

“The Pattern for Teachers”  
Acts 18:18-28  
(Preached at Trinity, August 15, 2007)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, this chapter deals with Paul's arrival at Corinth. Paul arrived at about A.D. 50 during his second missionary journey. **Verse 11** tells us he remained there for about 18 months.
2. Paul immediately found a Christian couple, Aquila and Priscilla, and joined with them because they shared the skill of tent making. They were to form a close bond – later they would accompany him to Ephesus.
3. Paul's immediate work in every city was to preach the Gospel. He had a burden for souls. It was his chief work.
4. Paul's initial focus was upon the Jews. Because he was forced to do secular labor during the week, his primary labor was restricted to preaching at the synagogue every Sabbath. Weekly he reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures. Paul had a true burden for his Jewish brethren.
5. Last time I directed your attention particularly to **Verse 6**. Paul earnestly laid the Gospel before them but they would not hear. In fact they responded with blasphemies towards Christ. Paul then symbolically shook the dust off his clothes and stated, “Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean”
  - A. I stressed the seriousness of this truth.  
If we warn sinners to repent and receive the Gospel, their blood is upon their own head – they are responsible for their own condemnation. If we do not warn them we bear the responsibility for their condemnation.
  - B. I had planned to apply this to both our duty to unbelievers and our duty to believers but ran out of time. I've decided to postpone my remarks on our duty to believers because **Verse 6** really doesn't address it and we need to remain true to the text. I'll touch on this subject in **Chapter 20**.
6. Tonight, let us pick up with **Verse 18**. Paul had spent a year and a half in Corinth preaching and teaching and building the church. He had begun a great work as many had come to faith in Christ and under Paul's teaching they were being strengthened in the faith.
7. After a year and a half Paul took Aquila and Priscilla and embarked on a journey to Ephesus – **Verse 18**  
This was a brief stay in Ephesus for Paul but he left behind Aquila and Priscilla. Paul would later return and spend two years, the longest period Paul stayed in a single city. At Ephesus Aquila and Priscilla met a certain Jew named Apollos. He was a native of Alexandria Egypt.
8. He was a particularly gifted man.

- A. The Bible describes him in **Verse 24** as an eloquent man from the word **λόγιος**. The Greek word can refer to being learned which is how the NIV translates it or it can refer to eloquence which is how most translations handle the word. He was a gifted speaker. We find him speaking in **Verse 25** and in **Verse 26**.
- B. He had a way of winning the love and confidence of the people he taught. Paul would have to rebuke the Corinthian church for giving too much attention to men. **1 Corinthians 1:11-13** – “For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup> Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”
- (1) The same thing is a danger today with men who are gifted with speaking ability. “I’m of MacArthur, I’m of Piper, I’m of Sproul.
  - (2) **1 Corinthians 3:4** – “For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”
  - (3) Charles Haddon Spurgeon started preaching when he was 15. He was called to pastor New Park Street at the age of 18 and the 5000 seat Metropolitan Tabernacle was completed when he was 26. It was the largest church of its day.  
When Spurgeon died over 60,000 filed past his casket.  
Yet within a short time after Spurgeon’s death and with the influence of American evangelicalism the church began its decline.
  - (4) The danger is to be more enamored by the speaker than what they have to say. Of the Spurgeon’s Church after he died Ian Murray wrote in *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, “The age of Fundamentalism had begun, and little else was remembered about Spurgeon save he was a soul winner.”
6. Apollos was a great man, eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in the Spirit, and a passion for teaching God’s people. But as with every Christian teacher, it was essential that his doctrine be pure.
7. As we examine this passage dealing with this man Apollos there are several things we can learn concerning the model of a Christian teacher.
- I. He must be a man striving to be mighty in the Scriptures – **Verse 24**
- A. The word for mighty is **δυνατὸς** – we get our word dynamite from it – it means powerful, strong, mighty
1. Apollos was able to take the Scriptures and teach them convincingly
  2. Since they didn’t have books but scrolls which would have been difficult to find particular passages, he would have been able to quote passages readily from memory and expound their meaning and apply them effectively.
  3. This made him a powerful teacher
- B. How does one become mighty in the Scriptures?
1. It takes hours of study
  2. This person is one who has an obsession for God’s Word  
He’s always reading it, studying it, talking about it
  3. Every believer should have a true desire to become mighty in the Word

4. Our desire must be to handle the Word of God accurately  
NAS **2 Timothy 2:15** – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”

