**On Mission Together**

***Acts 18***

So, picture yourself sitting in a worship service, just like this morning.

You’ve enjoyed a wonderful time of singing God’s praises. You are filled with joy and excitement as a guest speaker is introduced. You are ready to listen.

And then he begins to speak.

At first you are mesmerized. His delivery is amazing. His way with words is wondrous. And his exposition of Scripture opens insights you had never thought about before.

If he is not particularly handsome, his appearance is not unpleasing to the eyes and his voice is not annoying.

You look around and everyone else is experiencing the same reaction to the guest speaker that you are. Everyone is sitting on the edge of their seat and following along attentively. You can all recognize that this is a *great* speaker.

But then he says something that makes you think, “Wait a minute. Did he just say that?”

You let it pass as you reengage in what he is saying. But there it is again. “That can’t be right, you think to yourself.”

Now you are analyzing everything he says. But you seem to be the only one. Everyone around you continues to be mesmerized by the delivery of this guest speaker.

Finally, the service is over. But your soul is troubled. It wasn’t that the speaker said anything overtly wrong. It was just not quite complete. It was missing some essential truths that made everything else he said suspect.

You start walking back to the exit where a line has formed greeting the speaker. Everyone has smiles on their faces. All are shaking his hand enthusiastically and saying things like, “That was the best sermon I’ve ever heard.” “That was amazing!” “I was so moved.”

You are nearing the front of the line. What will you say? What *should* you say?

* Should you ignore the obvious omissions in his sermon, just shake his hand like everyone else and say something innocuously affirming?
* Should you just avoid the line and slip out a side exit?
* Or should you call him out? Should you tell him the truth no matter what the cost?

Well, that’s almost exactly the predicament a godly couple described in the Bible found themselves faced with one day as they listened to a gifted orator preach a sermon about Jesus.

Let’s look at this true story from God’s Word.

Please turn in your Bibles to **Acts 18:24-26** and follow along as I read the text:

**Acts 18:24-26** – “*Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.*

*He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.*

*He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.”*

What a bold move! Aquila and Priscilla offered Apollos hospitality, brought him into their home, and privately explained to this great teacher and skilled orator *“the way of God more adequately.”*

We are going to look at this remarkable couple today to **focus** on one essential truth:

**Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together**

God desires that ***ordinary people*** like you and me be used by Him to make ***extraordinary impact*** on the world around us by ***working together***.

God is unstoppable. That is the sermon series that Pastors Darin and Jason have been leading you through in this study of the book of Acts.

And our unstoppable God works through his church.

That’s his plan: to use his people to impact this world in extraordinary ways by spreading his gospel and making disciples of all the nations.

That’s what you’ve been seeing through your study so far.

You’ve examined an unstoppable Savior—Jesus, who rose in victory

An unstoppable promise—that we, his followers, will be his witnesses to the end of the earth

An unstoppable hope in the soon return of Jesus to complete the transformation of this world

An unstoppable Word and Spirit that empower an unstoppable Church to saturate this world before Jesus returns with the glorious gospel

It’s been a great journey so far and you’ve explored the ministry of some remarkable people: Peter at Pentecost, Stephen, the faithful martyr, Barnabas the encourager, Paul the missionary, and Timothy, his mother and grandma last week.

Sometimes these first century believers who transformed their world with the gospel can appear to be spiritual giants.

But the fact is, they were all just ordinary people who surrendered their lives to serve an unstoppable God.

And we’ll see this truth again today as we look into the lives of a married couple named Aquila and Priscilla.

Just ordinary people who made an extraordinary impact because Aquila and Priscilla embraced three truths:

**Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together**

1. God PREPARES ordinary people to team together on His mission
2. When we EMBRACE our mission to work as a team, God opens up new opportunities
3. When we STAY on mission, God produces extraordinary results

This remarkable, yet very ordinary couple, show up by name **on six different occasions** in the New Testament and every time they appear they are named together.

Their names appear on three different occasions that are recorded here in Acts 18:

* First, in verses **1-4**, when the Apostle Paul first meets the couple in the city of Corinth.
* Second, in verses **18-19**, when they join Paul’s missionary team and move to Ephesus.
* And third, in the passage we just read, verses **24-26**, when the couple encounter Apollos in the synagogue of Ephesus, take him home with them, and instruct him in the truth about Jesus more completely.

