

Apollos

Acts 18:18-28

- In 49 AD the Emperor Claudius had been receiving all of these reports of these riots and incidents, primarily in and around the Jewish synagogues that had been happening all over the Roman Empire
 - It was reported to him that these were disputes over “Christus”—or the Christ
 - And the Romans saw this as a Jewish internal dispute because at the time they didn’t differentiate between Jews and Christians yet—they just thought that Christianity was a Jewish thing
 - After hearing of these issues in Judea, in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Thessalonica, Berea—Claudius said, “You know what, it’s only a matter of time before these Jews

incite something here in Rome as well—so send them all away”

- So there was a great deportation of Jewish people out of Rome because they wanted to make sure they protected their most precious city
- Now, one of the couples that got kicked out of Italy was a man named Aquila, and his wife Priscilla
 - And you know that they were just a fantastic couple that everyone wanted to be around—why? Because their names rhymed. How fun is that?
- But they leave Rome, travel across the Adriatic and settle in Corinth. And now it’s time for them to start a whole new life for themselves
- So they go to the synagogue on the Sabbath—and normally, the way synagogues were, people would sit in groups of those who had the same or similar occupations

- Since they were tentmakers, they sit in the tent makers section—so to speak— hoping to meet some others in the business and network and find work for themselves
- One Sabbath—a new guy comes to the section and sits down. Aquila goes, “Psst! Hey, I’m Aquila, this is Priscilla”
- And the guys says, “Oh, that’s fun. Hey Aquila and Priscilla, I’m Paul”
- “Ah Paul, so you’re a tent maker then?” — “I sure am! One Second...”
 - And then he gets up and preaches the house down
- But then he forms a really good relationship with Priscilla and Aquila, and he stays with them.
- They work together as tent makers for a bit— until Timothy and Silas show up with an offering from the church in Macedonia that will allow Paul to stop tent making and just focus on the ministry.
- He stays there in Corinth for 18 months! Which is the longest that we’ve seen him stay anywhere on his journeys so far—and there’s a lot that happens there that we’ll talk about next week
- However, once he realizes his time in Corinth is up he wants Aquila and Priscilla to go with him.
- ***“So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.” And he sailed from Ephesus.” -Acts 18:18-21 (NKJV)***

- Now, I could be way off base here. But Paul seems to be going through something here. I think that he needs some time off.
- So Paul had taken what was referred to as the Nazarite vow:
 - This was a 30 day vow—from numbers chapter 6 that anyone could take
 - And within this 30 days—he could not drink anything alcoholic or anything made from grapes
 - He could not come in contact or proximity with any dead bodies, not even family
 - And he could not cut his hair for 30 days
 - After the 30 days, the hair would be completely shaved off and then burned in the temple..to conclude the vow
 - And this was a vow that one would partake of to show an expression of gratitude for God's deliverance
- Now, I know that God has delivered Paul from a lot over the years—and there's nothing wrong with taking this vow, it's between him and God
- But if I'm Aquila and Priscilla—and I don't know that he's taken this private vow...all I know is that he's always harping on us no longer being under the law but under grace. We don't need these old traditions anymore
 - But then all of the sudden he starts refusing wine at dinner..he's not partaking in the Lord's supper
 - His hair is starting to get scraggly and out of control
 - He randomly tells us that's it's time to get out of Corinth after 18 months and he wants us to come with.
 - So we go down to Cenchrea to catch a boat—and before we board the boat, Paul comes out with his head completely shaved and his hair in a bag

- Then we get to Ephesus, he just leaves us— then when we finally figure out where he is, he’s been reasoning in the synagogue, and they actually are receptive to him and ask him to stay longer but he says “Nah, I gotta go...I gotta feast to get to, and some hair to burn. But uh, if God wills I’ll come back...”
 - And then he just leaves!
- Aquila and Priscilla are just left behind in Ephesus...so I guess this is just where they are now.
 - And I don’t know, maybe Paul had a methodical plan for everything that he was doing—but as confused as I am by his actions just by reading about them, imagine the confusion of Aquila and Priscilla!
- But the narrative of the book of acts shifts away from Paul for a little but here, and stays in Ephesus— (maybe because Luke got left to? I don’t know!)
- But I’m so glad it does, because we are introduced to one of the most fascinating people in the entire bible in my opinion.
- ***“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.” -Acts 18:24-28 (NKJV)***

