

- **\*READ Acts 18:24-28\*** As we have been making our way through the book that contains the Acts of the Apostles, we have seen the Gospel making its way into the ears, minds, and hearts of many different people from many different backgrounds. Up until this point of the narrative of **Acts 18**, we have seen the Jews who called for the death of Jesus hear and respond to the Gospel. We have seen the Gospel go all throughout the great city of Jerusalem to where even some of the Jewish leadership had become obedient to the Gospel. Philip and others had made their way to Samaria and the surrounding areas because of persecution, so that many people included Simon the former magician heard the Gospel preached. Saul of Tarsus responds to the Gospel message, along with Cornelius and his household as the first recorded Gentile converts. The Gospel begins making its way even farther northward as there becomes disciples in places such as Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, and Corinth. Then finally, we see from our opening text that there were disciples who found themselves in Ephesus.
- It is here in Ephesus that we read of an interaction that took place between a man named Apollos and some disciples named Aquila and Priscilla. We find Apollos teaching and preaching in the synagogue, but there was a problem with his teaching and preaching, and that problem was that it was incomplete. Aquila and Priscilla, having a fuller and more complete knowledge of Jesus and the Gospel are able to sit down and explain to Apollos the way of God more completely and accurately. We will see how this exchange produced great success for the efforts of the Gospel.
- Such an exchange could have been disastrous if those involved would've approached it with poor motives or actions, but thankfully what we have is an example of truth falling on an honest heart that results in Apollos being able to learn the way of God more accurately. With such a tremendous and encouraging text at our fingertips, I would like for us to take some to consider this text, what takes place, and three lessons that we can take away that might help for us to be bettered prepared and equipped to try to do what Aquila and Priscilla are able to do in this text...simply explain and teach the way of God more accurately to those who might be lacking or incomplete in their knowledge or obedience to the Gospel.

## **I. Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla**

### **A. Apollos: Jewish man who was an eloquent speaker and mighty in the Scriptures. (Acts 18:24,25)**

1. Luke recorded for us that Apollos was not a native Jew from Jerusalem or Ephesus. Instead, he was an Egyptian by birth, and yet a Jew by blood or at the very least from a family of proselytes. With this likely being the case, we shouldn't be surprised to learn that he was mighty in the Scriptures likely having been taught from an early age as was to be the case with Jewish parents and families. **(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)** Such teaching from a young age would certainly qualify him as being a man who was *"instructed in the way of the Lord."*
2. In fact, he was learned and instructed to the degree that we are told that he was even teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus. However, this is quickly followed by the qualification that he was only acquainted with the baptism of John. This might seem strange to us on the surface that he would know much about Jesus yet only know the baptism of John, but it is very possible that Apollos has spent time learning from John and even been baptized by him. This would mean that he not only would've heard of the need for repentance, but he would've been well aware of who the Messiah was to be and what He was supposed to accomplish in establishing His kingdom. **(Matthew 3:1-12)** He might have even been aware of Jesus of Nazareth being the supposed Messiah and Savior sent by God.
3. Further, it might seem strange to us that Apollos would be unaware of what Jesus had already done in establishing His kingdom and church through His death and resurrection, but we must remember that the dispersion of information was nothing like what we have today. He very well could have just not been aware of the reality of Jesus and still thought of Him as a future realization. Therefore, it

would make sense that as he spoke from the Scriptures, he spoke as if there were great things that were to come in the future and people were still in need of being prepared for that which was to come. Apollos was certainly learned and a man of great faith, yet we will see in a minute just what was missing and how Aquila and Priscilla stepped in to help.