Apart from these three occasions recorded in Acts, we find Aquila’s and Priscilla’s names at the end of three of Paul’s letters:

* They appear in **1 Corinthians 16:19** where Paul writes:

**1 Corinthians 16:19** –*“The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.*

* We meet them again at the end of Paul’s second letter to Timothy:

**2 Timothy 4:19**—*“Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorous.”*

* And then we find their names again at the end of Paul’s letter to the Romans:

**Romans 16:3**—*“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.”*

Six separate mentions of this couple in Scripture. Each one positive. Each one revealing just a little bit more about their lives and ministries.

And putting these six passages together, we find that this courageous and committed couple were active for the Lord both at work and at worship. They were always prepared, in season and out, to give a reason for the hope that was within them. They were on mission all the time. And they were on mission as a team.

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together

1. God PREPARES you to team together on His mission (v. 1-4)

This morning we are going to drill down a little deeper on the life and ministry of Aquila and Priscilla to see how their example encourages us to join with other believers in order to be on mission all the time just as they were.

1. **Let’s first see how God PREPARES us to work together to pursue His mission.**

The first time we meet Aquila and Priscilla in Scripture is in **Acts 18:1-4**. Let’s begin there:

**Acts 18:1-4** -- “*After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.*

This is Dr. Luke’s introduction of us to this remarkable couple. Let’s consider the **context**:

We find in this passage that Paul is on a missionary trip to share the gospel in Europe.

A couple of weeks ago, Pastor Darin shared from the preceding chapter, that Paul had been in Athens, the capital of Greece, and clearly shared the gospel there in a very relevant and culturally contextual way.

Then he traveled west, crossed a narrow isthmus of land and arrived in Corinth, a large, commercial city overlooking a bay.

It was in this city that Paul first met Aquila and Priscilla. Luke gives us a little **background** on the couple.

1. We learn their ***names***: Aquila was a common Roman name. It means Eagle.

“Eagle” was married to a woman named Priscilla, which means Ancient.

There’s not much else to say about their names: just ordinary, common, Roman names.

1. Except that Aquila wasn’t a native of Rome. He was born in ***Pontus***, a Roman province, which was on the southern shore of the Black Sea.

Today we would call it eastern Turkey.

Pontus was about 1000 miles east of Rome, as the crow flies, and nearly 2000 miles by foot.

Scripture does not tell us when or why Aquila moved from his homeland of Pontus to Rome.

1. However, Scripture does reveal his ***ethnic and religious background***. Luke tells us in verse 2 that Aquila was a Jew.

That’s significant from a number of angles. It means he was doubly a minority in the capital of the Roman Empire:

He wasn’t a native Italian, which the majority of folks in Rome would be.

And he wasn’t an idolatrous pagan by birth; he had been raised as a Jew and that remained his identity when Paul met him in Corinth.

We don’t know anything about the background of his wife. Priscilla isn’t identified as a Jewess nor is she identified as an immigrant living in Rome.

1. But verse 2 tells us something pretty important: the couple didn’t leave Rome voluntarily to move to Corinth. They ***had to leave***.

We read that the Roman Emperor Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave the capital of the Empire. And that meant Aquila had to leave Rome and his wife went with him.

So they left Italy and went to Corinth in Greece. Still a part of the Roman Empire; but interestingly they didn’t go further east to the region in Asia where Aquila was born.

Instead, they went to Corinth, a busy, industrial city, west of Athens, at the base of the Peloponnesian Peninsula on the narrow isthmus that connects this peninsula to the rest of Greece.

1. Perhaps they went to this industrial, market city because of their trade. Both Aquila and Priscila are described as ***“tentmakers.”*** The image I have when I hear that word is of making something to go camping in.

Do any of you enjoy camping?

For our first 6 years as missionaries, Kathi and I were “homeless.” For two of those years, we lived in a 25’ RV, that served as both our only car and only home when we were not on an international ministry trip. We really enjoyed our mobile life and tiny home.

We stayed in a lot of campgrounds during those two years. Most of the RVs around us were monstrously large things.