- Apollos has long been one of my favorite people in the Bible. I love the intentionality of how he is described by Luke
- This is an in depth study that I had been wanting to do for a while now—and the more I got into this the more I realized that there is not a lot of extra biblical material on Apollos
 - Largely due to how thorough Luke’s description of him was.
 - Even my go-to commentary for the Book of Acts that I have been reading throughout this whole study —just completely skipped this section all together...it was rather frustrating!
- But I did find a short devotional commentary that I had written 12 years ago about Apollos—which was interesting to read what 23 year old Kenny had to say
 - But that is how long I have been enthralled with Apollos
 - As a young man trying to grow in wisdom and character and ministry—I don’t know if

there is anyone in the Bible that had caught my attention in the same way that Apollos had

- And if we break down Luke’s description of him, part by part, I think this will be very encouraging for us as believers
 - And I think it is very fitting for a Father’s Day message to break down the attributes and character of a great man like Apollos
- So first. ***“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man...”***
-Acts 18:24a (NKJV)
 - So right off the bat we learn three things about him—He’s a Jewish man from Alexandria, and he’s eloquent
 - **Now that word Eloquent (Logios):**
“Learned, Skilled in Literature, Versed in History and Antiquities, Skilled in Speech”
- It’s such an interesting word, and it’s the only time it’s every used in scripture—because its a word that has a double meaning. It could be

translated that he was a learned-communicator

- So not only did he sound like he knew what he was talking about—he really knew what he was talking about
 - It's actually a rare thing now a days, because you have so many people that will good communicators—but have actually no idea what they're talking about
 - Or you have people that really do know what they're talking about—but have no idea how to actually communicate it
- Apollos had both—and part of it was natural talent, and the other part of it was where he was from.
- Alexandria was the 2nd largest city in the entire Roman Empire...and 1/3rd of it's population was Jewish
 - Alexandria has had strong Jewish roots for a long time—this was the city Jesus most likely

would have lived in for those years when they had to flee to Egypt from Herod

- But at this time, there were over 1 million of Jewish people would have lived in Alexandria
- It had the largest population of the Hellenistic Jews, or the Greek-speaking Jews in the world
- This is where the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint was translated and formed
- Alexandria was the leading intellectual and cultural center of the Hellenistic world
 - For the Jews—this was their Athens
 - Alexandria had the largest library in the known world with hundreds of thousands of volumes available to learn from.
 - I read some day 400,000 others said 700,000 but under Julius Ceasar most of it got burned down...

- But Apollos took full advantage of the resources available to him—and because of that, he was also described as being:
 - “...mighty in the Scriptures,”- Acts 18:24b (NKJV)
 - Now this is the reason I chose the NKJV for this passage, because ESV said he was “competent in the scriptures”, which I see to be a very weak translation
 - He wasn’t just competent—he was MIGHTY
 - The word Mighty (Dynatos): —(similar to the word Dunamis, the word for power that Jesus used in Acts 1:8, which is where we get the word for dynamite and dynamic.)
 - But this specific word— **Mighty (Dynatos): “Able, Powerful, Mighty, Strong—Excelling in Something”**
 - He made so much use of the resources available to him, that he excelled and became mighty in the scriptures
- And if you think, “*oh well that’s nice for him, to have all of that available to him*”—you have more available to you that he ever did!
- All you have to do is take out your phone and you have millions of volumes available to you
- We have more teachers across the planet that you can have access to to help you navigate all of the information—and we have the entirety of scripture and countless commentaries by the highest scholars that we can learn from—if we make the most of the resources available to us
- Make no mistake, there is not a person in this room that does not have the opportunity to become Mighty in the Scriptures
 - And I’m telling you, we need more Christians today that are Mighty in the Scriptures
 - We need more men today that are Mighty in the Scriptures
 - We desperately need more Father’s today that are Mighty in the Scriptures

- We need to continue to ride the wave, because I do believe that is where we are trending towards—God is doing a work among the men and Fathers across our world. I believe it because I see it happening in our church
- I was so encouraged a couple of months ago, we had an impromptu altar call after the sermon—and we had a visitor that day from out of town
 - And it made an impression on her because she said—“I have never seen so many men go to an altar before in my life”
- Oh God is doing something, He is stirring up and raising up Godly men, who will be the spiritual leaders that they are called to be, who are Mighty in the Scriptures
 - And the enemy will do whatever they can to keep that from happening—and the number one way that they will do that is by trying to keep you out of this Word, gentlemen
- Don't let it happen—Asaph talks in Psalm 78 about the importance of being well versed in

the Scriptures, law and instructions of God... he's says it's important for us to know them—
“so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—and they in turn will teach their own children. So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting His glorious miracles and obeying His commands.” -Psalm 78:6-7 (NLT)

