

Word-Driven Disciple Makers - Acts 18:23-19:7

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[0 : 0 0] It's great to be here with all of you worshipping Jesus Christ, which is such a privilege to do so in the context of fellowship. Always appreciate the words we get to sing, the songs we get to sing, and the fact that they proclaim Christ so strongly.

So, this morning I'm excited because we get to jump into a passage that deals a lot with the gospel, and it deals a lot with God's word, and it deals a lot with making Christ known.

And those three things go together inherently all throughout the book of Acts. We've seen the sweeping narrative throughout the book of Acts of men of God and women who are called by Him to go and to proclaim Jesus.

And the responses that come out of that spirit-led process. And so, this morning we get to do the same thing, dive in to that same idea, because that is the heart of the book, and that's what the Holy Spirit is accomplishing.

So, if you could, we're going to start actually in 2 Timothy 3. If you could turn that with me. 2 Timothy 3.

[1 : 1 2] We have one key proof text to establish us well in our preaching text. And that's 2 Timothy 3, 14 through 17.

I'm going to read just these four verses. And for us, it's on screen if you don't have your Bible handy, but for us, this is a really good foundation to build what we're going to see today.

And it says this, this is Paul talking to his young disciple, Timothy. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. Knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

That the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. Four things that scripture does in the church and in the heart of the disciple.

[2 : 2 2] Teaching, instruction. It tells us what we believe. Reproof or testing and rebuking that which is false in our own hearts and in the church to protect it.

Correction, which implies more of an improvement or a refinement than just a rote rejection of what someone believes, but instead to be improved and refined, corrected by scripture.

And then, fourthly, training, which is guidance over time. Four things that scripture does. And we are about to see this admonition from Paul to his disciple, Timothy, fleshed out over a narrative text of Acts.

We're about to see these concepts take on flesh right in front of us as we read what happens when Paul goes to Ephesus. The teaching ministry of the gospel is at the core of the church's identity as the city on a hill.

And this morning we get to turn to Acts chapter 18, if you would, with me and see that that is indeed the case. That the gospel and all of its beauty and all of its richness and all of its truth is the core light that the church is called to take and shine for all to see.

[3 : 49] And the chief way that the gospel goes out is by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. So this morning we're going to understand a few concepts, hopefully as we read through scripture, but I want us to keep this underlying thought in the back of our minds as we read scripture and see things pop out of the text.

And that's this, that in the church, in Christianity, in the gospel ministry that is teaching, the objective is to go from teachable to teacher.

That we are called to be teachable, to hear from God, what He has to say, to grow in our understanding of truth and the Bible and who God is and what He's done to be teachable, to be taught by God Himself through scripture and through others.

And then as a result of that process, we are indeed called to teach, all of us, and I will flesh that out as we go.

So, teachable to teacher. Let's read verse 24 of Acts 18. It says this, Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus.

[5 : 03] He was an eloquent man, competent in the scriptures. Who's Apollos? Apollos is actually one of the lesser known founders of the early church.

He comes on the scene, laid in the game on the second missionary journey, here in the text, but we know a lot about Apollos actually from further writings by Paul and 1 Corinthians and elsewhere.

And here's who Apollos is, we know two things. One, says that he knew scripture very well. He was competent in the scriptures, which implies that as he reads and studies scriptures, he's able to accurately, very competently take scripture and make it known.

He knows it. And it says that he's a native of Alexandria, which gives us a further contextual clue that this man, Apollos, has been steeped in the tradition of scripture.

Alexandria was one of the hubs of the Roman Empire. It was an intellectual center of the world. It contained a massive 400,000 volume library, complete with some of the oldest Hebrew manuscripts ever written.

[6 : 18] So Jewish scholars would go here all the time to study the original manuscripts and it was eventually crafted the Old Testament Greek translation, which is called the Septuagint.

Right here in this very city, and this is where Apollos grows up. So we have a contextual clue that this man is probably very well steeped in scripture and it says he's competent in that.

But the second thing we know about Apollos is Luke tells us that he was eloquent. In other words, he was a winsome, charismatic presence as a speaker.

People likely were drawn to him through his manner of speaking. So we know of Apollos, this guy that comes on the scene, he's competent in scripture.

He knows scripture and he's eloquent. He speaks well. Seems like the perfect combination, right? And he comes to the city of Ephesus, which is a big turning point in the book of Acts.

[7 : 22] Because for Paul, he's going to find a respite here in this city. This is one of the longest days of his ministry, Ephesus. And it is here that we see the gospel grounded in a community and in some sense turned into the second missionary hub, the first being Antioch and now Ephesus.

