem to greet the Church and celebrate the Feast of Passover

From Jerusalem Paul “went down” to Antioch

In Antioch Paul received serious news of the Church in Galatia

- So Paul departed by land route to Galatia

This begins Pauls Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18: 23 Paul goes to Galatia

- By way of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch

This is probably July – September AD 53

Acts 19:1

- Then back to Ephesus

Acts 19:1-7

- Paul, a Bishop, Baptized and Confirmed the disciples

Acts 19:8-10

- Finding only conflict in the Synagogue
- Paul teaches daily in a public lecture hall

Paul worked as a tentmaker from before sunrise until 11 am

- Then he would preach as a missionary from the 5th to the 10th hour
- Noon until 5 or so

Acts 19:11-20 Exorcism

Acts 19: 21-22

- Paul remains in Ephesus almost three years
- Oct 53 – Jan 56

There Paul forms a man named Epaphras, to be a missionary

Paul never goes to Colossae

- Epaphras brings the Gospel to Colossae and Laodicea
- And establishes the Church there

Paul's Letter to the Colossians

Col 1:1-8 Epaphrus

1. Col 1:13-14; 2:8-19 Paul explains Redemption

God became man was to save us from the consequences of sin.

In Romans chapter 6 we hear that the consequence of sin is death.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. 6:23

- Death doesn't just mean the end of our earthly life
- Death means eternal separation from God

We might say,

- God is God – can't he just erase the consequences?
- Can't he simply hit the restart button?
- You know – forgive and forget

If he did it would *destroy* our freedom

- Hitting the reset button would remove all responsibility for our good and bad actions.

Imagine Playing a game with young child

- If every time the child made a wrong move you let him take it back,
- Then the child was not really playing the game was he?

If God would excuse every bad move I make

- Then he would take away my freedom.

Freedom requires consequences for our choices

- Good choices bear good consequences
- Bad choices bear bad consequences

If my actions have no consequences,

- Then, Freedom is imaginary
- And I am not really human
- b/c I don't really have free will

So rather than destroy our human dignity

- God became one of us
- He bore the consequences for us,
- He suffered our death
- And repaired our nature wounded by sin

Since Jesus is both God and man

- He could bear the consequences for all people of all time.

As Paul tells us in Romans chapter 5:18

Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men.

There is only one man who has conquered death - Jesus Christ

- He is the Good Shepherd who can walk with us through the valley of death and lead us to eternal life

2. Colossians 1:15 The Mystical Body of Christ

The whole point of life is to be united to God

- But with Original Sin we were separated from Him
- And the distance between us was impossible to bridge

The second reason why God became man

- is that only He can reunite mankind to God.

Imagine you had two shores,

- but they were separated by a river that was impossible to swim across
- With every fiber of your being, you desired to get to the other side.
- But you can't get across that river.
- You walk up and down, trying to find a way.
- Then you see a small walkway, a narrow divide in the river, where the far shore is joined to your side of the river.
- If you want to get across that river, the only way is that land-bridge.

If you want to get from man's side of the river to God's,

- you've got to cross where the two sides meet:
 - That point is Jesus
 - God and man have been joined together in Jesus Christ

Through the Incarnation man is reunited to God

- God *is* man.

If Christ is the one who bridged the gap between God and man,

- then for humans to get to God,
- we have to go through Christ.
- There's no other alternative.

The sacred humanity of Jesus is the land bridge

- This is the only place to cross over from our side to God's
- This is why he gave us the Eucharist, His Sacred Body and Blood
- To reunite us to God,
- Baptism and the Eucharist make us one with Him so now He is the Head of the One Body and we are the members.

3. Col 1:24 Redemptive Suffering (1 Cor 3:9)

Christ did not take away suffering, He transformed it and gave it meaning!

We must learn the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering.

1. By His Baptism Christ descended into every form of suffering – You are not alone, He is there waiting for you
2. Suffering purifies us of self-centeredness and forges us in the virtues, especially charity
 - a. Maximilian Kolbe
3. Suffering has Redemptive value for others.

Luther denied this because he denied human freedom

CCC 306

God is the sovereign master of his plan.

- But to carry it out he also makes use of his creatures' cooperation.

This is not a sign of weakness on the part of God

- Rather, it shows God's greatness and goodness

For God grants his creatures not only their existence

- But also the dignity of acting on their own,
- Of being causes and principles for each other
- And thus of cooperating in the accomplishment of His plan

God enables men to be intelligent and free causes to complete the work of creation

We can also enter deliberately into the divine plan by

- our actions,
- prayers,
- and our sufferings

In this way we become "God's fellow workers"

- Col 4:11; 1 Cor 3:9; 1 Thess 3:2

CCC 618

The Cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ,

- the one mediator between God and man.

Because of the Incarnation

- Jesus has in some way united himself to every man
- So the possibility of being made partners in the redemptive suffering of Christ is offered to all.

This is the meaning of the Mystical Body of Christ

- We have been joined to Christ
- Made one with Him
- By receiving His Spirit
- By receiving Him in the Sacraments

We are now one with Christ

Gal 3 and 4

He is the Head and we are His body

- We are called to use our freedom and enter into His Redemptive Work through our
 - Prayer
 - Work
 - Joy
 - Suffering

Jesus calls his disciples to take up their cross and follow him

- Matthew 16:24

For Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example so that we should follow in his steps

- 1 Peter 2:21

This is the purpose of the Sacrament of Anointing

- To strengthen us to unite our suffering to that of Christ for the good of others
- See this sacrament in the CCC

Colossians 3 From vice to virtue: the meaning of Lent