**PP Acts: To the End of the Earth**

**Part 50-Acts 18:18-28, *The Effective Servant of God* 9/18-28/2022**

We learn from Acts 18:18- that the Apostle Paul eventually left Corinth taking the husband and

wife ministry partners Aquila and Priscilla with him where he left them in Ephesus

There this duo ministered faithfully and were used mightily by God for the sake of the gospel

Meanwhile, Silas and Timothy stayed on at Corinth while Paul set sail, it seems to Jerusalem,

and then to his home church at Antioch

**Verse 22** concludes his 2nd of 3 missionary and **verse 23** launches his third and final one

***“After spending some time* [in Antioch], *he departed and went from one place to the next***

***through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.”* Acts 18:23**

Paul strengthened the churches that had been established earlier, where in the next chapter we

will see he arrived at Ephesus

Meanwhile, there was a great deal of work already occurring in that city and that is where Luke

focuses his narrative, and we will as well

We are about to see the character qualities of of man God used greatly, Apollos

**PP i. *A love for God’s Word***

***“Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent***

***man, competent in the Scriptures.”* 24**

There is simply no other way to say it than this: **PP** *The person God greatly uses is the one who*

*studies His Word*

**PP *‘competent in the scriptures’*** is a word related to dynamite…he was powerful in the bible

Paul would later say to young Timothy, **PP *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one***

***approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of***

***Truth.”* 2 Timothy 2:15**

The living and active Word of God ignites a fire in our hearts making us greatly useful to God

Listen to George Mueller’s personal account of this, a simple man of faith who began the most

well known orphanage in England’s history:

For 10 years he rose early in the morning and immediately went to prayer, but then, he wrote,

PP *“I saw, that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reproved, instructed; and that thus, whilst meditation, my heart might be brought into experimental, communion with the Lord. I began therefore, to meditate on the New Testament, from the beginning, early in the morning.* [I began] *to meditate on the Word of God; searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it…for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul. The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give to prayer but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less to prayer.”*

**PP** *A growing desire to study God’s Word will bring a growing delight in God*

**PP ii. *A teachable heart***

***“Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria…He had been instructed in the way of the***

***Lord.”* 18:24a, 25a**

Apollos was an Egyptian from Alexandria, the home of a great university and massive library

containing over 500,000 books

Named after Alexander the Great, it was a great city and the birthplace of the Septuagint

The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, basically our Old Testament

It was the common translation of the bible that most were reading in Paul’s day

Apollos studied there, and he was a scholar skilled in debating and teaching and public speaking

and he is a believer, but an Old Testament believer

He traveled to Ephesus and ***“he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus,***

***though he knew only the baptism of John.”* 18:25**

He had been ***‘instructed in the way of the Lord’* (25)** meaning he was living his life according to

the spiritual and moral standards that God made clear in His Law (**Psalm 25:8-9**)

But ***‘he knew only the baptism of John’***

He was a powerful preacher, bible centered, but his message only got as far as John the Baptist

He preached the Messiah but he did not know of His death on Calvary, His resurrection from the

grave and the coming of the Holy Spirit to live in and empower His believers

Imagine you are on a car trip, and the past 4 years, you have neglected to update your GPS app

And you find yourself on a road where the bridge is out, or seeing roads that aren’t on your map

Lost and confused, you stop to talk to a local, who quickly realizes your GPS app is out of date

You update it, and now the right roads to your destination are on the screen

Apollos was working off an old map, and Priscilla and Aquila help him get the updated one

He didn’t know what he didn’t know, but those more mature could see it

***“when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of***

***God more accurately.”* Acts 18:26**

This educated scholar humbly learned from a *tentmaking* couple and revealed his teachable heart

How willing are you to sit at the feet of those more mature than you, who can see what you

cannot?