But then there were the tents, which were generally smaller than our RV home. Many nights listening to the rain pound on top of our little RV, we pitied the folks camping under canvas or nylon or some modern tentmaking material.

But it is unlikely that Aquila and Priscilla made tents for campers. It’s more likely that they manufactured awnings made from animal skins, or possibly cotton or wool, for local businesses. This would satisfy a very common need by local merchants and would mean there would always be a market for their products.

They also perhaps made sails for boats. The same term is used for sail-making. And this would also be a lucrative business in Corinth as Corinth was on the water and boat traffic would have been plentiful.

Luke tells us both Aquila and Priscilla were tradespeople. They were craftsmen. They were both trained in the skill of using their hands to make things people needed.

1. And they were in ***business together***.

Some of you are in **business together** as husband and wife, maybe even your kids are involved in a family business. Being in business together as a couple can be very rewarding. It also has its challenges.

Kathi and I do ministry together. We travel internationally together. We meet and consult and train national partners together. We have different skills, giftings and abilities, but combined together we are more effective in what God has called us to do than if we did our ministry separately. We are a ministry team.

But that also means we are together 24/7, both in our ministry jobs and at home, either in a simple hotel somewhere in the world, on an airliner somewhere over the ocean, or in our little villa an hour and a half north of here in The Villages.

Being together 24/7 is mostly great. But, of course, occasionally we have our differences. And being together means we have to work on those differences and resolve them pretty quickly, because time apart simply isn’t an option.

1. Aquila and Priscilla appear to have both worked together and lived together. That means they probably didn’t have a lot of private time.

So, it’s interesting that we read in verse **3** that when Paul meets them in Corinth, they invite him into both their home and their work—*and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.*

This couple ***invited a stranger***, Paul, to join them in their business and to even live with them in their home.

Now hospitality was much more of a virtue and custom in their day than in ours, but still this is pretty remarkable.

This wasn’t an obligatory offer of an overnight stay for a traveler; Aquila and Priscilla hire this stranger who was also skilled in their trade to join them in their business and also open up their home to him to stay with them while he works alongside.

1. This was the beginning of a ***lifelong friendship*** and ***partnership*** between the apostle Paul and Aquila and Priscilla. As we read earlier in Romans 16, Paul described this couple as his coworkers in the gospel.

But it all started when they met Paul in Corinth and invited him into their work and home.

Let’s look at **three** **applications** from the brief narrative about this couple in verses 1-4. Let’s see how God **prepared** Aquila and Priscilla for his mission of proclaiming Jesus as the Lord and Savior of the world and how God is preparing each of us as well:

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together

1. God PREPARES you to team together on His mission (v. 1-4)

* Through difficult circumstances

First, notice that God ***used*** ***difficult circumstances*** in their lives to shake them from complacency, so that they would be ready to embrace his mission.

Aquila’s and Priscilla’s forced relocation from their home in Rome didn’t mean that God was punishing them; rather this forced relocation opened up to them a new chapter in their spiritual journey that they willingly embraced.

Not everyone here this morning is native to Tampa; in fact, most of you, especially those of you under 18, had little if any input into why you are living where you are living. It was your parents’ decision to live here.

When Kathi and I were about to turn sixteen, our respective MacDill-based Air Force fathers received orders to move from our homes in different parts of the Tampa Bay area to the common city of Stuttgart-Vaihingen in Germany.

Neither of us wanted to leave our friends in Florida.

Neither of us wanted to go to Germany, where we didn’t know anyone, we didn’t speak the language, and we’d have to enter new schools and start all over again.

But that’s where God had us meet one another—as displaced high school juniors. And that’s where we fell in love with one another. And that’s where we committed our love to one another and became engaged to be married.

But even more significant than that, the result of this forced relocation meant that Kathi, although raised in a religious home, heard the gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time and responded in faith and was born again.

This forced relocation meant that I, having come to faith at the age of 14 through the ministry of Christ Community Church, began to grow more mature and take responsibility for my faith.

Like Aquila and Pricilla, Kathi and I did not choose to move from one location to another: we were forced to do so by the decision of our parents.

But like them, we both in time came to realize that God was ultimately responsible for this forced relocation

and as we embraced this truth, we recognized how he was revealing himself to us and calling us to love and serve him.

