

Aquila and Priscilla – Acts 18:1-3, 24-26

I. Introduction:

- A. How often does Paul say, *“Be ye followers of me?”* – *“Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ?”*
1. Doesn't he often say things like – *“I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”*
 2. *“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an **ENSAMPLE**.”*
 3. I find it quite curious that the words *“example”* and *“ensample”* are not to be found in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament they are found all over the place.
 - a. *“Now all these things happened unto them for **ENSAMPLES**: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”*
 - b. *“So that ye were **ENSAMPLES** to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.”*
 - c. *“Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being **ENSAMPLES** to the flock.”*
 - d. *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an **EXAMPLE** of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*
 4. These are just some of the examples of the use of the word *“example”* in the New Testament.
 5. What was Paul's purpose in giving us **Hebrews 11**, mentioning all those godly people? Examples?
 6. A good example can be as contagious as someone's bad behavior.
- B. Aquila and Priscilla were two people who followed Paul's example, becoming examples themselves.
1. In fact, as couples go there may not be many higher examples in the Word of God.
 - a. There were certainly problems with, and between, Adam and Eve.
 - b. Look at the home life of Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon – they were near disasters.
 - c. There were problems between Moses and his wife, although they weren't as great as some of his other relatives suggested.
 2. Some of the greatest Bible characters weren't married – Daniel, John the Baptist and some of the disciples.
 3. But among all the married couples, Aquila and Priscilla are at, or near, the top of the list.
 4. It's not that we can't learn from bad examples, but it's not quite the same.
 - a. I read of a poor, uneducated girl who wanted to work as a maid, cleaning houses.
 - b. She had been raised by an aunt who was known to be a terrible housekeeper.
 - c. The girl's first potential employer wasn't sure, but said that she could be hired on a provisional basis.
 - d. She did a fabulous job, and the employer asked her about it.
 - e. The young lady replied, *“When I saw something that aunt did that wasn't right, I said, ‘This is a good example,’ and I did just the opposite.”*
- C. Searching the New Testament, you can't find a negative word about Aquila and Priscilla.
1. They are good examples. Be ye followers of them, even as they were of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. What are some of the things that their example includes?

II. First, they are always found together.

- A. Aquila's name is found five times in the Bible and never apart from his wife's name.
1. This is extremely rare. We don't read that of Peter or any other Bible couple.
 2. Priscilla's name is found five times in the Bible and never without her husband's name.
 3. I wish that this could be a lesson planted in every young person's heart.
 4. In the last 50 years, I have seen a several marriages destroyed and several others nearly so, because this lesson was not learned and implemented before the marriage began.
- B. The Bible says that when two people marry they become one; they **were a pair**, but they **become a couple**.
1. They become one flesh, and they should be **one heart**, one **faith**, one **purpose**, one **goal** and one **future**.
 2. When two people marry, they leave their fathers and mothers to become a new family.
 3. When two people wed, **his** and **her friends** must become *“their”* friends or not to remain friends at all.
 4. If that fiancé isn't willing to give up his Monday Night football, Tuesday bowling, Friday bowling and Saturday fishing trips, because his wife can't or won't join him, then they shouldn't get married.

5. If that wife isn't willing to make her husband her best friend, then he's not the man that she needs to marry.
6. When they go out, as often as possible, it should be together – as a couple.
7. They must take an active interest in each other's active interests.
 - a. It is **not** an option if they want that marriage to be successful.
 - b. That doesn't mean that she should lace on skates and play hockey with her new husband, but she should watch from time to time, listen to his stories, and patch up his wounds.
 - c. It doesn't mean that he has to take up knitting or tatting just because his wife likes to sew and quilt, but he needs to *"ooh"* and *"aah"* when she creates a new masterpiece.
 - d. And he needs to give her as much money for **her** hobbies, as he spends on fishing equipment.
- C. It appears that as far as Aquila and Priscilla were concerned, what they owned were **theirs** – **not his & hers**.
 1. They were inseparable – matched bookends, matched earrings, matched bedside tables – whatever.