That is the evidence of a teachable spirit, and one that will safeguard the next characteristic

**PP iii. *A fervent spirit***

***“And being fervent in spirit”***

There is always something new that comes into the church: A *‘new’* understanding of the bible, a

*‘new’* approach to ministry, a *‘new’* teaching in theology

And those who are proponents of the new, are always completely convinced it is correct and true

It’s not long before the possessors of the new divide the church or leave the church

So it is especially important to be humbly teachable if you have ***‘a fervent spirit’***

**PP *‘fervent’*** *was used of boiling water…Apollos had a spirit that was intensely passionate*

Likely the gift of exhortation, and with that gift comes an inner urgency for the things of God

that spills into the lives of others

God can use passionate, fervent people when they stay in God’s Word and remain teachable

These are the people who **PP *‘stir up one another to love and good works’* Hebrews 10:24**

When I was 14, I bought a Honda CR 125, which had been bored out to a 175cc motorcycle

Honda CR motors are known for their power bands, and when they kicked in, hold on to the bars

Instant acceleration, similar to a 4 barrel carb or turbo

A love for God’s Word gets us moving, teachability keeps us in the right direction, but fervency

gives the punch, it is the turbo of effectiveness in God’s hands

But without teachability, fervent people end up becoming divisive, surprised that no one else

shares their urgency, agrees with what they know, frustrated that so many just cannot see

Fervency without humble teachability has caused many to shipwreck in their faith

**PP iv.  *A consecrated heart***

You might wonder what it means to have a *consecrated heart*

**PP** A consecrated heart is one fully set apart for the Lord’s use and purposes

Paul referred to the consecrated believer in **PP Romans 12:1, *“I appeal to you therefore,***

***brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and***

***acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”***

We must appeal to and exhort our hearts to surrender fully to God for His service

Our natural selves resist this, and you know this to be true

Examine yourself and see if God is allowed a limited space in your heart, a part of your day

Is He truly your greatest priority, your greatest love, would you really follow Him anywhere?

The consecrated heart has an amazing ability to hear God, a single minded focus to serve Him

A consecrated heart does not calculate your sacrifice but rejoices in giving to God

It longs for ever greater usefulness to God and constantly asks Him for that to happen

A consecrated heart prays with Jesus, **PP *“not my will, but yours, be done.”* Luke 22:42**

It cries out with Isaiah, ***‘Here I am! Send me’* Isaiah 6:8**

Have you fully surrendered to God and said to Him, *Here I am Lord, I am yours, use me*?

**PP** *“The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him. By God’s*

*help, I aim to be that man.”* D.L. Moody

This was Apollos, who upon being discipled by Priscilla and Aquila had a consuming desire to

serve God in the most immoral city in Achaia, Corinth

God used him mightily as he ***‘greatly helped those who through grace had believed.’* 27**

God used this servant to ***“powerfully refute the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures***

***that the Christ was Jesus.”* Acts 18:27-28**

Apollos would become so influential that some believes began to say he was their pastor not Paul

Yet Apollos was humble and never used his popularity and influence to divide or pull people

away to follow him

We could have just as easily spent out time together looking at Aquila and Priscila today

This husband and wife ministry team are mentioned 6 times in the bible and 4 of the 6 times her

name occurs first, likely an indication that she was the more knowledgeable of the two

Our church is full of ladies who are incredibly strong in the study of God’s Word, amazing!

It seems to me there are Priscilla’s all through our church, and God will use them greatly!

In closing, let me ask you this question: Have you surrendered all to Jesus? Have you

consecrated yourself to God, fully devoting yourself to His use?

It’ll be God’s grace that brings you to the altar and His grace will enable you to lay yourself on it

It is God’s grace that will keep you there as well, enabling you to live a consecrated life!

If you are not there, let me encourage you to know the secret revealed in these verses:

**PP *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay***

***aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the***

***race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,***

***who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and***

***is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*  Hebrews 12:1-2**

Look to Jesus brother and sister, behold Him in His glory and your heart will be drawn after Him

There’ll be less of you and more of Him filling your heart, with a single-minded focus on Jesus

Purged out of our hearts will be that which holds us back from giving God our all

Flooding our hearts will be a consuming desire to hear, *‘Well done good and faithful servant’*

What is holding you back from God, from a life of effective service to our Lord and Savior?

Are you ready to confess and repent from that which has kept you from truly following Jesus?

Pray