We would not have experienced that if we moped around all day blaming our parents for making us move from places we both loved to the strange world of a foreign country.

But in embracing this as God’s will, we began to discover his calling upon our lives. And here we are, almost 50 years later, serving God all over the world together.

How is God preparing you to serve him through the unique circumstances of your life?

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together

1. God PREPARES you to team together on His mission (v. 1-4)

* Through difficult circumstances
* By placing you on a team

A second way God prepared Aquila and Priscilla to embrace his mission is by linking them together as a **team**. He did this by moving their focus from themselves as individuals to working together as a united couple through their marriage.

We see the emphasis on their identity as a couple throughout the six passages in Scripture that describe them.

Aquila and Priscilla were always working and worshiping the Lord together. They were of like-mind regarding the things of God and the things of life.

Now this really shouldn’t be unusual. This is the very reason Scripture gives for God creating marriage.

Way back in the Garden of Eden, God said, according to

**Genesis 2:18**—*“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”*

God’s original plan for marriage is that a husband and wife would be partners together in his calling on their lives. Marriage is intended not only to provide intimate ***companionship***, but also intimate ***partnership*** in the task of stewarding God’s world.

Of course, we see in Genesis 3 that when sin entered the picture, this ideal for marriage was distorted and frustrated.

Competition, pain, fear and shame would distort the original purpose God intended for marriage.

Many of us experience this frustration. All of us have less than ideal marriages. Some of you may be ready to throw in the towel. Some of you already have.

But the example of Aquila and Priscilla should give you hope.

Even while they were unbelievers, they were pursuing God’s ideal for them in marriage: they were working together; they handled the crisis of a forced exile together; they pursued common goals and had common values, like industriousness, like hospitality, like generosity.

And these goals and values were only reinforced and refined when they became Christians.

We should not be surprised. Marriage is not just for Christ followers. Marriage is for all human beings. It is a blessing of God’s common grace for all humanity.

That is why the assault on marriage in our modern American culture is so terrible.

What was intended by God as a blessing for all humanity has been corrupted by our culture to become something that is a burden, something that is a pain, something that hinders personal fulfillment rather than providing the very path to personal fulfillment and fruitfulness God intends.

Our culture encourages spouses to pursue their own *separate* dreams, to carve out their own unique roles, to satisfy their own selfish needs. And then our culture further encourages spouses who find one another burdensome to their individual aspirations, to ditch one another and try again with someone else, or no one at all.

Aquila and Priscilla model something very different.

Aquila and Priscilla lived and worked and thrived *together*. And once they both put their faith in Christ, their unity moved to a whole new level of fulfilling partnership as a ministry team.

Is that how you view your marriage? Do you see it as a testing ground and preparation ground for both your own spiritual maturity and a platform to become a ministering team?

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together

1. God PREPARES you to team together on His mission (v. 1-4)

* Through difficult circumstances
* By placing you on a team
* By opening up new relationships

One more application of how God prepared this couple for his mission from these three verses: Aquila and Priscilla **opened their lives** **up to other people**. They practiced hospitality.

Aquila and Priscilla were hospitable: they both welcomed Paul into their lives. They made room for him in their hearts.

They didn’t see Paul as competition to their work nor as an intrusion into their lives.

And as a result of their openness to this new relationship, they were blessed by Paul and formed a lifelong friendship with this great apostle, that they originally thought was just a displaced Jew who made tents just like they did.

We never know the future of any relationship we begin with someone else. But if we are not open to new relationships, we may miss a great blessing in our lives.

Often, we aren’t consciously excluding people when we don’t invite new people into our lives. We are just not being intentional about it.

I know how it is on Sunday mornings. You haven’t seen your friends all week and you want to catch up. So right after the service ends, you rush up to those you know and share what’s going on with one another. That’s what friends do.

But could I exhort you this morning that being on mission all the time means you become intentional about bringing others into the relationships you already have?

It’s not that hard. Before you rush to greet those you already know, look around you and see if there is someone you don’t know yet or don’t know well.

Approach that one, introduce yourself, and ask how their week has gone. Then introduce them to your friends or maybe invite them out to lunch or to your small group or whatever.

You might just be entertaining an angel, as the author of Hebrews tells us. Or maybe an apostle, as Aquila and Priscila did.

**Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together**

1. God PREPARES ordinary people to team together on His mission
2. When we EMBRACE our mission to work as a team, God opens up new opportunities (v. 18-21)

When we first meet Aquila and Priscilla in verses 1-4 we see how God was preparing them for his mission. They weren’t quite on mission yet, but God was preparing them for their unique role.

Let’s see what happened when they embraced their mission.

Look at verses

Acts 18:**18-21—***Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken.*

*They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquilla. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus.*

Verse **18** says Paul stayed in Corinth *“for some time.”* In verse **11**, we read that *“some time”* was *“about a year and a half.”*

Then Paul left Corinth for Syria. That wasn’t surprising. Paul was an itinerant evangelist and church planter. We expect him to move on to new places.

What is surprising is that he took his Corinthian business partners and hosts with him.

1. Aquila and Priscilla ***joined Paul’s missionary team***. They became missionaries along with Paul. They embraced God’s mission to go and make disciples of all nations. They were ***now on mission***.

They had left Rome because they had been forced out by the Emperor because of Aquila’s ethnic and religious identity. That had not been a choice.

But now they left Corinth, not because they were forced out, but because they embraced God’s mission to go and make disciples.

1. We shouldn’t be surprised. God had ***prepared them for this very thing***.

He had used a crisis to open them up to new opportunities.

He had used their marriage to teach them how to pursue common goals with others, rather than focus on their individual goals.

He had used a new relationship with Paul to expose them to Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples of all nations.”

I told you that Kathi and I were both military brats. We both had a very mobile background as children. Kathi spent a couple years of early childhood in Asia. I spent much of mine in Europe.

So it was hardly surprising considering our background that I joined the Army after college graduation and we willingly embraced a mobile, military lifestyle just as our parents had.

But unlike our parents, we saw our mobile, military career primarily as an opportunity to be on mission for God.

We saw each move the army sent us on as a new opportunity to engage new people with the gospel and help fellow believers grow in their faith as we hosted them in our homes for Bible studies, or taught their children in Sunday School and VBS, or regularly worshiped together with them in military chapels.

Becoming a local church pastor after a career in the Army, or full-time missionaries following a career in the local church, was just another logical step in “going and making disciples of all nations.”

God’s preparation for us to be itinerant missionaries, who have now served the Lord in almost 40 countries over the past ten years, began long, long ago when we lived or traveled in dozens of countries as children, teenagers and young adults.

Let’s look at two **applications** for you to consider out of Aquila and Priscilla’s obedience to be on mission.

**Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together**

1. God PREPARES ordinary people to team together on His mission
2. When we EMBRACE our mission to work as a team, God opens up new opportunities (v. 18-21)

* Your past has uniquely shaped you

First, How has God shaped your **past** to prepare you not only for the present but also for the future?

Have you reflected on the experiences of your childhood, both good and bad, that have not just shaped your present personality, talents and abilities, but also given you unique insights that can be used for God’s mission to “go and make disciples of all nations”?

If not, I encourage you to do so. Take some time later today to reflect on how the journey God has brought you on so far has prepared you for the next step in being on mission.

**Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together**

1. God PREPARES ordinary people to team together on His mission
2. When we EMBRACE our mission to work as a team, God opens up new opportunities (v. 18-21)

* Your past has uniquely shaped you
* Put into practice what you have already learned

A second application I want you to notice about Aquila and Priscilla leaving their home and business in Corinth to travel with Paul to Ephesus was that their preparation for embracing God’s mission didn’t require Bible school, seminary or even a life-time of Bible study.

It just required **putting into practice** what they already had learned.

As far as we can tell, Aquila and Priscilla came to know Jesus as adults, probably as a result of Paul’s influence in their lives over a one-and-a-half-year time together in Corinth.

But that short time of knowing Jesus and growing in Jesus transformed their lives to such a degree that they willingly left everything to pursue God’s mission of “going and making disciples of all nations” along with Paul.

When Paul challenged this couple to leave their comfortable and successful life as businesspeople in Corinth to venture into the great unknown, going to a place they’d never been, learning a new language, they simply obeyed and went.

They didn’t go off to Bible school or seminary first. They didn’t join a missionary sending agency. They didn’t say, “Well, maybe when I retire and have saved enough money, I’ll be on God’s mission.”