**B. Aquila & Priscilla: Married disciples who met Paul in Corinth. They were fellow tentmakers with Paul.**

1. We are first introduced to this couple earlier on in **Acts 18:1-3**. When Paul arrives in Corinth during his second journey in spreading the Gospel, he finds and befriends a Jewish man named Aquila, a native of Pontus, and his wife Priscilla. These married disciples had just moved to Corinth from Italy because Claudius had decreed that all Jews leave Rome. Being in a new place, Paul was very fortunate to not just find fellow disciples, but he was most fortunate to find disciples who were of the same occupation as tent makers. **(Acts 18:3)**
2. Luke seems to indicate that Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla lived together for about 18 months, and during this time, Paul did what he did...he taught people the Gospel in the synagogues and from house to house. It is even supposed by some that the church in Corinth that Paul would eventually pen letters to was begun in the home of the disciples. Yet, there was opposition on the part of some of the Jews and after being rejected and beaten, Paul along with Aquila and Priscilla leave Corinth and come to Ephesus. **(Acts 18:12-19)**
3. Paul did not stay long in Ephesus, but Aquila and Priscilla remained in Ephesus and it seems according to **I Corinthians 16:19** that their home was the meeting place of the church that would eventually exist in that city. Every time we find a mention of these disciples it is in the context of them being true servants of others and disciples of Christ Jesus. The last mention we have in the New Testament of this great couple of faith is in **II Timothy 4:19** where Paul requests that Timothy give his greetings and love to Aquila and Priscilla. Surely these two disciples serve as tremendous examples of faith, service, and teamwork that lead to a great result that centers around Apollos being taught more accurately the way of God.

**C. Aquila & Priscilla hear the teachings of Apollos and take him aside in order to teach him more accurately about the way of God. (Acts 18:26-28)**

1. Even though there might have been a church meeting in their home, it wouldn't have been strange at all for Aquila, Priscilla, and other disciples to frequent the synagogue where they would've surely found ample opportunities to interact with other people of faith. It could've been in this way that they happened upon Apollos as he taught. Or it could have been that Apollos's strong teachings had been told to Aquila and Priscilla so they purposefully went to the synagogue to hear his teachings.
2. Regardless of the way they came across Apollos, we find these two disciples hearing his message and then taking him aside and giving him the rest of the story concerning Christ. Surely this must have been a monumental moment in the life of Apollos. For so long he had been preaching and teaching in preparation of the Messiah accomplishing His work for God, and here were disciples of like faith informing him that this work was accomplished.
3. With this newfound knowledge being shared with him, we find Apollos being extremely fervent to take this new message everywhere he could. He first went to Achaia accompanied with a letter from the disciples so that they might accept him into their number. He hits the ground running by standing up publicly to the Jews by *"demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."* **(Acts 18:27-29)** This however doesn't seem to be his final stop for we can read of Apollos being one of those that the Corinthians sought to elevate as one whom they would follow in **I Corinthians 1:11,12**. It seems to be that Apollos eventually made his way to Corinth to use his zeal, talents, and knowledge to water what Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla had started. The last mention we have of Apollos is in **Titus 3:13** where Paul greets him as a fellow laborer in the kingdom who Titus was to help in any way possible. Some even speculate that Apollos could very well be the

unknown author of the Letter to the Hebrews. Regardless whether or not that its true, we can be very sure that Apollos was a great servant of the Lord and the Gospel, and he seems to have been very active and busy among many groups of God's people. But it cannot be forgotten that he was able to get to that place because of the work that Aquila and Priscilla did in teaching him more accurately the way of God.

## II. 3 Lessons We Learn About Teachings Others

### A. Even those who are fervent and knowledgeable can be in need of being taught more accurately.

1. A friend of mine from high school and college once told me that you can get people to believe in what you are saying if you will simply say it with confidence, conviction, and zeal. He would follow this up by saying that as long as you act like you know what you're doing then people will believe that you know what you're doing. A perfect illustration of this would be when he was able to walk right past security into a football game with a full cup of sweet tea in his hand as he raised his arms to be patted down. He was confident in what he was doing, and didn't show any hesitation or fear. For his hard work, he was able to enjoy some nice refreshing sweet tea while the rest of us were parched with thirst.
2. I share this story because the principle is true, but it is also a scary concept at the same time. This is perfectly illustrated by the great number of televangelist who have massive followings. The vast majority of these "teachers" and "preachers" say things that are completely contrary to Scripture, and yet people eat up their words because they are said with confidence and authority. This same thing was true for Apollos. He was able to gain the ear of many people because he spoke with eloquence and boldness. He was also speaking what would have been the truth at one point in the past, but the reality is that his message was outdated. Even though he was sincere in what he was speaking...even though he was speaking what would have been truth...it was lacking at the time he spoke it in Ephesus, and he was in need of being taught the truth more fully and accurately.
3. If this can be true for Apollos then it can be just as true for people who preach and teach today. We should appreciate zeal, conviction, and knowledge, but we should appreciate all the more when those things are combined with accuracy and truth. That is why it is so important for us to make sure that we are of the same mindset as the Bereans that we listen to what is said and then compare it with what we find in the text. **(Acts 17:11)** Apollos's message was lacking in that regard, and for that Aquila and Priscilla stepped up and taught him more fully.

