

“MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES”

Acts 18:24-28

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INTRODUCTION

How important is the Word of God to you? How important is it to our Church?

What do we look for when it comes to the preaching of the Word?

Flair, pizzazz? Shish bam boom? Excitement, pounding of the pulpit, charisma, pleasing personality?

Are we “seeker sensitive” in our approach? Should we shorten our preaching to satisfy the limited appetite of contemporary listeners?

Are we discerning in our listening? Can we discern truth from error?

Sometimes the best speakers are **false teachers**—cultists, liberals, those who can lead us astray.

Sometimes good and well-meaning preachers are not properly informed and do not proclaim the full truth.

DO NOT BE LED ASTRAY—BE DISCERNING

Apollos was a good man, but he was not a “Christian.” He was still a “Jew.”

Yet, he had great potential and many good qualities. Aquila and Priscilla did not openly rebuke him, nor did they outright reject him, but neither did they ignore his shortcomings. They gently and patiently corrected him.

This was one of the greatest contributions that this **lay couple** did for Christianity!

DON'T CAST AWAY “WEAK BRETHERN” —CORRECT, DISCIPLE AND ENCOURAGE THEM.

It would have been a genuine tragedy if the Ephesian believers had thrown out this man who had so many good qualities and such great potential.

We could have taken either of these approaches to this passage—instead we are going down a different track. There is much we can learn from the man Apollos that can help us in ministry at Berean Baptist.

We will look at his person, his practice, and his problem.

One thing about his life especially stands out: HE WAS A MAN MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES.

WE MUST BE MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES

I. HIS PERSON

A. Learned, cultured, and eloquent—“eloquent” (25)

- He was from Alexandria— Alexandria was noted for its great university and library. It was the “literary center of the Hellenistic world, both Gentile and Jewish.”
- It was the center of Jewish philosophy—Philo’s home, and later of Christian philosophy—Clement and Origin—all who erred in merging biblical truth with Greek philosophy.

- Note that he was not yet a Christian—he was still “a Jew.”
 - Where do we get the idea that preachers should be ill-trained and ignorant? Where do we get the idea that believers should be unacquainted with the philosophical positions of the day?
- B. Extensive _____ of the Bible—“mighty in the Scriptures” skilled in the use of and the knowledge of the Bible—here the OT.
- **This “should be true of every preacher. There is no excuse for ignorance of the Scriptures on the part of preachers, the professed interpreters of the word of God.”**
 - Robertson also notes that John A. Broadus’ (his father-in-law) last lecture made to his NT English class at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was a plea based on this passage for them “to be mighty in the Scriptures” (p. 307).
- C. _____ in the ‘way of the Lord’ (25)
- This is the verb from which we get our catechism or catechize.
 - The idea is “to re-sound, to re-echo, to teach by repeated dinning into the ears ... to teach orally by word of mouth (and ear)”
 - “The way of the Lord” would be his teachings and life practice of godliness. It would also have reference to how one becomes “right with God” and lives “righteously.”
 - It would be parallel with “the way of God” in which he later became better instructed (v. 26)
- D. _____ in spirit (25)
- Full of enthusiasm in the Lord’s work
 - He was “red-hot”; he was “on-fire”.
 - Burn out for God—don’t rust out!
- E. _____ (26-27)
1. He was willing to admit that he was wrong.
 2. He meekly accepted correction from laymen—and even a woman!
 3. He humbly sought the approval of the believers in Ephesus before moving on to another ministry.

These qualities should be true of everyone who wishes to serve the Lord:

- Learned, cultured and eloquent
- Extensive knowledge of the Bible
- Trained in the “way of the Lord”
- Fervent in spirit
- Humble

But we also need to look at the **Practice** of Apollos

II. HIS PRACTICE

- A. Preaching (speaking) and Teaching—due to the fact that he was so **fervent** in spirit.
- This is the primary duty of the Man of God.
 - This duty must not be neglected or shortchanged
- B. _____

- The next verse makes clear that he did not know all that he needed to in order to be a Christian.
 - But, all that he did know about Jesus he taught accurately.
 - He taught “the things concerning Jesus”—The high points of His life and activities and some of his teachings.
- C. _____—**freedom of speech and openness**
- Note that he spoke in the synagogue where teaching about Christ was not common or usually welcome.
 - He did not hold back because of possible opposition.
- D. Desire to _____ when given the opportunity (27)
- The Western manuscripts here add comments that some Corinthian believers heard him and wanted him to come over to preach to them.
 - This may be how it happened, but the text is not original.
 - This is often the way that servants of the Lord are led into ministries.
- E. Effective service
1. Toward _____—“he helped greatly those who believed through grace.”
 - The verb means “to throw together,” to “help, assist.”
 - Note that he “greatly” helped them—not a small assistance; he powerfully used the Word of God as we saw at Ephesus.
 - “Through grace” can be joined with “those who believed”—showing that their salvation was by grace.
 - But the expression can also join with his service—he served “by grace”; the grace of God enabled his ministry.
 - If this is the case, this is an indication of the work of grace in his heart as the result of his training by Aquila and Priscilla.
 - Note also Paul use of this same expression and even when writing to the Corinthians: I Cor. 3:10; 15:10; II Cor. 1:12.
 2. Toward _____(v. 28)
 - He worked with the Jews—cf. Paul’s work with them earlier.
 - He worked in public—Paul had been rejected from the synagogue.
 - He had some converts: see I Cor. 3:4-17—esp. v. 5.
 - He continued the work Paul had started—building on Paul’s foundation.
- F. Powerful Refutation (28)
- The verb used here is a doubly emphatic compound of the word “convince, convict, refute”
 - This is not to say that all were convinced, but that he did have some success and that he did “have the last word.”
- G. Continual Setting Forth of the Truth Concerning Jews Christ
1. He did so **by the Scriptures**.
 2. He proved from OT passages that the Christ is Jesus.
 3. He looked at the Messianic OT passages and showed why the fulfillment occurred in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Yes, Apollos was an **amazing person**, and **his practice** was sound and Scriptural. However, **HE HAD A PROBLEM**.

III. HIS PROBLEM

A. He was acquainted only with the baptism of John (25)

- Thus he did not know about the finished work of Christ—His resurrection, ascension, session, and sending of the Spirit.
- He likely preached a “gospel of repentance” like John did.
- How is this possible? We cannot say for sure. But there must have been all kinds of transitional “believers” during this time who eventually were confronted with the truth and had to make a choice.
- If they were “truly saved” in the OT sense, they would receive the additional truth about Jesus just as Apollos did.
- If they were lost and resistant, they would respond like the Jewish leaders did against Christ and later against the apostles and other preachers.

B. He was corrected by Priscilla and Aquila (26)

- They “took him aside”—privately, possibly to their home, maybe for dinner after the synagogue service.
- Notice that even believers met in the synagogue when no “church” was available.
- They “set out, explained” the “way of God”—God’s full and complete plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- They did it **more accurately**—cf. v. 25.

C. He was encouraged by believers (27)

D. He was recommended by believers to the Church of Corinth—“the disciples.”

- Note that Paul refers to this letter in II Cor. 3:1
- He needed no such letter of recommendation.

CONCLUSION

How we need servants like Apollos; how we need loving believers like Priscilla and Aquila!

- *We need Apollos’ learning, knowledge in Scripture, training in the Lord’s way, fervency, and humility.*
- *We need his zeal to preach and teach, his accuracy, his boldness, his desire to serve and his effective service—toward both believers and unbelievers, his ability to refute error and ability to set forth truth.*
- *We also need to submit to correction, accept encouragement, and follow the recommended path.*

What an example for us!

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