And now this is the place where Apollos finds himself. And we're going to learn a few things here as we go by about what gospel teaching demands.

What I mean by gospel teaching is teaching of scripture that takes the whole Bible in its full context. And it looks at every part and says, this points to the gospel.

This shows the gospel. This shows what God has done and who he is. Gospel teaching. We teach scripture with this lens. So we're going to see a number of things that gospel teaching must be according to this passage in Acts.

And first, in verse 24, right off the bat, we learned firstly that gospel teaching must be rooted in scripture. It must be rooted in scripture.

[8 : 29] For this man, Apollos, who we've just met, he comes to Ephesus and he's competent in the scriptures. And this is a requirement that I think it's overlooked.

Biblical literacy in the American churches is staggeringly low right now. And it's plummeting every year. And I could quote all the numbers and stats and research to you. I looked them all up, but you know what?

I decided I'm not going to use these stats to drive a pummeling hammer of guilt down on all of us. Because that, as we know, produces nothing of substance. Instead, we're going to see today that the gospel story and those who labor to make it known should inspire and encourage us to be students of God's word.

Because all gospel teaching must be rooted in the very word of God. Because it is what shows us the gospel along with what Jesus has come to do. So for Apollos, he is competent in scriptures.

And for us, we must be competent in scripture to know the word of God, to be teachable in order that we might teach. Let's read verse 25.

[9 : 43] And it says this, he had been instructed in the way of the Lord. In other words, Apollos at some point in his history had been discipled. That in the town of Alexandria, most likely as he was around scripture, around scholars, around Christians, because they'd already been in that place.

Someone along the way took him aside and discipled him. And secondly, we learn this, that gospel teaching must rely on transference.

It has to rely on transference. That when I receive the gospel, when I receive the truths of scripture, when I understand it more clearly, and it's been shown to me by someone with wisdom and experience.

It's now my obligation to do what? To pass it along. To transfer. To transfer what God has given me via knowledge of him and his word to the next person.

And it's far too easy for us. Me included to read scripture, to know it, to be discipled, to soak in the truths of the gospel, but just sit and hoard.

[10 : 50] We must be about the business of replicating and transferring the gospel. But for Apollos, we see a faithfulness here of some Christians, somewhere along the lines that we will never know until glory, who did take the time to pull this young man aside and instruct him in the way of the Lord.

Third thing we're going to learn is that gospel teaching must be accurate. The end of verse 25 says this, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

So here's a man we've already learned that he probably is very well versed in scripture because it says he's competent, he grew up in Alexandria, he was elegant, he was a winsome teacher, he had been discipled at some point along the lines.

And now we learn this, that he began to speak and teach in Ephesus as one of the first gospel witnesses there with accuracy.

And this is deeply important, not just that we would know God's Word, but that we would be able to communicate God's Word accurately and not twist truth, and not leave out essential pieces and make Jesus who he really is to our listening audience.

[12 : 07] Now it says this, though he knew only the baptism of John, which a lot of people have argued about what this means. I'm going to take the really conservative route and say this, simply put, Apollo knew John the Baptist and that he baptized people in repentance.

But he hadn't been shown clearly yet that Jesus baptizes with the spirit and with fire. So he knows about John who predicted the way of Christ and people need to be baptized into the coming Messiah and the preparation of the way.

But he hadn't been shown yet that Jesus comes to offer life. And there's a baptism that follows that life, that Jesus inaugurates.

But the truth still remains that Luke, as far as he's concerned, and as far as the witnesses are concerned that told him about all these events, maybe he even witnessed that Apollo did accurately teach about Jesus.

What more could we ask of a teacher? Then he have eloquence, scriptural competence and passion. Three things that Apollo has, we've been already been told, eloquence, scriptural competence and now fervent in spirit or passion.

[13 : 21] However, for Apollo's there are still some rough edges and gaps in his understanding of the full narrative. He knew the facts of the Bible well and he taught them well.

But there's still room to grow. And I think right here we need to understand that gospel teaching must be accurate. That Apollo's did a great job with the information that he did have that he did understand to communicate it clearly and accurately.

He was faithful in that. We must start at this place and we teach the gospel. But let's also be reminded that none of us will ever arrive.

That there's always refining and growing that we can do in our understanding. And for Apollo's he needs that refining. So gospel teaching must be accurate.

Next, gospel teaching must be intentional. And now we're going to see verse 26. Gospel teaching must be intentional. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue.

[14 : 20] But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. Priscilla and Aquila enter the scene.

And in this passage we see a man who's he's got competence. He's got eloquence. He's got passion. But there's a godly couple that had been specifically planted in Ephesus by Paul.

