"The reassuring power of Jesus' promises" – Discussion Questions on Acts 18v1-22

Feel free to choose the questions that you feel are most interesting or relevant for your group – there is no need to go through them all! This passage brings us to the end of Paul's second missionary journey as Paul returns to Antioch in v22. The bulk of the text deals with Paul's ministry in Corinth (v1-17) and then details Paul's onward travels which include a brief stop in Ephesus (v19-21). When studying Acts, it is always helpful to ask, "Why is this story here?" and in this case I think we are intended to be reassured about the nature of Christian witness after several chapters where Paul has faced various hardships. Jesus is at work to encourage his people and give them the resources they need to keep witnessing for him.

Read Acts 18v1-22

1. Given that we know that Paul came to Corinth in "fear and trembling" (1 Corinthians 2v3) why do you think this might have been? What are the main sources of any nervousness that we might feel in being witnesses for Jesus?

2. In this passage we see Paul engaged in what has come to be known as "tent-making ministry" in v2-4. What do you understand by this term? Why is it so relevant when we think about going to do Christian work abroad and increasingly in the UK? What might be some of its advantages and drawbacks?

3. This passage gives us an insight into the team of people who supported Paul in his ministry. What role does each play? What are some of the ways that other Christians have "held the rope" for you in your witness for Christ? How might this concept challenge some of the ways that we often think about witness and evangelism?

4. Looking at the commands and promises that Jesus gives to Paul in v9 why would these have been so reassuring to him?

5. People often struggle with the doctrine of election (that God has chosen some people before the beginning of time to be his). How does this passage rule out any sense that this doctrine breeds passivity among Christians? How does this doctrine serve as an encouragement to evangelism? Why is this so exciting?

6. The incident with Gallio shows that Jesus not only makes promises to his people but that he also keeps them. Why would this incident have been so encouraging to Luke's first readers? How might the fact that Jesus makes and keeps his promises give you more confidence in your faith this week? How might the fact that we believe that Jesus has "many people in Cambridge" encourage us at Eden as we think about multiplying into two churches?