## II. He must be a believer

- A. There is debate as to whether or not Apollos was a believer at this point
  1. He did not know the baptism of Jesus. He knew only John’s baptism which was a baptism of repentance. The Baptism of Christ points to the Gospel.
  2. In other words, his knowledge of the Gospel was deficient. He knew of Christ but he did not understand the nature of the death and resurrection of Christ. Like John the Baptist he knew the preparing of the way of the Lord but not the Lord Himself.  
 Note the message of John the Baptist in Matthew 3  
**Matthew 3:1-3** – “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, <sup>2</sup> And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. <sup>3</sup> For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”
  3. In other words Apollos was a disciple of John knowing the teachings of John and the baptism of John but not the fullness of the Gospel of Christ.
  4. He was mighty in the Scriptures but his knowledge of the Scriptures probably came from a rigorous Jewish education.
  5. He had probably heard of the death and resurrection of Christ but no one had opened the Gospel to him—he didn’t know the meaning of the cross. You can be instructed in the way of Christ and yet, not know Christ.
- B. It is possible to have much knowledge of Christ and not be a believer
  1. **Verse 25** tells us, “This man was instructed in the way of the Lord”
    - a. The word for “instructed” is **κατηχέω** from which we get catechism. He had been catechized.
    - b. He was teaching accurately the things he knew. He sincerely wanted to follow God, yet he did not know the essence of the Gospel.
  2. A teacher must have a relationship with the Christ he is teaching.
    - a. Education and eloquence are both good but not sufficient. Even a knowledge of the Scripture is insufficient.
    - b. The truths he is teaching must be applied to his own life. He must have experience in them.
    - d. This is why a pastor must not be a new convert.

## III. There must be a passion in his teaching

- A. **Verse 25** - “and being fervent in the spirit” - **ζέω** - to boil with heat, be hot
  1. This isn’t talking of the Holy Spirit but a spirit of fervor
  2. The NIV translates it, “and he spoke with great fervor”
  3. His teachings were important to him and he taught them with passion and enthusiasm

- B. A Christian teacher should teach with energy and conviction
1. We are doing more than simply conveying information
  2. We have the words of life – we must have a passion for truth.  
We must have a great desire to win the lost and instruct the brethren  
He must challenge them and press them towards obedience and service
  3. Our motivation is Christ – His honor
  4. Notice the great desire Aquila and Priscilla also had for sound doctrine  
They were in the synagogue listening to teaching. When they heard  
Apollos they took him aside and taught him.  
**Verse 25** – “they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”

IV. He must be teachable

- A. Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures, yet still needed to be a student
1. He must be willing to be taught by others – a student
  2. Every teacher needs to be teachable  
I knew a man that needed some clarification on a particular subject. I offered to give him a book that might shed a different light on his understanding. He said, “I’ve already studied the subject. I’m not interested in reading anything new.” This man was not teachable.
  3. Apollos was deficient in his understanding of the Gospel. He had a high view of God and His Word and wanted to teach it accurately. He feared and despised error and was willing to have his own doctrine corrected.
  4. Far too many today see error as a small thing. They are content to have their truth while others have their truth. This is relativism and it is deadly.
- B. Then Aquila and Pricilla came on the scene
1. Aquila and Priscilla were introduced earlier in the chapter. They were Jews banished from Rome under Claudius. Paul stayed in their home at Corinth because he shared the same trade. When he left Corinth for Ephesus they accompanied him. Paul left them there and continued on his journey to Jerusalem.
    - a. They were common laborers, probably not well educated but sat under the teaching of Paul.
    - b. These common laborers knew more than Apollos in some areas, even though he was mighty in the Word.
  2. Apollos was not too proud to be taught by these common people  
Sometimes our instruction can come from the most unlikely sources.  
The issue is we must remain teachable.
- C. Aquila and Pricilla were also teachers, yet not in an official sense.
1. Although I’m addressing particularly the model for those given to public teaching you don’t have to have a public teaching ministry to teach
  2. Every believer should mature that they might teach others  
**Hebrews 5:12-14** – “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. <sup>13</sup> For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. <sup>14</sup> But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

3. All of God's people are important in His work
- D. What about the issue of Priscilla teaching Apollos
1. There are two admonitions concerning women teaching men
    - 1 Timothy 2:12** – “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”
    - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35** – “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. <sup>35</sup> And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”
    - a. **1 Timothy** states the issue – women must not teach men
    - b. **1 Cor. 14** sets the parameters
      - Paul is talking about the public assembly
      - Paul is stating that the woman is under the headship of her husband
  2. Priscilla was with her husband. She was not formally teaching men in the church. She was with her husband sharing the wonderful truths she had learned from Paul.
  3. Apollos learned much from their instruction
- IV. He must teach with doctrinal purity
- A. Aquila and Priscilla clarified his doctrine
 

**Verse 25** – “they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”

    1. The word means “accurately”
    2. Apollos could not properly teach the Gospel until he had a proper knowledge. Sound doctrine is essential
 

**Titus 1:9** – “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”
    3. No man should teach others unless he has an accurate knowledge of Scripture himself.
  - B. He must be Biblio-centric – Sola Scriptura
    1. Notice in **Verse 28** that the Scriptures were the basis of his teaching
 

**Acts 18:28** – “For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”
    2. Apollos wasn't interested in simply teaching his personal opinion. He wasn't simply using empty oratory skills. He was a man mighty in the Scriptures.

#### Conclusion:

1. Only when a man meets these qualifications is he ready to teach. Notice that after Apollos became sound in his doctrine the church sent him forth.
 

<sup>NAS</sup> **Acts 18:27** – “And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he helped greatly those who had believed through grace;”
2. He was used greatly of the Lord.
 

**Verse 27** – “helped them much which had believed through grace:”