In last week's section of scripture, we saw that as Paul goes into Ephesus from Corinth, he takes this godly couple. He sees something in them. We don't know what it is exactly. But he sees something in a person Aquila just as he takes them.

Come with me, godly couple. And they go and they land in Ephesus and Paul leaves them there and departs. Meaning that for Paul, this godly couple who he most likely trained and talked with the gospel on their long boat journey and time together, he plants them there to do ministry and set in motion the gospel teaching as he goes.

So where we find Priscilla and Aquila and where are they at? They're in the synagogue implying that they are actively teaching. They are actively trying to spread the gospel and make disciples.

[15 : 38] And in that context, this young, passionate, fervent, competent young man comes in and starts speaking about Jesus. I love this because this godly couple saw the potential, saw the passion, saw the accuracy.

And knew this guy's on our side. But let's love him by teaching him and showing him more accurately what we know about God.

And so gospel teaching must be intentional because for a young godly couple, they see a man that's in need of refining and they take him in. And they most likely take him and they sit down somewhere else, somewhere private.

And we're not given a time for anybody here. So I imagine it wasn't just a one time event. Perhaps they disciple them over and over and over again. It takes a long time to show the way of God accurately.

But we do know this. This godly couple did train Apollos to read scripture with Christ at the center.

[16 : 50] And this is the part that gave me chills because we know this is the case because before Apollos meets the coolant Priscilla, here's what we know about him.

The scripture says that he is competent in scriptures. It says he instructed in the way of the Lord and he taught accurately the things concerning Jesus. Now that last one, it sounds almost like he's saying things that are true about Jesus, but it doesn't get at the heart.

It doesn't get at the methodology. It just says he taught things that were accurate. Those three things are important. Competence, instructing in the way of the Lord, which he had been, and he accurately taught things concerning Jesus.

But after being discipled by Aquila and Priscilla, notice this. This is amazing. Look at verse 28. It says he powerfully refuted the Jews in public showing by the scriptures, which he's competent in.

What does it say? That the Christ was Jesus. Apollos knew scripture.

[17 : 56] He knew the Old Testament. He knew everything that there was to know about God and how he deals with his people and how he has promised to redeem them and fulfill them to the coming Messiah.

He knows all of this, but what's the one thing that hasn't been connected yet for Apollos? All of those scriptures that you're competent in, that you're teaching accurately, that you've been instructed in, I can only presume that Aquila and Priscilla show him they're all pointing to Jesus as the Christ.

Jesus is the Christ, Apollos. And this godly couple is intentional. And they take him aside.

And in love and deliberation and kindness, they teach as a couple the way of God more accurately.

Which leads us into the next element of gospel teaching that it must be Christ centered. Gospel teaching must be intentional.

[18 : 59] Aquila and Priscilla show us this, but next it must be Christ centered. After they've taken Apollos and they've refined him, they've showed him, they've mentored and discipled him in truth.

What does it say in verse 27? And when he wished to across to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed.

For powerfully he refuted the Jews in public showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. Achaia, speaking of the region across the sea, and we know that from context, this is Corinth because in verse one of next chapter it says, Paul was at Corinth.

So when he gets to Ephesus, let's recap here, he's preaching, he's teaching, he's showing excitement and fervor. And Aquila and Priscilla say, hey, come with us, we're going to mentor you and disciple you in truth.

And they teach him the way of God more accurately. And as a response to this, he says, I got to get over there. I got to go to Corinth and teach and preach. Now why does he want to go back to Corinth?

[20 : 00] I don't know exactly, but we know he's passionate. I got to get over there. And here's what happens. A letter is written and the disciples say, yes, come over, we'll receive you in Corinth.

And he goes, and that's where he goes right to the head honchos. He's ready. He's ready to talk about scripture and revisit the ways that it all points to Jesus, the most offensive person in history to the Pharisees, the Jews of the day who rejected him.

I'm ready to defend Jesus. And he goes, and I imagine he knows all the scriptures, he himself is a Jew, and he's opening the Bible and he's pointing out all of the prophecies.

He's pointing out all of the elements of all the scriptures that they all would, all the Jews would have received and, and dwelled on in obedience to God. And he's saying all of this is pointing to the Messiah Jesus.

That without Christ, there is no fulfillment. Without Christ, there is no redemption. There's no forgiveness. There is no relationship beyond what we have.

[21 : 13] It's Jesus. Paul now understands the centrality of Christ is the hero of all of God's story.

How do we read scripture with Christ in mind? Every book, every part, every verse, every line.

