5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, 6 and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.
 At this point in the letter Paul gives updates concerning his future plans. In verse 5 we see his original plan is to pass through Macedonia. In each of the territories Paul visits he seems to have base congregations for the regions. Ephesus for Asia Minor, where he is writing this letter from, and Corinth for Greece, in Macedonia Phillipi and Thessalonica. The reason for visiting the congregations in Macedonia may be because of what is occurring in Philippi. In the letter to the Philippians there seems to be an issue which Paul may like to address.
 We notice, however, that he only intends to pass through Macedonia. Whatever the issue is in Phillipi it is of less concern, ultimately, than what may be going on in Corinth. Regardless he would still like to spend some time with the Macedonian congregations.
 This then leads to Corinth itself. His plan would be the pass through Macedonia and then seek to stay in Corinth for an extended period. As we saw a few weeks ago Paul was already planning to visit Corinth in order to send the gift they would be sending to Jerusalem. There is also another interesting tidbit. While in Corinth he spent his time as a tentmaker, not seeking to burden anyone when it came to his presence. This bothered some of the Corinthians as we have seen in the letter previously. Now, however, he will willingly accept their help. Whether this is purposeful in order to smooth things over, or if Paul would have done that anyway now that the Gospel has been planted, we can only speculate. in either case by accepting their aid it also allows them to be actively involved with the Lord’s work being done through Paul.
 We now see the reason why he does not plan on going straight to Corinth. His ultimate plan is to spend some time with them. It is likely he sees everything that is going on and recognizes the greater need is for him to spend some time in Corinth. However, he also leaves it open to the Lord’s will. As we will find out later, his plans did in fact change. He ultimately goes directly to Corinth instead of travelling first through Macedonia.
 His current place, however, will be to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost. That Paul is using the Hebrew celebration as a reference point is interesting. Some claim that it reflects his Jewish ancestry. One has to wonder, however, why he would use Pentecost as the reason and not some other reference frame when writing to a predominately Gentile congregation. Scholars are quite quiet about this question. Though we could surmise that it was known to the Gentile believers at that time, perhaps even still celebrated by the Gentile Christians.
 Still, the reason for staying in Ephesus is that there are doors being opened to him for ministry purposes. Though, at the same time, Paul recognizes many adversaries as well. This may be a reflection of what was said previously about facing “wild animals.” We remember how this term was often utilized during the time to represent humans rather than animals, thus the opposition here may be those who are very much against the Gospel message.

10 When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. 11 So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.

 We now come to a minor note about Timothy. Here we find that Paul has either sent, or will send, Timothy to Corinth. Timothy was a fellow worker with Paul’s ministry. In sending Timothy as Paul’s representative, however, Paul senses that there may be some hostility toward Timothy.
 As such, Paul reminds them that Timothy is doing the Lord’s work and as such they should seek to be as peaceful with him as possible. Instead of causing him distress, they should seek to aid him in his endeavors rather than go against him. This does not mean that Timothy was by any means timid. Quite the contrary, Timothy would likely know what he is walking into with Corinth being what it is. Still, he goes and as such Paul requests a peaceful visit on the part of the Corinthians.
 We can say that this might be the reason for Paul’s change in plans. It is possible that whatever Timothy reported to Paul that he decided to go directly to Corinth as we find out in II Corinthains.

12 Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.
 The final point concerning travel is that Paul has requested Apollos visit. This is interesting in two ways. The first is the Corinthians were possibly pitting the apostles against one another, and in their minds they had this one was greater than the other. Meanwhile, neither Paul nor Apollos considered each other rivals by any means. Instead they were both coworkers seeking to do the Lord’s work. We know at this time, Apollos was actually with Paul in Ephesus doing ministry work together, even.
 Still, Apollos going he may be able to encourage the Corinthians to peace rather than division the way Paul has attempted to do in this letter. Yet, we find that Apollos has no desire to go to Corinth. One has to wonder why. Was Apollos just aggravated by the way the Corinthians were behaving that he simply did not want to go? Was he needed elsewhere and he simply knew that? We cannot know for certain.
 All we know is that Apollos will visit when an opportunity presents itself. He does not seem to want to change any of his current plans, but when he is able, should the Lord allow, he will go to Corinth. Ultimately, both Apollos and Paul recognize whatever plans they make can change based upon the Lord’s will.

Main Point: The main point of these verses are for Paul to convey his future plans when it comes to his traveling. He leaves open exactly what will happen based upon God’s will, but does, at this point, have plans to visit Corinth for an extended period during the winter season. He also requests that they care for the youthful Timothy when he arrives, and informs them of Apollos’ decision to not visit Corinth in the immediate future.

