

ACTS | Apollos Speaks | Story 27

Acts 18:24-28

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Apollos

Acts 18:24-28

Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷ And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

- **Aquila and Priscilla** were tentmakers that settled in **Corinth**
- Roman persecution of Jews pushed them out of their home in Italy
- They linked up with the Apostle Paul
- They began planting the Corinthian church.
- Paul, Aquila and Priscilla left for Ephesus and started the church there in their home.
- Even after Paul left, they remained there overseeing this fledgling church in **Ephesus**.

Ephesus

- capital city of the Roman province of Asia
- population of about 300,000 people
- Asia's commercial and trade center
- the temple of Diana was in Ephesus
- whole city was steeped in idolatry...

*And it's in the middle of this that **Apollos** shows up*

- he was competent in the scriptures
- KNEW the word AND he was fervent in spirit
- he was intense! Passionate about the word...
- BUT he knew only of John's baptism.
- he knew of the baptism of repentance... but knew not of the FULL baptism in the Holy Spirit...
 - in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ...
 - the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit
 - that activates and emboldens, and electrifies the spiritual gifts that God has placed in you...

J.I. Packer wrote this...

"The Christian's life in all its aspects—intellectual and ethical, devotional and relational, upsurging in worship and outgoing in witness—is supernatural; only the Spirit can initiate and sustain it. So apart from him, not only will there be no lively believers and no lively congregations, there will be no believers and no congregations at all."¹

Without the Holy Spirit, Apollos was deficient not only in His understanding, but he was far less effective in his IMPACT.

¹ J.I. Packer. *God Has Spoken* (Crossway, 1965)

What Priscilla and Aquila understood and what we need to never ever forget

without the Holy Spirit...

- there will be no vibrancy in our relationship with Christ...
- no illuminated understanding of the nature and character of God
- no missional unction or empowering
- we will have lifeless, mission-less, powerless church....
- even no church at all

But if we take hold of all of things that are ours in Christ...

- when the Spirit reveals the deep things of God to us in Christ
- and we take hold of them...
- we won't be able to help but live lives that brings Glory to Him.

Two ditches

Last week we talked about the ditches that we can fall into as it relates to finding commonality without compromising what we believe...

1. But there are two ditches here as well... There are two ditches that the church can fall into, especially as it relates to the baptism and the continual filling of the Holy Spirit...
 - a. one is **charismania**... where we only seek sensational and emotional experiences that aren't rooted in Scripture—and rather than pointing people to Jesus, distract others FROM Jesus. It's the Holy Spirit's singular aim to make MUCH of *Jesus*.
 - b. The other ditch is—that we're so rigid and stoic, and so afraid of the supernatural that we avoid the filling and moving of the Holy Spirit at all costs, and end up with a deficient, cold, lifeless, Christianity.
2. Church, we want to walk the path that Priscilla and Aquila pointed Apollos to...
3. We want everything the Spirit wants to give us, and we want to remain 100% in alignment with Word, the Will, and the Ways of God.
 - a. The Holy Spirit will never operate in ways that are contradictory to the Scripture.

Mature instruction and response

Acts 18:26

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, **they took him aside** and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

What did they do?

- they pulled him aside and instructed him privately...
- they helped him learn.
- they were gracious and understanding and kind and servant-hearted...
- and yet direct about the fact that he was deficient in his understanding of the gospel

And how did he respond?

- with openness and humility
- he was teachable, he was hungry for what they offered to him

And everyone benefited from how they handled it...

Rather than trying to destroy Apollos for his deficiencies, they made an investment in his life that set him up to make an infinitely greater impact than he ever would have had otherwise!!!

What is so beautiful about Apollos is that he was confrontable. He was open to correction. In fact, he welcomed it.

- If you have a God that never confronts you, you don't have God, you have an idol.
- If you demand that God submit to your perspective rather than you submitting to His, you don't have God, you have an idol.
- You're not being made into God's image, you're making God into yours...

Priscilla and Aquilla kindly, humbly, gently took Apollos aside and instructed him more deeply in the ways of God. He receives their instruction and moves more deeply into the will and calling of God on his life.

Acts 18:27-28

²⁷ And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

Apollos became a powerhouse in the kingdom of God! He made an ENORMOUS impact... so much so that even people in Corinth began to divide over who they were following... "Paul or Apollos" which Paul rebuked them for in 1 Corinthians 1.

But why did Apollos become such a powerhouse in the Kingdom? How did that happen? Two tentmakers mentored him. Instructed Him. Discipled him and made an intentional investment into His life. Two people that were radically generous and faithful to the body of Christ helped Apollos grow and mature.

Chuck Swindoll, wrote about this exact idea years ago... he just simply asked the question...

Who taught Martin Luther his theology and inspired his translation of the New Testament? Who visited Dwight L. Moody at a shoe store and spoke to him about Christ? Who was the elderly woman who prayed faithfully for Billy Graham for over twenty years? Who helped Charles Wesley to get underway as a composer of hymns? Who personally taught G. Campbell Morgan, 'the peerless expositor,' his techniques in the pulpit? Who followed Hudson Taylor and gave the China Inland Mission its remarkable vision and direction? Who discipled George Muller and snatched him as a young man from a sinful lifestyle?

Had it not been for those unknown people – those 'nobodies' – a large chunk of church history would be missing. And a lot of lives would have been untouched.²

All these unknown people were just like you and me, and God used them to encourage, instruct, develop, and empower others to go farther than they ever could on their own.

**This is exactly what Priscilla and Aquilla did for Apollos...
and exactly what we're called to do for others.**

*Every single person in this room is **not only capable—but called** to do this for someone else.*

**It's not about how much you know!
It's about your willingness to obey.**

**The beauty of this is if we're following in the footsteps of our Messiah...
He entrusted the most important mission throughout all eternity to a group of nobodies.**

**He looked at them and said, "you're going to do greater things than me."
And then you know what He did to prove it?
He laid down his life for them.**

² Charles Swindoll. *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI 2003)

Discussion Questions

1. What was redemptive in how Aquila and Priscilla corrected Apollos in his understanding of God.
2. How did Apollos' response show that he was a true disciple seeking Christ?
3. How did the "addition" of the Holy Spirit change Apollos' ministry?
4. Discuss how God used two tentmakers to mentor a powerhouse of a preacher.
5. Discuss how God uses "nobodies" to encourage, instruct, develop, and empower others to go farther than they ever could on their own.
6. What can YOU do for someone else? Who do you have in mind?

NOTES