First we must recognize the redemptive story. Four things I want to encourage you with as you read and study scripture. As you hear me talking, as we preach through this, as we read through this book, four phases of God's work, redemptive work, creation, fall, redemption, restoration.

Scott talked about these recently, to view every story in the Bible as a piece of God's sweeping grand narrative that he's working to redeem his creation.

That every story has an element of it that talks about God's original plan, our fall, his redemption and his promise to restore.

[22 : 23] It all points to Jesus. Two questions when studying scripture, it will help you see the Bible in its Christocentric context. Two questions. One, how does this passage point to the problem of sin?

Every section of scripture, I would argue you can find sin. It all points to a problem. Life without God, man without God, sin.

And secondly, when studying scripture, ask how does this passage point to Christ as the hero? How am I urged on by this passage to continually renewed faith in Jesus to save me?

This passage shows of my need for God and his love for me through the gospel by what Jesus has done. Jesus is the hero, not David. Jesus is the hero, not Samson.

Jesus is the hero, not Paul, not Apollos, Jesus. And these men know this. Paula and Priscilla know this. That's why they say, Paul, let us tell you about Jesus more fully.

[23 : 32] Their discipleship of this young man was no small thing. For we know that Apollos in verse one, it says, he went to Corinth.

And what's amazing is who planted the first seeds in Corinth? It was Paul. Paul brings the gospel, teaches and preaches, and Apollos comes behind him and continues preaching, refounding the gospel for the Corinthians.

And what's amazing about Ephesus is who's the first person in Ephesus to preach the gospel that we know of? Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos.

And who's going to come in a few chapters here, back to Ephesus, or in a few verses here, back to Ephesus to continue the work of the gospel being planted? Paul.

And what I love this is gospel teaching next must be cooperative. It must be cooperative.

[24 : 31] We are not single-handed, independent teachers of God's word for my glory that you would recognize me as a good teacher.

But instead I teach the gospel. We teach the gospel to one another because Jesus unites us. His gospel is all our story and it's cooperative in nature.

Now I want you to imagine, imagine having the right tools for a job, but you still fail it. That's kind of what Apollos was a little bit.

He had a good heart, I believe he's totally in the body of Christ, he's saved here, but he had the right tools, but he didn't quite have the knowledge and experience to put it all together. Now, me and my wife have been remodeling our house the last couple of years.

Slowly, you know how it goes, step by step. And our basement bathroom has been a disaster. It's always been just neglected, a mud room, it needs everything replaced except for the tile.

[25 : 35] It's just needed a lot of work and I've been working on this for a while. There's vanity replacing the mirror, replacing a lot of the hardware and whatnot and finally it came down, okay, it's time for the toilet.

And I get this toilet off, I've never done this my entire life. Get this toilet off and I look and I see there's a ring and there's an outer ring. And the first ring is wax and it's disgusting. So I scrape that off, seemed like the right thing to do.

And the next ring is called the flange which I looked up on Google. And I'm thinking, oh, this is really easy, there's two holes. I'm going to buy a new toilet. So I'm going to stick the toilet on, I'm going to put the screws in and just screw it down.

Really easy, right? A lot of debate here, this is good. Okay, so here's what I did. I pulled up YouTube because that's how you become a chur.

I pulled up YouTube and I typed in how to install toilet. And I watched a 20 minute video in the bathroom hunched over just sitting, my wife's like, Eric, are you coming to eat? Hang on. I'm making good use of my time, right?

[26 : 37] Okay, so I'm watching this video and it's showing me this guy, step by step how to do this. I watched the video, I know how to do it now. I got the knowledge. Thank you for your experience, YouTube guy, delete whatever and remember who you are.

Go to Home Depot, I get a couple tools, I get a couple of pieces, I got my toilet, I get my crowbar out, I get my drill, I get my screws out. I've got all the tools, I think I've got the knowledge, here we go.

And here's the thing. I did have all the right tools. So I take this flange and I push it down, I put the toilet on and I sit on it and it starts rocking.

What's going on? I don't understand. So I rip it off, scrape the wax ring off, I didn't buy an extra one, so I got to go back to Home Depot to get another ring, this time I bought two. Bring it back, I come back, it takes me an hour to recognize the flange itself is so broken that it's up above the floor level.

So I go back to YouTube, I research again how to remove a flange, that was not fun, took me about an hour just ganking at this thing. I rip it off, I put a new flange, I put it in, I install it, I got it.

[27 : 47] Everything's, I finally get it. It's all clicking. I take the new toilet and I put it down and I miss one of the screws barely. So I pull it off, slips, falls, breaks into five pieces.

