

7/24/16

Acts 18:18-28

A Solid Church

After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. ¹⁹ And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. ²¹ But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus.

²² When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. ²³ After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. ²⁴ 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.

(Pastor Prays)

Unexpected blessings are some of the best. I don't get to carry much cash, which may be by design, because if I have it, it always seems to find somewhere else to go... That and (the fact that) Connie doesn't give me any! But the other day I put on a pair of jeans that I hadn't worn in some time and I found \$25 in the front pocket. I didn't know where it came from and I don't care. It was like Christmas to me. I protected that \$25 like it was the Holy Grail. That's a great feeling – maybe because it is so rare.

That was sort of how I felt when I found this little passage about a man named Apollos. (We are) Reading along in Chapter 18 about Paul and Priscilla and Aquila and Paul's journey to Ephesus and Caesarea and Antioch and Jerusalem as he strengthens the disciples; and in v. 24 we run up on a man named Apollos.

It's like finding some money in your pocket that you didn't know was there, because this man Apollos (and how he is described) is who I want to be and what I hope we want to produce.

Hopefully by now you know that my job at Hickory Grove Baptist Church is not primarily to be a vision-caster or a dream-maker or a people-developer or a lifecoach or a problem-solver.

My job is to Exalt Christ, Make Disciples and Pass the Torch. And I will tell you the truth: there is no better example in scripture of what we hope to produce than a man named Apollos found tucked into Chapter 18.

One of our very own couples, Brian and Becca Davis are having a baby boy in October and are naming him Apollos (and that is cool) for that very reason.

So how do we do that? How do we create Apollos and what does he really look like?

Honestly, the only real hope for a democratic society is through professing Christ and getting serious about what we believe about violence, racism and sexual perversion. It

can only be neutralized by the power of the cross, and this man Apollos knew that power.

I want Hickory Grove to be a solid church and ...

A Solid Church Is a Sold-Out Church

A solid church has several characteristics:

We Must Be Genuinely Equipped

We don't know a whole lot about Apollos. He just sort of appears on the scene in v. 24.

We know he was a Jewish Christian from Alexandria, a great city where the Latin Old Testament was translated. A great library was at Alexandria until the Islamic Invasion burned it down. V. 24 tells something else. He was an eloquent man. That comes from the Greek word "Logios". It has less to do with the ability to speak and more to do with the ability to communicate. He read a lot and it broadened his vocabulary so he spoke well but, more importantly, v. 24-25 tells us he was competent in the scriptures and had been instructed in the way of the Lord.

What a great description. In fact, the ESV doesn't really do the description justice. The word "competent" is the Greek word "dunamis" like "dynamite." It's powerful and mighty. He *knew* the bible. His life was dominated by scripture in such a way that he not only knew the Bible, he *understood* it in a Christian way. V. 25a says, *He had been instructed in the way of the Lord*. He not only knew the Bible, he understood how the Bible points us to Christ.

Loving Jesus is tremendous, but what a shame it would be to genuinely *love* Jesus but not to *know* him. It's why we do what we do around here so that, top to bottom, young to old, we might be genuinely equipped.

Commented [CK1]: explain

I had a little taste of it yesterday. Connie and I kept Ron & Cassie King's kids for a few hours while Ron helped with the carwash and Cassie was on the Peru mission trip.

Colton and I were in the swimming pool and he said he was going to walk on water. I thought I could use this as a teaching moment so I said, "Jesus is the only person to walk on water." Then Colton says, "Yeah, and the guy he called out of the boat." (Turns out there have been two people to walk on water.)

As we continued to talk about the scripture, Colton seems surprised and says, "So you know that story, too?"

We want our people to be genuinely equipped so that knowing the Bible translates into living the Bible in a world that absolutely knows no real hope, a hope that is made plain in the pages of this book. It points us to Christ, to life and death, to the resurrection, the ruler and His power to save. A solid church is a sold-out church. We must be genuinely equipped. Let's press a little more.

We Must Be Thoroughly Convinced

I really do think that's what will drive our evangelism and ministry, much like it did Apollos.

I think one of my favorite descriptions of a person in the Bible is found right there in v. 25...If we can just rightly cultivate what it means to be fervent in the spirit. Let's read v. 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.*

This passage tells us that Apollos was a man of conviction, that what he believed about Jesus, he believed with his heart and life. No game playing, no window dressing, just a deep conviction that leads to real action. Furthermore, this verse tells us that he wasn't sloppy with his conviction. What I mean is, this is not just raw emotion. The text tells us that he taught accurately the things concerning Jesus. He was precise in his Theology.

If you are a Christian, then you are the only theologian most people will ever meet and why we would ever be lazy about that is beyond me. I don't want an English teacher

who can't spell or a surgeon who didn't study or a mechanic who can't fix, so why would I ever be a Christian who can't explain the Gospel?

That doesn't mean you know everything. Apollos didn't. Read v. 25 & 26 together. *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.*

He was well-versed but he still had a lot to learn and he knew it, and he was humble enough and hungry enough to receive instruction from Priscilla and Aquila, two experienced believers. Being convicted doesn't mean being prideful. It means desiring to know more and more about what the Bible says is true.

For me personally, the way I grow and learn for my own personal benefit happens in 3 primary ways.

1. Read the Bible daily. From 5am to 6:30am, I read, pray and think.
2. Read books recommended by trusted people. It's why we have recommended reading like "Repentance" by Richard Owen Roberts.
3. Listen to podcasts such as Desiring God and The Briefing. I sometimes use Audible.

All of these things point me to grow in my faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. I want to be a solid Christian, leading a solid church, because a solid church is a sold-out church.

We must be genuinely equipped and we must be thoroughly convinced.

We Must Be Centered on Christ

Let's finish this passage about Apollos. Look at his desire to serve and how focused he is on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. V. 27 & 28, *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.*

v. 28 indicates that Apollos was a debater, an apologist who debated with unbelieving Jews but not for the sake of argument.

We don't learn information about Jesus just to win arguments. Our desire is to win people to the true claims of Jesus Christ, and the text says that Apollos took the Bible and shared how Jesus is the Christ.

Now for those of you who are not sure about all of this, let me explain what it means for Jesus to be the Christ. This is what the Bible teaches. *(Pastor shares the Gospel message).*

As a solid and sold-out church, this is what we believe. Today, I'm inviting you to do the same.

(Pastor prays)