

The Best Laid Plans . . .

1 Corinthians 16:5-9

Problems can be solved by those who submit to Christ, 4:17,18; 16:5

There was tension and there were problems between Paul and the church he founded, 1 Cor 4:6-16

Churches have problems that can be solved.

Paul has hope that these problems, as difficult as they are, can be solved if people take God's words seriously.

Solving problems takes work...16:5-9

There was a plan to solve the problem

Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote this letter, 16:8; 15:32

His ministry in Ephesus had been difficult (15:32, Acts 20:19) and would continue to be so, 16:9, 2 Cor 1:8ff.

He would travel through Macedonia on his way to Corinth after completing ministry in Ephesus, 16:5-6

He didn't want to make a short, direct visit, he planned a winter-over, 16:6-7

Fixing the problems would take an investment of time

Fixing problems would take an investment of effort

Fixing problems would take an investment of prayer

There was no instant quick-fix.

Sometimes Christians want that.

Sometimes people would rather live with the problem than fix it.

Even though the planned solution didn't come to fruition, Paul didn't quit, 2 Cor 1:15-2:4

Paul's plans are made with this caveat: "If the Lord wills..." 1 Cor 16:7, "Perhaps..." 16:6. "If the Lord is willing...", 4:19

Paul's plans are interrupted, he must defend his visit schedule, 2 Cor 1:15, 16, 2:1

One unwilling to fail in the determination to find some way to get the problem solved will never get started, nor will the person afraid to try and try again make much progress.

We tried that and it didn't work.

Paul perseveres in the solution to the problem even though many are "grieved" by his short, "not according to plan" visit, 2 Cor 1:23; 2:1-4.

Some said:

Paul lied

He did not keep his promise

He only wants to cause hurts

There were people in Corinth who didn't want to understand, they wanted to complain.

True in many relationships: marriage, family, business, church, etc

Some churches are driven by complainers. Forget the plan...

It would have been easy to give up. Most 21st century believers would have done so...

They would have found another church were there were fewer problems.

Church ministry calls for setting priorities wisely.

"The great and effective door" of Ephesus

It was an opportunity of significant proportion

With opportunity comes opposition, 16:9

It is almost always so...

The door of opportunity for the Christian swings on the hinges of opposition.

The Word of God never yet prospered in the world without opposition.

So what?

God is glorified when his people work hard to solve problems.

You will feel better when you are part of the solution to the problem.

Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?