And I'm standing there with shards in my hands just like this. To this day I still haven't installed the toilet. So I'm going to take my own application, if any of you guys know how to install toilets and do it the right way, I'm taking help at this point.

But here's the reality. I read the manual, I watched a YouTube video, I had gathered all the necessary tools but still did not know how to do the job.

And Apollos is great as he is and with all the knowledge he has, with all the fervor he has, he's still in need of something. That is someone to come alongside and show him how to do it.

And this is a quote in Priscilla. I don't think we understand how important this godly mentoring, discipling couple is to acts.

[28 : 51] Because Apollos goes on to preach, to plant, to be about God's ministry by teaching about Christ. And cooperatively, and in Priscilla are not in need of stepping in and saying step aside, junior, let me preach.

They say, no, this guy's got passion, he's got game. Let's pull, let's equip him. And they teach him. And we see in 1 Corinthians 3 now that it must be cooperative because Apollos and Paul are now co-teaching.

Listen to this, 1 Corinthians 3, 5 to 11, this is the account that Paul gives of what has happened. What then is Apollos, Corinthians? What is Paul, servants through whom you believed as the Lord assigned to each?

The Corinthians had a problem and what was it? I am Peter's disciple. I am Apollos' disciple. I am Paul's disciple. And Paul says, are you kidding me? We're Jesus' disciples and God just used us.

That's all he did, he just used us. But listen to this, verse 6, I planted the seeds of the gospel in your city.

[29 : 56] And Apollos, after being discipled in truth, came over and he waters it by teaching about Jesus again. But who's the one that grew it? It was God.

God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one and each will receive his wages according to his labor for we are God's fellow workers here at gospel teaching must be cooperative.

Listen to this, you are God's field, God's building. And according to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation and someone else is building on it.

Let each one take care how he builds on it for no man can lay a foundation other than which is laid in Jesus Christ. In other words, what Paul is saying is there's a foundation. It's massive.

And it's laid by Christ's work. And on top of that foundation, I'm building my own foundation over here on top of God's building, which is the church. And I'm planting the gospel in Corinth.

[30 : 56] And then there's a guy that comes behind me, Apollos, and he comes and he teaches the gospel in Corinth. Now he's building on the one that I built. But here's the thing, the point of this passage is we're looking back and we're saying that is being built.

The Corinthian church is being built by the gospel, by his glory and power on Christ's foundation, great. And you guys are squabbling over which brick is signed P, which brick is signed A. When we teach the gospel, do we sign or sign?

That was me. Great. I taught them about the atonement. I taught them about the hypostatic union.

No, Apollos says it's God's building, it's the church, and we are faithful teachers to build. And we build on one of those foundations within the teaching ministry of the gospel.

We all build on Christ, but we build on one another's. And we are building this holy building of the gospel, God's building, by teaching to one another and for one another.

[32 : 04] And while we build on the same foundation, and we are building the same building, not our own, the same building, the church, we are also using the same building materials, which Paul would say, gold, silver and precious stones, those are where we're going to last.

In the context of this analogy is actually teaching the gospel, I would argue. So we can teach things about the gospel for the church is building up that are either gold, silver, precious stones or wood, hay and stubble.

And there's a fire that's going to come and it's going to burn away all of the wood, hay and stubble. And what will be left are the true gospel teachings of scripture.

Our building materials must be mined and collected from no other place than God's word. The prophecy and fulfillment of the Messiah are the bricks and mortar of God's building.

The essential nature of Christ's dual humanity and divinity is the rebar and framing that holds it up. The perfect law fulfilling life of Jesus is the concrete that's poured.

[33 : 05] The sin sacrifice and atonement of Jesus' death is the electric wiring and plumbing and the miraculous resurrection and appearance of Jesus is the primer in paint.

We build God's building with His truth. And any teacher, speaker, or disciple who uses his or her own building materials is building in vain.

Christ's building materials for His building of His church are gospel truths, not my truths or the world's truths. But for teaching, we must know and apply.

So why is it so important that we are reading and internalizing God's word every day through intentional devotion and reading?

And it is not so we can check an obligatory moral box to make ourselves feel better. Here's the point, the sermon where the preacher is going to say, read your Bible.

[34 : 03] But it's crucial that we answer some questions, okay? Because yes, that is one of the applications majorly here. Because Paulos, Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, they know Scripture in and out, clearly.

So we must know Scripture. But here's the reality about this application for us. If we read Scripture and study it and do our devotions to check an obligatory moral box, we may have the right tools without any of the ability, passion, fervor, or ownership to do the job.

We intentionally study, devote ourselves, memorize God's word. Because according to Paul, the very church is built by it.