III. But they weren't so family centered that they didn't have any interest in others.

- A. They took in a **stranger named Paul**, and made him a participant in their tent-making business.
 1. They took in a stranger name **Apollos** and earned his respect and confidence.
 2. They were helpers of the ministry generally, and even risked their lives to assist Paul.
 - a. To the church in **Rome** Paul wrote: *"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:*
 - b. *"Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."*
 3. These two opened their house to the church when they lived in either Philippi or Ephesus.
 - a. To the **Corinthians** Paul wrote: *"The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."*
 4. And they knew, loved and supported young **Timothy**.
 - a. In his second letter to that young man, Paul asked him to say hello to Aquila and Priscilla for him.
- B. A few years ago, I knew a couple so interested in themselves that they had no time for anyone else.
 1. In fact they didn't want their idyllic life spoiled with the addition of a baby.
 2. I once knew a saint of God who said that she didn't want people to join her church because they would disrupt things with all their new problems.
 3. Such ideas are not right – they aren't natural.
 4. I hope that you know the Biblical definition of good religion:
 - a. **James 1:27** – *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."*
 5. The Lord Jesus said that His disciples are to be characterized by *"phileo"* love.
 - a. **John 13:35** – *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*
 6. These are the instructions of the Word of God, and Aquila and Priscilla are good examples.
- C. There should be careful pruning in every Christian's life in order to make them fruitful & to bring glory to God.
 1. There **should** be **sacrifice** in the Christian life.
 2. And there **must** be sacrifice in the godly marriage, or it will not endure.
 3. And that sacrifice must be on both sides of the equation.

IV. We also see that Aquila and Priscilla were faithful people, both **AT** home and **AWAY** from home.

- A. It is relatively easy to be semi-religious at home week after week.
 1. We have our regular routine which helps us to maintain our regularity.
 2. The activities of Sunday morning are not something to be debated or relegated to the flip of a coin.
 3. And there should be **regular patterns**, **good** patterns, **godly** patterns **within each day** as well.
 4. There shouldn't be any question, but that at the dinner table everyone waits until thanksgiving is offered.
 5. These and a number of other things are standard procedure under normal circumstances.

- B. But how much do our lives change when our lives change.
 1. When we are on vacation, we aren't at home with our Bibles at our bed-sides for a little late-night reading.
 2. And certainly no church anywhere in the country is going to be like our church back home, so why attend?
 3. At that restaurant, when every eye in the place is looking at us, should we publically pray?
 4. Things change when we aren't at home, or at least there is the temptation to make some negative changes
 5. But getting out of our usual rut might prove whether or not our religious activities are just habits or true worshipful activities of our hearts.
- C. When we first meet Aquila and Priscilla they were living in **Corinth**.
 1. But we are told that they had moved to Corinth **from** their home in **Rome**.
 2. Then we see them again in **Ephesus**. Eventually we seem to see them **back in Rome**.
 3. And there was no change in their behavior, their love, their service anywhere they went.

V. Perhaps it needs to be remembered that these two were not raised as Christians.

- A. They had come out of a corrupt and false religion – they were Jews.
 1. Like a great many of the best Christians, they had to learn, or correctly learn, the things of Christ.
 2. Why is it that so very often, the best Christians are not those who were raised in Christian homes?
 - a. I realize that this is a generalization, and that there are lots of exceptions, but generally it is true.
 - b. People who are saved out of great sin, become the better servants of God.
 3. It shouldn't be that way; it should be that children of Christians become children of God at an early age.
 - a. They should grow up in an atmosphere without cigarette smoke, pot, profanity and lewdness.
 - b. It's not that they aren't sinners or that their parents aren't sinners, but being protected from open sin and being taught the Word of God from an early age, they should flourish as saints of God.
 4. But time and time again, those children grow up with a lack of appreciation for their spiritual blessings, simply because they never smelled the fire and brimstone.
 5. Aquila and Priscilla were Jews, and they knew how close they came to spiritual disaster.
- B. But then I wonder if Aquila and Priscilla had been **fanatical, Pharisaical Jews**, or just nominal Jews?
 1. For the fanatics, it takes a Damascus road experience to bring them into the genuine service of God.
 2. Rarely do you hear of Catholic priests, or rabid atheists, or Mormon Bishops becoming children of God.
 3. It takes a special courage and a special kind of death for those people to become flaming evangelists.
 4. Many Jewish converts were considered as dead by their families, and funerals were held for them.
 5. They lost their jobs, their inheritances, their friends – virtually everything.
 6. Was that the way it was with this Christian couple?

