

65. The Ministry of Aquila and Priscilla

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to seek the will of God for their lives day-by-day. We also saw that Paul took a vow and went to Jerusalem before going to Antioch. On the way from Corinth to Jerusalem, Paul stopped at Ephesus for a short time. Paul left Aquila and Priscilla in the city of Ephesus to begin to share the Gospel in that area. In our topic today, we are going to see how Aquila and Priscilla served the Lord before Paul returned to the city of Ephesus.

In our last topic, we saw that Paul went to Antioch. Acts 18:23 says, “After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.” Here, we see that Paul did not spend a long time in the city of Antioch. Instead, he soon left to strengthen the churches that the Lord had used him to establish on previous trips. First, we see that Paul went to the region of Galatia. This was the area where the cities of Lystra, Derbe and Iconium were located.

We see that as Paul traveled through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia that he was strengthening the disciples. The word translated “strengthening” means *to establish, to make firm or to strengthen more*. Paul realized that this was a very important part of his ministry once he led people to Christ. Acts 14:22 says, “Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” Paul realized that the Christians would face much opposition and so they needed to be encouraged and strengthened. Acts 15:41 says, “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” Here, we see that Paul also spent time strengthening the churches. Now, as Paul started his third trip from Antioch, the first thing that he did was visit the churches previously established to strengthen the churches.

Meanwhile, we also see that Aquila and Priscilla were busy in the city of Ephesus. One day, a Jew by the name of Apollos came to the city of Ephesus. In Acts 18:24-25, we read about the background of Apollos when those verses say, “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.” We see in these verses, that Apollos was a Jew. We also see that he had been born in the city of Alexandria, Egypt. Alexandria was one of the five largest cities in the Roman Empire and had a large Jewish population during the time of the New Testament.

Apollos was a very eloquent man. The word translated “eloquent” means *a highly educated person who was very familiar with history, literature and the arts and who was a skilled speaker*. We also see that Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures. This phrase spoke of the fact that Apollos had a very good understanding of the Old Testament. Apparently, Apollos had the same kind of Biblical training as a child that Timothy had received. 2 Timothy 3:15 says, “And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The fact that Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures meant

that he had spent much time studying and learning from the Old Testament.

We see that Apollos had come to the city of Ephesus. We also see that he had been instructed in the way of the Lord. The phrase “the way of the Lord” is used several times in the Old Testament. God said about Abraham, in Genesis 18:19, “‘For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.’” Here, we see that the way of the Lord meant to do righteousness and justice. In Judges 2:21-22, God said, “‘I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the Lord, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them*, or not.’” In these verses, we see that God wanted to test Israel to see if they would keep the ways of the Lord.

From these verses, we see that “the way of the Lord” means *to follow God and be obedient to Him*. Proverbs 10:29 says, “The way of the Lord *is* strength for the upright, but destruction *will come* to the workers of iniquity.” We see that those who choose to follow God and be obedient to Him will be given strength by the Lord. Taken together, these verses show us that Apollos was a man of godly character and was depending on the Lord for his strength.

We also see that Apollos was fervent in spirit. The word translated “fervent” means *to be hot or to have a zeal for what is right and good*. In fact, Romans 12:11 used this word when it says, “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” This verse is in the middle of several verses that describe godly followers of the Lord. We even read that Apollos spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord. Here, we see that Apollos was a very good teacher of the Old Testament. However, he was very limited in what he knew about Christ, because we read that he only knew about the baptism of John. John the Baptist came before Christ to prepare the way for Him. The message of John is summarized in Matthew 3:2-3 where we read, “And saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.”’” John prepared the way for Christ but he knew nothing about the death and resurrection of Christ. The same was true for Apollos.

This is why Acts 18:26-28 says, “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.” Apollos was a wonderful speaker and he also had great boldness as he spoke about the Lord. However, he could only share what he knew and so all that he could teach about Christ was the need of people to prepare their hearts for His coming.

Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos speaking boldly in the synagogue. They realized that he knew nothing about the death and resurrection of Christ. As a result, they took him aside. The word translated “took aside” means *to take a person to oneself and eat with or to take a person into your*

home. We see that Aquila and Priscilla just invited Apollos to come and spend time with them in their home. This passage gives us an ideal example of how to correct a person that loves God, but does not have proper understanding of Scripture. Instead of criticizing his teaching, Aquila and Priscilla just invited him into their home so that they could explain to him that Christ had come and teach him about the death and resurrection of Christ.

We see that they explained to him the way of God more accurately. This word is used in Acts 28:23 where we read, “So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.” In these verses, we see that Paul explained what the Law and the Prophets taught about Christ from morning until evening. It is probable that Aquila and Priscilla spent even more time explaining the teachings of Christ and teaching Apollos about His death and resurrection. Since Paul had spent much time working with them, Paul had taken the time to explain many things to Aquila and Priscilla. They now shared these same things with Apollos and spent time answering his questions. This is what is meant when we are commanded to make disciples. We are also to take much time explaining and answering the questions of new Christians that need help in their spiritual growth and understanding.

Later, Apollos wanted to travel to Corinth. The brethren who had become Christians in Ephesus through the ministry of Aquila and Priscilla wrote a letter to the church at Corinth. They encouraged the Christians in Corinth to receive Apollos and give him opportunities to teach the Word of God. We see that when Apollos taught the Christians in Corinth that he greatly helped them in their spiritual growth. Titus 2:1 says, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.” Because of the help of Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos had also been equipped to teach sound doctrine.

In addition, we also see that Apollos was able to speak publicly to the Jews who did not believe in Christ. We have seen that he was able to teach accurately what the Old Testament taught. Because of the help of Aquila and Priscilla, he was now able to explain accurately what the Old Testament taught about Christ. Using the Old Testament, he was able to show the Jews that Jesus fulfilled the promises the Old Testament gave about the Messiah. He was able to back up everything he taught from the Old Testament, so it was the Word of God, not his opinions.

This is the same way that we want to equip our physical and spiritual children to teach the Word of God to others. We want to help them learn to understand the Word of God so completely that they can back up from Scripture each of the things that they teach so that they teach others the Word of God and not their own opinions. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to accurately teach the Word of God.