Without a church filled with followers of Christ who know the Gospel and its many applications for us, the building of God will have structural weaknesses that will be burned away to reveal the true building, which is glorious.

So here's where I implore to you, read your Bible. Yes. You might say, what? Read the Bible.

[35 : 23] Read its contents. You might say, where? Where do I do that? Anywhere. Anywhere where you will be most successful and gain the most out of reading. We must answer this question as well.

How do I do that? Is it as simple just opening up any Bible that I have and just starting anywhere, just turning open to random? I wouldn't recommend that one. But pick a section.

I'm going to pick the creation narrative in Genesis to start with. I'm going to pick Joshua so I can understand how God has been the hero and is the hero over everything that we live in and move and have our being in.

I'm going to read from John to see how Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Whatever it may be, whatever reason you come up with, start. And one of the ways that I find it's easier and more friendly for me to read scripture is something called a reader's Bible, which it takes away all the chapters, all the verses.

It's just straight words. And I love it. It's really cheap. You can get it for \$5. A reader's Bible is a good way to read scripture. It lays out like a novel. So you feel like you're just reading without the obligation to...

[36 : 33] Oh, I'm at the end of the chapter. I better stop. I read so much better, so much quicker, so much farther. There's an app called Dwell that I've used. It lets you repeat scripture in your ears as you're running, as you're working out, as you're driving, and it just speaks scripture and you can multiply the one you're listening to so you can memorize it.

There's ways to read scripture devotionally, aka just read without the burdens of all the observation, all of the study elements. Just read and let it bless you.

There's study, which means we're marking up, we're doing work, we're investigating, we're asking questions. There's scripture readings. Let's read scripture together. We're just going to read Romans.

Everybody come over to my house, we're just going to read it. The young adults have been doing this and it's been great. A lot of grassroots there, a lot of young adults saying, we're just going to read scripture. Everyone just come over. Love that. That's what the early church did.

Another way to read is small groups. Are you part of a small group or some type of group that's dedicated to God's word?

[37 : 39] Well there's Har-Hal, but here's the most important question we ought to ask. If we leave this question, we don't answer this question, then reading our Bible does become an obligatory moral box to check.

That is why. Why Eric? Because you have come to receive and live in the grace of Jesus Christ through the Gospel.

All because somewhere down the line, someone else read, studied and understood the Bible enough to teach it to you who then believed in it in the good news.

That's why. Someone else was so in love with God that they wanted to know him. And they fell in love with his word and as a result, the Gospel was shared with you.

Why? Because the mission of God does not advance without the study and proclamation of his very word.

[38 : 45] That's why. And it is a joy. It is a grace, a blessing to marinate ourselves in Scripture. It leads to life.

And somebody needs you to teach them. That's what we see. Paul is going on Paul's foundation and continuing the Gospel.

Paul coming back to Ephesus and saying there's already believers we're going to see in a second. Amazing. Cooperative nature of teaching the Gospel. Next, gospel teaching must be clear. And the verse one here, start with Paul.

It says this. Paul passed to the inland country and came to Ephesus. So he's coming out. He's going back in. There he found some disciples. Let's not overlook this.

Where did these disciples come from? Either Akula and Priscilla, Apollos, or perhaps both. So he finds some disciples who've already heard the Gospel.

[39 : 43] Verse two, and he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? I love this. And he said, no, we have not even heard there's a Holy Spirit. I love that honesty. What? What's a Holy Spirit?

I can only imagine this is Paul's just like, all right, let's do this. Verse three, and he said, into what then were you baptized? Now remember, Apollos theological deficit.

What was it? No shame on him. He just, he needs to be disciplined. He needs more understanding. He needs more knowledge. And when we have gaps in our understanding of Scripture, this is what happens.

We say, what baptism into John's baptism? That's what Apollos knew.

Get baptized in repentance to prepare the way for the Messiah. That's all he knew. And verse four says this, and Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him.

[40 : 46] That is Jesus. I love this. He's a lot more mature, more experienced, more knowledgeable Paul.

He comes and he sets them straight in right doctrine. He lovingly corrects their misguided doctrine and clears up this theological messiness.

Baptism is a response to Jesus who does wash us clean, really washes us permanently, actually identifies us with his death and resurrection that we might be saved.

That's the baptism you must be baptized into. And in so doing, clearly, obviously teaches the spirit. And this is why doctrine matters, because it leads us into right living.

And for Paul, it must be clear. Baptism must be clear. You must understand exactly what it is, and that's what he does.