No, they simply obeyed and went.

How about you? What is God calling you to do to be on his mission? What excuses have you been making to avoid his calling?

Don’t be afraid to follow God when he calls you to do something outside your comfort zone. Don’t be afraid to follow God when what he seems to be calling you to do is not understood even by those who love you the most.

As long as it is confirmed by his Word and his people, don’t be afraid to leave the comfortable and familiar to venture out with God into the unknown. The blessings of obedience are unimaginable and indescribable.

That’s what Aquila and Priscilla discovered as they took the bold step of joining God’s mission to go and make disciples of all nations.

But look at what happened next. They were **left behind** in Ephesus as Paul traveled on to other places.

Acts 18:19—"*They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquilla”*

Now that must have come as a surprise. They left their home and business in Corinth to join Paul on mission and he leaves them at the first stop: in Ephesus.

**Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together**

1. God PREPARES ordinary people to team together on His mission
2. When we EMBRACE our mission to work as a team, God opens up new opportunities
3. When we STAY on mission, God produces extraordinary results (v. 24-28)

Luke doesn’t explain why this couple didn’t continue on with Paul as others on his team, including Dr. Luke, did. But we can make an educated guess.

Paul left them in Ephesus to continue the work of ***being on mission all the time*** ***no matter the place***.

You see, you don’t have to go to Timbuktu to be on mission for God.

You can make disciples of all nations right here in Tampa.

The place is not the issue, staying on mission is.

And when we stay on mission, God produces extraordinary results

1. Let’s take a look at **the probable reason** Paul left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus, while he and the rest of his missionary team continued moving forward.

Let’s pick up the story in verses **24-28**—

*Acts 18:24-28—"Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.* *He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.*

*He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.*

*When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*

Now Luke introduces us to a man named Apollos.

Like Aquila, he was a Jew. Like Aquila, he was a foreigner. He was a native of Alexandria, a city in Africa on the Mediterranean Sea.

Alexandria was famous in the ancient world for its library, which contained books from all over the world

But unlike Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos was not a tradesman—he didn’t work with his hands;

He was an academic—a well-schooled, literate, highly educated student and teacher of Scripture. He was also a great orator, who spoke with great fervor, zeal and passion.

Yet just like Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos was a follower of Jesus. Our text tells us that he taught about Jesus and did so accurately.

Accurately, but **not completely**.

He knew Jesus was the Messiah, the promised deliverer of Israel.

And he knew the message of Jesus, the gospel of the Kingdom, the good news that reconciliation with God was possible by grace through faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

And he knew about John’s baptism.

1. But Apollos didn’t know about ***Christian baptism***.

Let’s talk briefly about the difference. We don’t have time to look at the whole event but look down at

**Acts 19:4**— *Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”*

Apollos taught people about the need to repent of their sins to prepare their hearts for the coming Messiah, who was Jesus.

But Christian baptism is something entirely different. Here’s how John the Baptist himself described the difference according to

**Matthew 3:11***—“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”*

Christian baptism is being immersed by the Holy Spirit into Jesus. Christian baptism is not simply repenting of our sin, but rather dying to our old life of sin, so that we now live a new life of holiness in the power of the Resurrected Christ.

This is what Apollos didn’t know and was consequently leaving out of his message about Jesus. And this is what Aquila and Priscilla explained to him more adequately.

This is the complete gospel Aquila and Priscilla had learned from Paul and now shared with Apollos in their home.

This is the full gospel of power and victory that Apollos eagerly embraced and became the message that he subsequently shared with others as when he left Ephesus and went on to Corinth.

* Isn’t it great to know the full gospel?
* Isn’t it great to know that Jesus is not only our Savior, but also our victorious Lord?
* Isn’t it great to know that we are not only saved from the penalty of our sins by God’s grace, but also given indwelling power to be victorious over the power of sin in our lives now?
* Isn’t it great to know the whole story that Jesus has baptized us with the Holy Spirit, we are the temple of that Spirit, and the Spirit of God is transforming us little by little into the very image of Jesus?
* Isn’t it great to know that the Spirit never leaves us, that he instructs us, corrects us, fills us and bears his fruit in us?
* Isn’t it wonderful to know the whole Gospel?