- My favorite part of that passage is—“even the children not yet born”
 - Because if anyone is hearing this message and thinking, *“Well, I don't have kids yet—so I'm just gonna mess round and have fun now but when I get married and have kids ill shape up and prioritize God...”*
 - First off, it doesn't work that way. 2nd off—the children you will have one day, even if its a decade away — will benefit from your intake of the Word of God right now!

- And even if you never have children yourself, it is still your responsibility to find ways to impact the next generation with the Word of God
- So that in the hopes of your children, or the children that you influence will be able to have said about them what Luke said about Apollos in verse 25 when he said: ***“This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord”***
-Acts 18:25a (NKJV)
- I love this because we know that Apollos is a learner—he’s sharp, he’s an excellent communicator. He’s talented and brilliant
 - He’s read countless books and has taken in so much knowledge through his own God-given intelligence
- But he didn’t just rely on himself for his learnedness
 - He knew that even with the high capacity that he had to intake and process information, and communicate that information that he processes—he still

needed others beyond himself to help give him a fuller and deeper understanding of everything that he has learned and knows

- The word **Instructed (katēcheō): To teach orally, to instruct; to sound into the ears**
 - He knew that there were others that were smarter, more learned, more eloquent, more mighty in the scriptures than him that he could learn from
 - He knew that he needed to be challenged and was open to where he may be wrong in some certain areas
- Now, this is something that we need so desperately in our culture today. Because we have way too many self-taught people now a days
 - What we experience is we come to learn about about something, we form an opinion and view point on it—and refuse to listen to or reason with anyone who thinks differently

- And we will only listen to or consider something from a source that we know will agree with us and affirm what we already think
- And when we get to pick and choose the how we are taught and only consider things that line up with how we want to be taught—we're not really taught anything
 - It's the illusion of wisdom we have when all we're getting is just what we want to hear
- Apollos wasn't about that. It didn't matter how high of an IQ he had, he knew that he needed to be taught and challenged
- And who was it that would have given him the instruction that he needed?
- Well, most likely it was John the Baptist.
- Most agree that Apollos had either been a follower of John the Baptist or had at least been baptized by him and sat under his teaching a time or two.
- And with how learned Apollos was in the Scriptures, the instruction of John the Baptism led him to the truth that everything that he knew about the scriptures was actually all pointing to Jesus
 - And the Scriptures came alive to him in a brand new way and he became even more mighty in the scriptures, seeing Jesus all throughout the Septuagint
- Then he probably went back to Alexandria to restudy so much, now that he had this newer and deeper understanding
 - Then John the Baptist gets arrested and beheaded
 - And that lights a fire under Apollos—to learn more, and pick up where his instructor left off by telling everyone how Jesus is their Messiah, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and they need to repent!
- And he did so with passion because Luke says that he was: ***“and being fervent in spirit,”***
-Acts 18:25b (NJKV)

- ***Fervent (Zeō): To Boil with Zeal for What is Good***
- This is why he was so learned, so mighty in the scriptures, why he was instructed!
 - Because he had a fiery passion for the truth
 - He was passionate for what was good, what was right—passionate about who God really is and what He wants for us and from us
- And we need more Christians today, men today, Father's today that are passionate about what is good for others
 - That are passionate about what is good for their family
 - Passionate about what is good for their church
 - Passionate about what is good for their community
- And that will be passionate enough, bold enough, and learned enough to speak up—like Apollos

- The rest of this verse goes on to say: “and being fervent in spirit, ***he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord,***” -Acts 18:25c (NKJV)
- **Accurately (Akribōs): With Exactness, With Caution, With Completeness**
- There was precision to the way that he spoke
- He taught carefully, the full-precise truth about the way of the Lord
 - About God's design for this world
 - About God bringing redemption to the world through the Messiah
 - About that Messiah being Jesus—“the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world,” like his mentor would declare!
- When we speak of the ways of the Lord, we are to do so with exactness, giving the complete truth, but we are to do so cautiously