[41 : 43] Next gospel teaching must be spirit led. Verse six, and when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

There were about 12 men in all. Gospel teaching must be spirit led. These disciples receive the Holy Spirit, and they begin speaking in tongues and prophesying, which we know in the right context, not in the Corinthians context, but in the right context tongues and prophecy were gifts of the Spirit to edify, build up, and proclaim the gospel to the church, and possibly to others.

So these 12 men receive tongues and prophecy, and they begin speaking, teaching God and who he is and what he's done through these gifts.

Now, spirit led teaching, we've got to be careful. Spirit led teaching does not imply a lack of preparation. It also does not imply that teachers should wing it in submission and obedience to the Spirit.

I've heard that used before. Spirit led teaching instead is accomplished by being faithful to what the Spirit is saying, the content of our teaching, and being confident in his power to produce fruit from his truth proclaimed by us.

[43 : 07] The strength of our teaching, what we have prepared, what I have prepared, what any of the teachers have prepared should contain content that is accurate to what the Spirit is saying, because he wrote scripture, it's God breathed, accurate to the Spirit's own truth, but also expectant and confident in what he's going to do through it.

That's spirit led preaching. It's on him and his power, not mine, which is why Paul says in Romans 1.16, he says the gospel is associated with power.

It is the power of God. He does the work. We teach, he does the work. Teaching must be spirit led.

Next, gospel teaching must be powerful and persuasive, verse 8. So Paul's in Ephesus, he lays his hands on these gentlemen, they received the Holy Spirit, and says, he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Must be powerful and persuasive. Now elsewhere, Paul also says that when he came to Corinthians, his words were not in persuasion, but in the power of God.

[44 : 21] So there's a balance between us preaching in power and using the elements of speech and homiletics to convey messages in a winsome way.

So as long as our dependence is still on the Spirit to produce fruit. Our persuasiveness is not what wins others to Christ, it is God's Spirit that invigorates and illuminates the heart.

Next gospel teaching must be equipping. Verse 9, but when some became stubborn, Paul's three months arguing, reasoning, persuading, when some became starting to continue disbelief, speaking evil of the way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of tyrannous and this continued for two years.

When he's no longer allowed in the synagogue, he takes the disciples he has and they go. Now they go to a special place called the hall of tyrannous. Now the word hall here literally is skole, sounds like school, the school of tyrannous.

Now this place was a lecture hall, a public lecture hall where people would come in and they'd talk and they'd debate and they'd use their intellects and Paul says, come with me disciples, let's go here for two years.

[45 : 41] Let's not miss this, two years and I will take you in here, I will disciple you. Three possibilities of why Paul goes to this place.

One he rents it for ministry purposes which is believed by a lot of people because in Acts 20, a couple chapters later he talks about how my hands have ministered to my necessity and to those who are with me and then he talked about just before this being a tent maker.

So it's very likely that Paul is making tents, bringing in money and spending that money to rent a place of hall of tyrannous to the disciple. How cool is that? For two years.

Another possibility is Paul's dialoguing with the philosophical and intellectual elites about religion and faith. Definitely probably, not definitely, probably happened. Number three, Paul teaches and trains the Ephesian disciples for ministry which are the 12 he took with him.

So he goes to this hall of tyrannous and what does he do? In all three of those instances he teaches the gospel clearly to those who would listen and those who are opposed.

[46 : 45] Essentially I would argue Paul is running a seminary in the hall of tyrannous. Two years intense training in Bible study. He's debating intellectuals, training disciples and sending church planners over all of Asia.

How do we know he's sending church planners over all of Asia? Let's look at the last verse. Two years, so that, what does it say? All the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

It's a staggering statement. Just slipped in here at the end. As Paul runs his seminary in this building with disciples that had just come to Christ over two years he pours into them, teaches them, shows them the way of the gospel and from this place all of Asia hears about Christ.

This is our last point. Gospel teaching must be intensely missional, intensely missional.

Church planting, evangelism, evangelism, missions exploded from the hub of Ephesus.

[48 : 04] There are many churches in the Bible that are mentioned in later passages that are located in Asia. This is crazy. And most of these churches in Asia were not directly planted by Paul.

Instead, Paul sent out commission, disciple, passed on, trained up.

And the book of Colossians verse 1, 7, listen to this. Just as you learned it from a Paphras, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf.

Do you know where Paphras is thought to be from? Ephesus. Most likely, Paphras is one of the 12 and was sent by Paul to a neighboring city called Colossae.

Also mentioned in the rest of the Bible is Laodicea and Hierapolis, three churches that are a tri-city, if you will, right next to Ephesus and Asia. And all three come to the gospel and are planted, but not by Paul.

[49 : 20] Teachable to teacher. No. Maybe sitting here, you might be saying, okay, Eric, this is all great, but I am a servant. Which is great.

