

HE GREATLY HELPED

Text: Acts 18:24-28

INTRO: When Paul left Corinth in 54 A.D., he determined to be in Jerusalem for the Passover, then go to Antioch in Syria. As he made his way toward his goal, he passed thru Ephesus, capital city of Asia. There he left Aquila & Priscilla. Paul preached in the synagogue in Ephesus one Sabbath & was invited to stay longer with them, but had already set his goal to be in Jerusalem in time for the feast, so he promised to return to Ephesus later. He did return before the end of the year, & spent 2 years there preaching the gospel in that city.

In the mean time, let us take a closer look at the events taking place in Ephesus while Paul continued his journey toward Jerusalem.

There are 4 lessons we want to take special note of in connection with these verses.

I. GOD GIVES TO DIFFERENT SERVANTS DIFFERING ABILITIES.

A. Apollos was evidently one of the most talented & capable Christians who ever lived in the area of public speaking and teaching.

1. Eloquent, vs. 24. Never stated of any other Bible personality.
2. mighty in the Scriptures, vs. 24.
3. Fervent in spirit, vs. 25.
4. Spoke & taught accurately the things of the Lord, 27
5. Greatly helped believers in Corinth, vs. 27.
6. Vigorously refuted errors of the Jews, vs. 28.

B. But all this ability & zeal on Apollos' part could never replace the work of God's other servants.

NOTE: Much of Apollos' skill & talent would have been of little profit had it not been for Paul who had laid the ground work for his efforts, and for Aquila & Priscilla who taught Apollos the will of God more thoroughly, vs. 26.

READ I CORINTHIANS 1:12; 3:3-8, 10-11, 21-23

- C. Dorcas may have had none of the abilities that made
- D. All Christians are admonished to use their abilities in such a way as to glorify God.

Priscilla & Aquila or Apollos or Paul great servants of the Lord, but she could make clothes for those who needed them, & in this she, too, was a great servant of the Lord, Acts 9:39; Matt. 25:40.

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:11)

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Col. 3:17)

II. EVEN THOSE WHO ARE MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES & ELOQUENT IN SPEECH CAN LEARN FROM THOSE WITH LESS SPEAKING ABILITY.

A. Nobody ever said that Aquilla & Priscilla were eloquent or mighty in the Scriptures, but they did know something Apollos still needed to learn -- & they had enough courage & concern for the soul of Apollos & those who heard him, that they called him aside & taught him more fully.

B. Even so, each of us, if we will develop our abilities and exercise our minds in the study of God's word, can often be a help to other whose abilities in many ways surpass our own.

For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of

the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

(1 Cor. 12:14-21)

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Eph. 4:15-16).

III. ONE TEACHER CAN SOMETIMES FOLLOW ANOTHER & MAKE THE EFFORTS OF BOTH MORE FRUITFUL, vs. 27

- A. Paul had laid the foundation in Corinth -- converting Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas, perhaps Sosthenes & others.
- B. But when Apollos arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed, vs. 27.
- C. Illustrations:
 - 1. A preacher in a gospel meeting often persuades someone to respond to the gospel because their hearts have already been softened by the work of the local saints.
 - 2. The local preacher sometimes is able to baptized someone into Christ whose heart has first been touched by a visiting preacher in a gospel meeting or public debate.

3. The results on Pentecost depended partly on the work that had already been done by John & Jesus
4. Preachers often have the pleasure of taking a confession of faith & baptizing someone whose commitment first came from a discussion they had at work or in their home with some friend or family member who is already a Christian.
5. Most preachers have had the joy of being able to help some weak church member that was already in the congregation before he came -- or of seeing some member who was weak while he was there be helped by the preacher who follows him. The same goes for class teachers.
6. All such facts should encourage us that our efforts are not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15:58.

IV. THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR MORE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD, vs. 27-28.

The harvest is great but the laborers are few (LK 10:2).

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour & saw others standing idle in the marketplace, & said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, & whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, & did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out & found others standing idle, & said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard & whatever is right you will receive.' (MT 20:1-7)

NOTE: The question of the vineyard owner is pertinent to us: Why have you been standing idle????

A. "I'm not a preacher." Neither was Priscilla. God's work

needs more than professional preachers.

1. Before they became preachers, Peter was a fisherman, Matthew was a customs agent, Paul was a tent-maker, Jesus was a carpenter.
 2. Before they began preaching, Stephen & Philip had been selected to serve tables. They used their talents & developed the talent to serve forth the bread of life. Even if they had never become preachers, they were fulfilling a useful & needed work in the Jerusalem church.
 3. There are likely some people you know who are more willing to discuss the Bible with you precisely because you are not a preacher.
- C. "I don't have time." You have the same amount of time anyone else has. It's a matter of what you choose to do with it. If Paul could make his living as a tentmaker & still accomplish what he did, surely you can earn a living & still do something for the Lord besides showing up for worship services once in a while.
- D. "I'm afraid I'll fail." This is the voice of sinful pride. It is better to try & fail than to fail to try. Jesus' efforts were not always successful, LK 19:41. Paul was often run out of town by the people he tried to help.

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8).

Pray for God to help you overcome fear -- then help Him by cooperating.

- E. Basically, it becomes a matter of whether or not you are willing to make an effort. God has not required that we make increase, but that we plant & water. He put the power in the seed.

"For as the rain comes down, & the snow from heaven,
And do not return there, But water the earth, And
make it bring forth & bud, That it may give seed to the
sower & bread to the eater, So shall My word be that
goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me
void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall
prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isa 55:10-11).

CONCLUSION: You don't have to be a Paul or an Apollos to go to
heaven, but you do have to be a faithful servant of God. You can't stand
idle all day & expect to be welcomed as a good & faithful servant.

La Porte, TX, January 25, 1981

Exton, PA, March 10, 1985

Exton, PA, September 8, 1991

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 28, 1993