- Not passively—there is no room for passivity in Christianity, and we don't see any of that in Apollos
- But using caution does not equal being passive
- Using caution is like following the instruction of James who told us to “Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry”
- Using caution is to make sure one is rightly dividing the Word of Truth like Paul told Timothy to do
- *I have to be cautious with every sermon I ever give. I have to comb over every line and every thought and every word that is going to be spoken...I have to ask myself, “What if I’m wrong?” “What if I misread” “What would be the counter argument to that” “How could someone misinterpret what I’m saying here, and how could I say it more clearly”*
- *And I have to cautiously ask myself every single one of those questions because when I am handling the Word of God and instruction*

about Him, I am going to have to give an account before God by how I presented Him and His word to you—and that will require caution

- *But after I take every precaution, I must speak boldly and passionately*
- And in the same way, when you talk about the things of the Lord with your family, with your friends, with you co-workers, with strangers—please take caution to make sure that you are speaking with accuracy, and exactness
- And the Bible doesn't just encourage us to speak with exactness, but this same word is also used in Ephesians when Paul says: ***“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,” -Ephesians 5:15 (NIV)***
- Very careful there is the same exact word and we have translated accurately in our passage—Akribōs

- We are to live with exactness, that will demonstrate the things of the Lord in our lives.
- The values that we hold, the conversions that we have, the way that we lead our families, the influence that we have on the community around us should in itself speak with exactness a testimony of the Lordship of Jesus and the Freedom that is found in Him.
 - That is why we are not just to be just hearers of The Word, but doers also.
- So Apollos was a learned man from Alexandria, mighty in the scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, who passionately and accurately taught the things of the Lord to all who would listen...then Luke says: “**though he knew only the baptism of John.**” -Acts 18:25d (NKJV)
- Here’s the encouraging thing—he didn’t know everything!
- Yes, there were so many things that he was teaching accurately, but not fully
 - Because he was teaching what John the Baptist taught, which was all true—but it was a little out dated now
 - He knew that Jesus was rightly the awaited Messiah and he could prove that from scripture as well as the apostle Paul could
 - He knew that we were called to repentance and to baptism—but John’s baptism was about preparation for the Messiah
- Apollos didn’t really understand the Christian baptism was no longer about preparing for the Messiah but being united with the Messiah
 - John and Apollos knew the baptism of anticipation—not the baptism of accomplishment
 - The Baptism of Faith had replaced the Baptism of Repentance
- Apollos didn’t know yet that the work of Jesus as the Messiah wasn’t something to look

forward to anymore—because His work as the Messiah had been completed

- He didn't have an understanding that the prophecy from Joel that said the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh has actually been fulfilled and been spreading since the day of Pentecost —so he still had more to learn
- Verse 26 goes on to say: ***“So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue.” -Acts 18:26a (NKJV)***
- **Speak Boldly (parrēsiazomai) : “To Speak Freely—To Grow Confident, Have Boldness, Show Assurance”**
- You see, when you put in the work, and you carefully and cautiously examine the truth, learn the truth, and become mighty in the truth —you can speak freely about it
 - The number 1 reason that believers won't talk about their faith—isn't that they're scared that they'll be rejected...it's that

they're scared that they don't know enough about it

- So if you feel that way—so something about it!
- Become so confident in your faith that no matter what situation you are in or who you are around you can speak freely about it
- I love this wording and this definition because I think that so often when we read the word “boldly” or “confidently”—that leads us to think of someone talking and declaring something like a dictator
- But speaking boldly isn't about speaking over people or speaking down to people...it's just having the confidence to speak freely about what you know to be true
 - Not having to fumble around ideas and hypotheticals but just freely speaking the truth of Jesus and the salvation that He offers.

- And Apollos can encourage us in that, because no matter how well learned and versed we become in our faith—there is still more for us to learn. And we need to be open to that learning...because the more we learn the more we can speak freely and confidently
- So Apollos was speaking freely, he was speaking accurately and passionately— and Aquila and Priscilla were impressed, but they saw where he could improve
- And verse 26 goes on to say: ***“When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” -Acts 18:26b (NKJV)***
- So it wasn't that Apollos wasn't accurate—he could just be more accurate and Aquila and Priscilla wanted to help him do that
- And when it says that **They Took Him Aside (Proslambanō): To Take or Receive Into One's Home**
- So this language tells us that after the service they invited him over for Sunday lunch, or for dinner later in the week
- But they recognized that he was falling short in an area—and they lovingly instructed him further because they had experienced something that he had not learned or experienced yet
- *You know what they didn't do—if Aquila and Priscilla lived today and acted like people do today, what they would have done is take a clip from Apollos' sermon- they'd go on tick tock or whatever and have a side by side clip of the sermon and them watching the sermon*
 - *Scoff when he said one thing, shake their head at another—played 15 seconds of it and then say :*
 - *“Ok, guys this why Apollos isn't saved—he's a false teacher, he's not giving you the full accurate picture of what baptism is about—and you should listen to him...so*

everyone lets destroy him in the comments!”