VI. Why did they do these things? What was the source of their strength?

- A. They knew enough to realize that the Old Testament revealed Christ, and that Paul preached that Christ.
 1. They heard him take **Isaiah, Psalms, Genesis** and other scriptures to preach the Lord Jesus.
 2. These two were intelligent enough, and not so enslaved to their priests, to be able to know the difference between tradition and truth.
 3. As they worked along side **Paul**, and later as he lived in their home, they quickly learned more and more of the truth of God.
 4. They studied to *"show themselves approved unto God, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*
 5. And when **Apollos** came by – whose heart was good, but whose theology was a shallow – these two were able to teach him the truth in a little greater clarity.
- B. What an example there is in this: the ability of **"non-professional"** Christians to minister the Word of God.
 1. How well do you know your Bible?
 2. Do you know the Ten Commandments, and can you find the Lord Jesus' High Priestly prayer?

3. Do you know the chapter that teaches love, and do you know which book teaches the church most clearly?
4. Can you prove the imminent return of Christ, and can you point to enough scriptures to point someone to the Saviour?
5. Set Aquila and Priscilla before yourself as examples.

VII. Romans 16:3-4 describe this couple as helpers not hinderers.

A. *"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."*

1. I remember a visitor to our church who called himself a *"para-theologian."*
 - a. In fact he had written and published a couple articles on Bible doctrine.
 - b. He left the impression that he would be happy to answer any nagging questions that I had and that he was available to preach for us, whenever we needed him.
 - c. He **left** the impression that he was an helper.
 - d. But he also **left** just after Sunday School, & I'm convinced that he'd be more of a hinderer than helper.
2. Aquila and Priscilla were true helpers and givers, sacrificing of themselves for the work of the Lord.

B. **I Corinthians 16:19** tells us that their house became a church meeting place.

1. Whether the entire church actually met in their living room, or just that their doors were always open to the members of the church, isn't that important a matter.
2. But they made sure that their casa was everyone's casa – their castle always had the draw-bridge down.

C. And obviously, they never forgot their old friends.

1. We probably all can name people who once called us friends, but who have no time for us now.
2. It's not that they have become enemies, it's just that they don't have the time necessary to be friendly.
3. That was not the case with these two.

VIII. All of these things together brought high praise from the Apostle Paul.

A. Now, I acknowledge that the praise of some people is not necessarily significant.

1. Back when I was still a philatelist, I would be asked to speak at various local and regional stamp meetings.
2. And I've had several people come to tell me that I'm a good speaker.
3. But until they come to hear me preach the gospel, and until they tell me that they appreciate my evangelism, their words bounce off me like falling leaves.
4. On the other hand, when you tell me that a particular message was a blessing, that means something.
5. I may only say, *"Thank you,"* because I choose not to dwell on it, but it is an encouragement never-the-less.
6. But yet again, if by the grace of God, some day I hear the Saviour say, *"well done, good and faithful servant,"* that will be extra special.
7. Aquila and Priscilla heard that kind of word from the Apostle of God; the special ambassador of the Lord.

B. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our church was full of Aquilas and Priscillas?

1. There isn't any reason why it could not be.
2. Look at the things the Bible commends in them, study them and apply them.
3. *"Be ye followers of them, even as they were of Christ."*