That’s the gift that this precious couple gave the great orator Apollos.

This lay couple, tradespeople, businesspeople, shared the whole gospel that they had learned from Paul with Apollos. And he humbly accepted it and then shared it with countless others.

Let’s look at a few **applications** of this particular episode in Aquila and Priscilla’s life:

**Ordinary People, Extraordinary Impact, On Mission Together**

1. God PREPARES ordinary people to team together on His mission
2. When we EMBRACE our mission to work as a team, God opens up new opportunities
3. When we STAY on mission, God produces extraordinary results (v. 24-28)

* Stay committed to truth

First, they were more ***committed to truth*** than to the awkwardness of confronting someone more educated and knowledgeable than they.

Think of how awkward the situation was: These were not seminary trained professional theologians, as Apollos was; these were two small business folks; blue-collar workers.

They probably didn’t speak or read biblical Hebrew; probably had never actually held a Bible in their hands, as Apollos did and had.

Everyone else who had heard Apollos speak in the synagogue was in awe of his skill. But they were not intimidated because they knew the truth.

You need not be intimidated by those who are professional theologians, if you are devoting yourself to learning and applying God’s Word in your life.

The Bereans, we read in the previous chapter, were not intimidated by the apostle Paul’s preaching; rather, they both received his message with great eagerness and examined God’s Word to see if it was actually true.

You can do the same with my message and with Pastor Darin’s and Pastor Jason’s messages, and with what you hear on the radio and TV, and what you read in Christian books, no matter how famous the author or speaker or how many people say that what he or she claims is true is.

Know the truth and do not be overawed with the one who proclaims the message.

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* Stay committed to truth
* Confront error with humility

Second, they did so with **humility and gentleness**. They didn’t publicly confront Apollos with his incomplete teaching about Jesus.

They didn’t troll him on his social media page.

They invited him into their home and privately dealt with his ignorance.

They built relationship with him, by offering hospitality.

They cared enough for this man of God to be used by God to make him a more effective tool of God.

That’s what true love does: true love cares about others growing in their walk with Jesus.

True love doesn’t just sit in pride in our own knowledge, but rather in humility and deep concern, comes alongside others so that they can grow in love as well.

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* Stay committed to truth
* Confront error with humility
* Obedience results in greater fruit

Third, their obedience led to Apollos being **used in a greater way** for the expansion of the Kingdom.

We already see in chapter 19 what Apollos’ incomplete teaching about Jesus resulted in: 12 men who were following Jesus but didn’t know of the grace of his power to conquer sin in their lives by the Holy Spirit.

Think about how many others would have also been taught incompletely and lived less than victorious lives if Aquila and Priscilla had not corrected Apollos’ teaching and Apollos had continued to bring an incomplete gospel around the world.

But because of their obedience, Apollos became a much more effective ambassador of the gospel.

In fact, along with Peter and Paul, Apollos was probably the third most fruitful evangelist and apologist for Christ in the New Testament church.

**Conclusion**

Brothers and sisters, being on mission all the time is God’s will for all of our lives.

1. God graciously ***prepares*** us to be on mission as he:
   1. uses the difficult circumstances of our lives to develop our faith;
   2. as he unites our hearts into teams so that we will learn to work together;
   3. and as we open our hearts to new relationships with people.
2. Then he invites us to ***embrace*** our mission by graciously
   1. calling us to leave our comfort zone and go and make disciples of all nations.
   2. And we embrace this mission as we simply obey, putting into practice what we already know.
3. Finally, he desires that we ***stay*** on mission no matter where we are or what we are doing.
   1. Being on mission all the time is not about a place, it’s about a Person—the person of Jesus Christ.
   2. And Jesus graciously gives us his Holy Spirit so that the power to be on mission all the time comes from him and not from us.

Do you know Jesus this morning? Then you are called to be on mission all the time. God may be calling some of you here this morning to leave the comfortable and known to venture out into the unknown.

Obey him.

But God is calling all of us wherever we are to be on mission all the time right where we are.

Ask the Holy Spirit daily to fill you with himself so that you will be both aware and obedient to give an answer to everyone for the hope that is within you.

Let’s go and make disciples of all nations both here on the West Coast of Florida and all around the world.

Let’s pray.