### B. In order to teach these types of people, we must have a strong and proper grasp of our faith and its teachings.

1. While it was the proper thing to do for Aquila and Priscilla to take Apollos aside to teach him the way of God more accurately, we must take a moment to recognize that this isn't something that is easily done. To begin with, taking someone aside to teach them takes courage and conviction in our knowledge and message. When we do such a thing, we are creating an opportunity for a truly crucial conversation to take place. The stakes are high when it comes to truth, obvious this conversation is taking place because there is disagreement, and often when there is disagreement there is opportunity for emotions to become enflamed. However, these conversations must take place if we truly desire for truth to be understood by all.
2. In order to help ourselves to be more successful in these situations, we ourselves must make sure that we are properly versed and knowledgeable about that which we are about to discuss. I believe this is something that Aquila and Priscilla were perfectly capable of doing based on the time they spent with Paul. I can't imagine that Paul would allow anyone to spend 18 months with him without them coming to have a pretty strong and firm grasp of the Gospel.
3. Therefore, these two disciples had the knowledge they needed and they only had to step up and have the courage to put themselves in a possibly awkward situation of trying to more fully explain the truth to someone that was speaking with such boldness, knowledge, and conviction. We can be faced with this exact same type of intimidating circumstance if we try to more fully teach someone

who is bold, knowledgeable, and full of conviction. And yet, that doesn't mean that we are allowed to shrink away. Our attitude must be that we too find boldness, knowledge, and conviction, and those things can be had by us if we are willing to put in the work to dig into the text and build up for ourselves a strong foundation of faith and knowledge that will help us to teach others through our firm grasp of the truth. **(II Timothy 2:15)**

4. I can think back on my own life and remember times when I was scared to have those conversations because I simply was ill-prepared to teach, but through time, effort, and commitment I have grown to the point where those times of being ill-prepared are few and maybe in nonexistent. Few worse things can we do than go into this same type of situation as Aquila and Priscilla did and be ill-prepared. We must know the truth and have confidence in conveying it, and that only comes through knowing the Word of God that can make the man of God adequate and equipped for every good work. **(II Timothy 2:16,17)**

**C. There is a proper way to approach those who might be inaccurate in their teaching and knowledge of the Scriptures.**

1. There are a number of different ways in which the situation at the synagogue with Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla could have gone. They could've let Apollos continue on in his teaching of incomplete truth. They could've publicly called him down. They could've pulled him aside and berated him. Or they could've done what I believed they did in taking him aside and calming explaining that there was simply more to the story. I can see how they would've taken him aside and began the conversation by complimenting his passion and zeal for the things of God and then leading into what he needed to additionally consider. There is no doubt in my mind that Apollos would've been so appreciative to them for handling the situation in such a way as they did. I also have no doubt that this was the absolute best way for them to address and handle the situation that they found themselves in.
2. However, we must recognize that this wasn't always how these conversations were handled. In fact, we see just a few verses later that Apollos stood up publicly to refute the Jews who were teaching against Jesus being the Christ. **(Acts 18:29)** We can look elsewhere in the book of Acts and even in the Gospels to find the Apostles and even Jesus publicly rebuking those who stood in opposition to them. So what gives? Which is the proper way to handle those who are wrong in their teachings of Scripture?
3. The best answer I can give to this question is that we simply need to exercise much patience and wisdom when addressing false or inaccurate teaching. I would always lean towards the approach of Aquila and Priscilla because it has the best chance of being taken well. However, I also recognize that there will be times where a public rebuke or response must be necessary for the sake of those who might be present and depending on the circumstances surrounding the situation. But above all, I would strongly advise that we all take to heart the words of the following verses:
  - a) *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger."* **(Proverbs 15:1)**
  - b) *"This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger"* **(James 1:19)**
  - c) *"Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."* **(Colossians 4:6)**

With all of these things considered, may we use this example of Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla and their interactions concerning truth as an example to encourage each of us to be diligent to always be prepared to more accurately teach the way of God to those who might be in need. It will take some effort on our part... some study, courage, and boldness, but hopefully we have been more than convinced of the great good that can come from our efforts. May God bless us as we strive to more accurately teach His ways to those who are in need of the words of truth and life.