

Trust, Investment, Leadership, Expansion

Acts 18:18-19:10

vs. 18, Paul had been working with Aquila and Priscilla to establish the church in Corinth.

Paul shaved his head (Why record a haircut?)

- Most likely Paul had made the vow at the time the Lord had promised he would not be harmed in Corinth. It would have been a vow of gratefulness, not a vow of divine manipulation (wanting a blessing).
- Numbers 6:1-21 -> Nazarite vow explained
- Would offer hair as a burnt offering at the temple in Jerusalem.

vs. 19, Ephesus

- Was the largest area of trade in the territory of Asia. It was a cosmopolitan harbor city.
- Had a substantial population (250-300K). Even slightly larger than Corinth. (Estimates of actual size vary greatly).
- It had a college of messengers / couriers, making it the center for Roman communications in Asia and the hub of all its courier routes.
- It was a free city and not a Roman colony, but it hosted the proconsul of Asia.
- A large Jewish population was present and well integrated into the broader society.
- It was the hub of all culture and commerce in western Asia, and from Ephesus the church could and did spread out into the interior, following the Roman roads.
- It was well known for its religious tourists who continued to come in great numbers to see the Temple of Artemis, one of the great wonders of the ancient world.

vs. 21, Priscilla and Aquila are left in Ephesus to continue to work vocationally and to offer leadership and continuity to the local church.

vs. 22-23, Travel itinerary

Why is it included?

Accountability.

Travel was seasonal.

From Jerusalem to his final arrival in Ephesus, Paul would have journeyed 1,500 miles on foot.

Paul expends his energy in two necessary directions.

The first is to take the good news of Jesus to places where it has yet been proclaimed.

The second is spent checking in with those he has encountered, strengthening all of the disciples (**vs. 23**).

- For Paul it was a both / and. Both evangelism (conversion) and discipleship (strengthening).
- His aim was maturing, growing, fruit producing churches.

vs. 24-28, Apollos

vs. 25, In the way of the Lord (Jesus). He could show through the Hebrew Scriptures that the Messiah was Jesus. He is lacking one thing (he only has the baptism of John).

What is it that is recorded for our benefit?

The specifics of what he was lacking is not what Luke records.

It is the fact that Priscilla and Aquila instructed (taught) Apollos.

vs. 27-28, He was of great help.

Apollos had skills!

Priscilla and Aquila

- Followers of Jesus.
- A married couple with a passion for ministry.
- Business owners with flexibility.
- Seasoned believers and church leaders.

Luke makes it a point in his writing the variety of roles women played in early Christianity.

“The significance of this episode was not lost on that first great commentator on the book of Acts, John Chrysostom, who says when discussing Acts 18:18–19: ‘He sailed to Syria ... and with him Priscilla—Lo, woman also—and Aquila. But these he left at Ephesus with good reason, namely that they should teach.’”
~ Ben Witherington III

Key Question: Are there women in the NT who function as church leaders?

- If Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16) wasn't a convincing enough example, Priscilla most certainly is.
- Both Priscilla and Aquila are trusted by Paul and given the green light (from an Apostle) to shepherd and lead. **18:2-4, 8**, Along side Paul they help start the Corinthian church. Imagine the conversations the three of them had about Jesus, faith, and the kingdom.
- **18:18-21**, They are relied upon by Paul to get something going (a community of Jesus followers) in Ephesus. Paul leaves P&A in charge of the mission in Ephesus.
- Churches in the NT weren't exactly the way things are today. Faith communities were formed, led, taught, disciplined, and cared for in a somewhat informal way.
- Regularly attended Synagogue, heard Apollos, discerned the precision of Apollos' skill in explaining Jesus as the Messiah and yet discerned his story was incomplete.
- Welcomed Apollos into their lives (amazing hospitality - προσελάβοντο / proselabonto).
- P&A teach Apollos doctrine and share their lives as well. Apollos is receiving the benefit of P&A learning from Paul. **1 Corinthians 3:4-6** For whenever someone says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, “I belong to Apollos,” are you not acting like mere humans? **5** What then is Apollos? What is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, and each has the role the Lord has given. **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.
- **vs. 27**, There is a church that P&A are leading (brothers and sisters) who write letters of reference for Apollos as he travels to Achaia.
- Paul's refers to P&A as co-workers. They also were well known enough to face persecution. **Romans 16:3-4** Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, **4** who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank them, but so do all the Gentile churches. **5** Greet also the church that meets in their home.
- P&A are church planters (Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome)
- **Acts 20:17-21**, Paul is saying farewell to the elders of the church in Ephesus. Who would have been part of the process of selecting, guiding, and caring for these elders? P&A -> pastors to pastors! They were the most seasoned leaders in the church in Ephesus.
- Of the 6X P&A are mentioned in scripture 4X Priscilla is mentioned first. In the 1st century this meant something! But don't miss the beauty of the partnership, marriage, friendship, team, and delight of Priscilla and Aquila together. They were better together!

The third missionary journey 18:24-21:26, but much, much more.

19:1, After 6-9 months away Paul returns to Ephesus.

vs. 1-7, The beautiful and unique reality of the spread of the good news of Jesus (salvation history) in real time.

- Luke purposely includes this interaction as to compare and contrast the differences with Apollos.

Apollos

Filled with the HS

No mention of additional baptism

Disciples of John

Do not have the HS

Baptized in the name of Jesus

“What this text and others in Acts remind us of is that early Christianity did not immediately have a universally recognized and set approach to discipling people.” ~ Ben Witherington III

vs. 8-10, A hall is rented and for 2 more years the kingdom is explained in doctrine and community to both Jew and Greek.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla send you greetings warmly in the Lord, along with the church that meets in their home.

Metanoia

Perhaps today was beneficial for you as you continue to grow and change into the image of Jesus. Many times in life our assumptions are confronted and a fresh, joy filled truth is dumped in our lap.

Question: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, who are you welcoming into your life? What does amazing and abundant hospitality look like in your everyday? Who are the people Jesus wants you to entrust the truth of Jesus and your lives with? Are you celebrating the women and men in your life who have lived and taught Jesus to you? If so, how? If not, why not?