

LEARN FROM AQUILA & PRISCILLA

David Halbrook

In Acts 18:26-28, a married couple named Aquila and Priscilla visited the local synagogue. Why did two Christians go to a Jewish synagogue? Were they there to show an ecumenical spirit, believing that all religions and beliefs are valid? No, for when they heard a lesson on baptism that was not accurate they talked to the speaker to explain to him the way of God more accurately. They did not accept all beliefs or religions but corrected the inaccurate beliefs of others.

I admire this couple for visiting the synagogue. They did not belong to a synagogue because of the error taught there. But that did not stop them from visiting and questioning what they heard in an effort to help others understand the way of God. Last week, we invited you to visit with us any evening this week at 7PM. Come hear a gospel lesson and if what you hear is not accurate, do what Aquila and Priscilla did. And if what you hear is accurate, then do not delay to obey God.

-- This article appears this week in *Arkansas Weekly*. Use it and our flyers to let the community know about the opportunities of the week.

-- Travis Duvall, who was baptized several weeks ago, wants to join with us in the Lord's work. We welcome him! Let's get to know him and work to grow with him.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

September 22, 2013

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“PREACH THE WORD!”

Wayne Goff

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

Every seasoned, well-trained gospel preacher knows this Divine charge under which he stands. It is a sobering thought which transcends this life and places one before the eternal throne of God to give answer for his work as a preacher.

The passage teaches us that a preacher is not a hireling of the church, but rather a servant of the Lord, answerable to Him. A church may “hire and fire” a preacher, but his obligation is to God.

The passage teaches us that some preachers will tend to preach something other than “the Word.” The context (vv. 3-4) even gives us one motivation for it: popularity among men. Shame on the preacher who preaches to please his audience rather than God!

There are many preachers, in the church and out, who preach what others want to hear, who play church politics, and who choose to preach on the side of what is deemed in the church as “orthodoxy.” God knows who they are, and they shall give an account one day.

Gospel preachers are commanded by God to “preach the Word,” so they had better spend sufficient time in the Scriptures to know what “the Word” really is! Paul instructed the young preacher Timothy about this very thing when he wrote: “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ... Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all” (1 Tim. 4:13, 15). It takes hours every week of careful Bible study to obey this command. If you think otherwise, then I suggest you work up a decent sermon outline with Scriptural documentation, and see for yourself!

Furthermore, Paul wrote: “If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed” (1 Tim. 4:6). Gospel preachers not only teach the lost, but they also instruct the brethren! Some brethren have yet to learn that simple truth.

The passage also teaches us to preach the Word “in season and out of season” -- when your audience likes it and when they don’t! A sound preacher is a courageous man. Some of what may not be liked is the “convince, rebuke” part. Preachers must “convict of their errors” and “rebuke” (“The word implies a sharp, severe rebuke, with, possibly, a suggestion in some cases of impending penalty (TIME’); charge on pain of” [Vincent’s Word Studies in NT]. You can see why a sound preacher can often become an unpopular one!

The passage also teaches us that a preacher must “exhort.” The Greek word (PARAKALESON) is a form of the same word that identifies the Holy Spirit as “Comforter.” Preachers must also give positive reinforcement to his hearers, after having convinced them of sin and the need to repent of it.

I do not think it an incidental matter that God gave preachers the ratio of 2:1 here. In Jeremiah’s commission we see the same exact ratio! “See I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant” (Jer. 1:10). Furthermore, you see the same sequence as well. One must “root out” and “pull down” error, false doctrine, and sin. One must “destroy” and “throw down” every false thing! Then, and only then, is there good ground on which to plant. Then, and only then, is there a good foundation upon which to build solid faith. The preacher’s work is difficult but necessary.

The passage finally speaks of the preacher’s disposition in the process of his work: “with all longsuffering and teaching.” One only has to preach for a few years to fully understand the need for longsuffering. Being a gospel preacher is aggravating, frustrating work! Listeners do not often “get” the message the first time around. So you must patiently preach it again. Then when some listeners do “get it,” they reject it! The patient preacher will continue to give positive, Scriptural reasons for why his message is the truth and should be obeyed. One cannot compel others to believe the truth, or to obey it. But one CAN persuade others to believe the truth and obey it! This takes time and lots of patient endurance.

In spite of all this, the apostle Paul warned young Timothy that the time would come when “they” (brethren) would “not endure sound doctrine.” There is nothing more heartbreaking, heart-rending than to see brethren turn away from the truth in

search for a more personally-pleasing message. It has happened before, and it is happening now. Visit enough churches of Christ in America, and you will eventually see what I mean. The sound gospel preacher is “watchful ..., endures...,” and works!

(www.roanridge.org/media/uploads/articles/2013/04/281703-1367160935.pdf)

“WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING”

Wayne Goff

The church at Ephesus was one of the strongest churches of the first century. They had strong elders (see Acts 20:16-38). The organization was scriptural and their work second to none (see Rev. 2:2-3). Today, we would call them a “sound church.”

If you want to see how they became that kind of a congregation, begin with Acts 19 where Paul came to Ephesus and found “some disciples” (v. 1). He corrected their mistaken baptisms because they were receptive to the truth and to any needed change. The teaching of Paul confirmed by the working of profound miracles solidified the church there and converted many (vv. 8-12). Error was defeated publicly so that the word of the Lord grew mightily in Ephesus (vv. 9-20).

That the city of Ephesus and the church there were unique in the first century is obvious to any reader of Acts 19-20 and the book of Ephesians. Much in the spirit realm was going on then, both positively and negatively. Naturally, God’s Cause won out because “because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 Jn. 4:4).

With that background, we should sit up and take notice when the great apostle Paul admonishes the brethren there to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (Eph. 4:1). There is a certain way that Christians must conduct themselves if the church is to continue strong and effective. The attitudes are “lowliness and gentleness, ... longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:2-3). Brethren, are those your attitudes today in this congregation? They must be! The standard is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God (Eph. 4:4-6).

Brethren, is this your standard today as a part of this congregation? Again, it must be!

The church for which Jesus died is precious. It is made up of many varied kinds of people.

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