- Yall know what I’m talking about—I get stuck watching too many of those videos myself—I admit that
- But to take Luke’s wording, Aquila and Priscilla were more noble-minded than that
 - They took him aside, privately, they invited him over for dinner, they encouraged him on how accurately he was teaching—but also showed how he could be teaching more accurately
 - They helped him grow, rather than cutting him down
- And then we round out the chapter with the last two verses: ***“And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly,***

showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.” -Acts 18:27-28 (NKJV)

- Vigorously—man that’s a strong word. That’s how passionate he was about fighting for the truth. For the name of Jesus
 - But everything he did—like we discussed about Paul last week —was rooted in the scriptures
 - He was constantly showing them from the scriptures
 - You see this is why we need to be mighty in the scriptures—not so that we can sound smart and win debates. But rather so that we know what the truth is, and where to find it
 - And we can, like Apollos:
- **LET THE WORD OF GOD DO THE WORK OF GOD**
- Apollos was probably the most talented and gifted man in the ministry that we see in the entire Bible

- It doesn't take long after this time with Aquila and Priscilla —that he finds his name being mentioned among the likes of the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul
 - He was easily the most well known and influential Christian leader that was not an apostle himself
- He was one that could gain people's attention and gain a following and a crowd—but at the same time, he was so incredibly humble
- The first reason I know that is because he allows himself to be taught, corrected, and instructed by Aquila and Priscilla
 - He was so talented, so passionate—but still so teachable
 - Here he was with all of his education, with all of his experience, with all of his travel, and successes in speaking and debating—yet he still allowed himself to be taught and corrected by a couple of tentmakers
- How do I know that that is how he responded? Because if he hadn't, he would have had recommendation letters written for him by the believers, and he never would have greatly helped the churches!
- Apollos never let anything be about him...he was about the Word of God doing the work of God—and he never let his ego or his successes get in the way of that work
 - And that led him into being put into a leadership position at the church of Corinth — and he served very well there for a while until he had to remove himself
- The Apostle Paul had to address the situation with the church in his first letter to them.
- ***“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What***

I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” -1 Corinthians 10-13 (ESV)

- Paul had to get on to these believers because many of them started to associate and define their faith by which teacher that they liked best.
- And Paul says, I get it, it's human nature: In chapter 3 he says — ***“For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.” -1 Corinthians 3:4-7 (ESV)***

- Your spiritual growth can never be attested to or attributed to another human being — even if you have a spiritual leader in your life that led you to the Lord, it's not them leading you — it's God leading you through them
- All of the glory, all of the credit — always, has to go to him
- As soon as it goes toward someone or something else — that's when we get in trouble
- And Apollos saw this happening — tried to correct it, but nothing he said was working, his cult following continued to grow, the competition among the believers continued to escalate — so he removed himself
- Man, how many Christian leaders would do that today?
- He was getting too famous he was getting too much recognition, his following was getting so large that he had to remove himself to remind people that “this is about Jesus and not me”

- Even Paul tried to get him to come back, he said in chapter 16: ***“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. Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” -1 Corinthians 16: 12-13 (ESV)***
- I can’t help but think that because Paul put verse 13 right after verse 12, he was saying— stay on guard, persevere in the faith, act boldly as a man, be strong”—I think by saying that, he was also saying “Be like Apollos”
- Take advantage of the opportunities presented to you, take responsibility for your life, make an impact by passionately and accurately sharing the truth—
- Be men of conviction, be authentic and genuine Christians—and be humble enough to be corrected, to put the Lord first all that you say and do
- Apollos is an incredible example that we have in scripture—and I hope you are as encouraged as I am, this Father’s Day to have an example in scripture that we can emulate—for the betterment of ourselves, our families, our friends, and those around us....but most importantly, for the furthering of our faith.