Application Points
1). On Hospitality and Other Things: As we conclude the letter, and as I said last week, finding application points can become a bit harder to do. I Corinthians was written to a particular congregation, and as such there are moments where things are being discussed which can be incredibly focused on the day to day of the particular people involved in the letter. This week is no exception as Paul continues to close out the letter discussing his travel plans.
 But, we can recognize that there are things for us to consider even now. One of the things is to consider Paul’s ministry. Oftentimes we can think of Paul being the solo guy on the journey. That he did all these things on his own. While giving Paul credit for his accomplishments in Christ is important, we must also remember that Paul was, more often then not, accompanied by other individuals.
 Timothy is an example of such an individual. Timothy was a younger believer who had began to accompany Paul. In this letter we see how Paul requests that they do not hinder Timothy because Paul is expecting him with the brothers. Timothy had a role to play when it comes to the ministry which Paul utilized, just as the other brothers whom he was expecting.
 Likewise we see how the tension between leaders within the Corinth was not something experienced by the leaders themselves. Apollos and Paul were on good terms. They did not see each other as rivals but as fellow laborers seeking first and foremost to honor Christ. They were not islands doing their own thing, but were often connected with each other encouraging one another in the truth.
 We also notice that they did not force each other to do things. For example, Paul did not demand that Apollos go to Corinth, despite the fact that it would have probably made the situation better with Apollos preaching the same thing Paul did. Paul implores, but does not demand. He does not hold a grudge against Apollos for not acquiescing to his wishes, either.
 I think this might be a good reminder when it comes to fulfilling the ministries God has called us to, rather than doing the ministries that others want us to. This can be a hard thing for us to do, because the truth is the other ministries which others would demand us fulfill are good. However, our call is to be faithful to the ministry God has laid before each of us.
 This does not mean that we can be willy nilly about such faithfulness. It doesn’t mean that we can claim, let’s say, to be faithful while ignoring the Scriptures. Instead, the Scriptures guide us, showing us what faithfulness looks like for each of us. When it comes to our lives oftentimes, we forget that the greatest ministries we have is the very lives we live. Parents who are being faithful in accordance with the Scriptures are fulfilling a ministry in the same faithfulness as the missionary overseas.
 The point, then, is this. Be faithful to the ministry you are currently called to. We can encourage others to further roles and ministries, we can even implore, but we can also respect where God leads people everyday, knowing that it might not be where we think they ought to be. In this sense, we would then look at whether they are being faithful to do what God has called them to and be thankful despite not being able to do everything we want them to.
 So that is the other things that came to my mind when considering these verses, it is a reminder that there are many ministries that we are all fulfilling and the best we can do is encourage each other into the specific ministries God has called us to for the betterment of each other as individuals and the congregation. Something else that was a bit more obvious was the call to hospitality. We see this when Paul discusses Timothy and requests that the congregation in Corinth. They are to put Timothy at ease and not despise him, but help him.
 I do want to notice that this is not someone staying, but someone passing through. As most of us have seen, we experience much the same when it comes to visitors, friends, and family who visit the congregation on any particular Sunday. It can be very exciting for us to see new people, especially, and since we want others to join our fellowship we can be a little too eager to make sure that they will come back next week!
 Not that there is anything wrong with this. Again, we like our fellowship, we think, overall, we have a good fellowship and do want people to join us in it. Are we perfect? No. But do we love Jesus? Do we love the Scriptures? Do we love each other? I could say yes to all these things even if we do not do all these things perfectly. So, to want others to come in and be affirmed in this fellowship makes sense and why we would be so excited to see new people come in and desire them to stay.
 But, again, what is being seen here are those who are passing through. Because for all the times we have had visitors who are looking for a new congregation to fellowship with, there have been ten visitors passing through. The question we want to ask is, are we treating these individuals with the same gusto and same love as we would anyone else while they are with us?
 This is a question for each of us as part of the fellowship. Do we, sometimes, get disappointed to learn, “Ah this person is just passing through” to which we do not dedicate our full attention to them as we should? Because, the truth is, we should be dedicating just as much attention to them because even if they are passing through they are still believers doing the Lords work wherever they are called to be.
 No matter who comes through the door on Sunday we should always have love at the forefront. A desire to encourage them further in the truth. To put them at ease while they are here with us, and to help, if need be, those on their way offering them peace.
 We know such visitors are not returning to Paul, but they are on their way to return somewhere. Whether that is a job, friends, or family. They are still going to a place that is expecting their return. What better way to encourage them than to be hospitable to them while they are among us, showing the love of Christ for the one simply passing through?
 So I leave it up to the congregation itself. How can we be more hospitable to those who are, especially, passing through? How can we as a whole bless those who are here with us? For some they might be thinking of ways to benefit them on their travels, maybe a small gift basket with something in it. Others, may be thinking of praying for them and with them. Others may be thinking of something else.
 I will say this, I will not guilt anyone into doing anything, but instead simply encourage to think and pray about each ministry opportunity that we discuss and ask whether or not the Lord is leading you in that particular direction. Perhaps you will sense God calling you to more of a hospitality role within the congregation, either hospitality when it comes to Sunday service in general, or perhaps when it comes specifically to visitors regardless of who they are.
 Just as Paul had a particular calling, and Apollos, and Timothy, each fulfilling their callings in faithfulness, this conversation leads us to back to that as well. To recognize that faithfulness is the key to whatever we are called to do. Above all, we should be seeking to encourage one another into this, faithfulness, faithfulness, faithfulness.
 My hope is that everyone who comes through the doors on any Sunday knows the Spirit is with us because of our active obedience to love one another and encourage one another in the truth, even those who visit. My hope is that we would be faithful in and out of season to do what we are called to do, and to consider how we can help the Timothy’s on their way, giving them nothing but peace.
 As we move forward, then, let us be a hospitable congregation to each other and to others. Let us always and anon encourage one another in faithfulness and love, seeking peace in every circumstance. May we trust God to bless each and every endeavor as we seek to Honor Him with what He has called us to do, and to be, knowing that following Him will always lead to what is good, true, and beautiful.