Two major designations of spiritual gifts, those that gift of serving, those that gift of speaking. That's what Peter says this, and if you're not somebody that speaks or teaches or wants to do that, there's giftings in service and we're not neglecting that, but we're also not neglecting that teachers need to be serving.

There are mandates throughout Scripture that both people that are more oriented to speaking need to serve and people that are more oriented to serving need to also speak in certain situations.

So I'm going to offer to all of us here that everyone has a role in the teaching ministry of the gospel. Everyone, every single believer has a role in this teaching ministry that the gospel goes forward in.

It is not just the pastors, elders, and Sunday pulpiteers that get to teach. Bear with me. It is very clear in Scripture that the proclamation and authority of the teaching ministry of the church is for the office of elder.

[50 : 38] That's very clear. But are there instances in which all the rest of the body can participate in teaching the gospel?

Romans 15, 14, I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of full goodness, filled with all knowledge and what? Able to instruct one another.

That is not just for the elders. That is for the whole church. Fill with knowledge, all of you, that you would instruct one another. Colossians 3, 16, let the word of Christ dwell in you, richly teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing songs and hams and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Both of these passages, what precedes the command to instruct one another and to teach one another? First, be filled with knowledge. Second, let the word of Christ dwell in you.

In other words, before we teach, we must be taught. Before we give, we must receive. Before we instruct, we must be a student.

[51 : 41] But I love that Colossians passage. It is literally suggesting that singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in our hearts of God is an essential, essential part of the teaching ministry of the gospel.

I'm going to throw in under this category that we're all called to teach one another in some fashion. We're all called to admonish one another. We're all called to instruct one another. Small groups where we have discussions and grow together.

Discipleship opportunities and interactions where there's a disciple or a disciple lead. A man to man, woman to woman, whatever it may be, couple to young man of fervor.

Teaching and preaching from the pulpit. Teaching and preaching on a Sunday morning group. The list goes on and on and on. If you're an older woman or a man with wisdom, consider teaching a younger.

If you are a couple with connections in the church, consider encouraging and admonishing other couples. If you are a parent with children of any age, consider helping other parents with younger children or also focus on your children as well.

[52 : 58] Just had a conversation recently with Rob Fassette who goes here with his wife and his two kids. We were talking as parents. He's got a lot more years of experience than I do.

We were talking as parents how we often lament the fact that we teach our children things. We tell them good principles and good things that are biblical to do, but we fail to connect them to Scripture.

Why is it that when I teach my daughter to serve others, I can't say, this is Philippians 2. Let's read this together. He empties himself, taking the form of a bondservant.

When I teach my child to love others, I also teach them 1 John 4.19 which says, we do this because Jesus loved us first. Then this daughter, son, on and on the list goes.

If we fail to attach our moral, which may be good, our moral, our good ideas about obedience and life to our children without attaching to Scripture, they grow up and possibly run the risk of assuming everything they've learned is my parents' morals.

[54 : 05] Instead of, no, no, he, they taught me that it was God's and the authority has changed. Regardless of your role, single person with time and energy, a member of the body that has an encouraging word, consider what your role is to teach the Gospel.

From teachable to teacher. The church that knows the Gospel grows in the Gospel, then goes in the Gospel, then shows the Gospel.

But in order for growing, going and showing to happen, we have to know what it is that we believe that we would die for and that it is worth proclaiming to every creature.

And I'll end with this, Paul's later letter, a pistol to the Ephesians, shows something special.

It shows that this Ephesian church was saturated in Gospel teaching and ministered faithfully because of it. That the pistol to the Ephesians is the most positive, encouraging, very little rebuke, any at all, because they were rooted and grounded in the Gospel truth of Scripture.

[55 : 30] And my prayer is that the fourth memorial church would be a collective body of Gospel teachers in whatever context God calls you to do that, of Gospel teachers, because we have first devoted ourselves to be Gospel students.

Lord, we pray this morning, please encourage us and convict us simultaneously, God.

Give us the humility to see the ways in which we perhaps have neglected our obligation and role to go into all the world making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them all that Jesus commanded.

I pray that even for those in here who may have an aversion to speaking or to proclaiming or sharing their faith in any way, would you encourage them?

And God, I also pray that whatever the role may be for Paul being an elder, for Quillin Priscilla being disciples, and for Apollos being a disciple in training, whatever the role may be in this body, elder, or someone who's in need of discipling, that we would commit ourselves to the teaching ministry of your Gospel.

[56 : 56] Would you in ground and in grain in us the words of truth that we would live by them, that we would show the world the truth of your word by first saturating ourselves in it?

Lord help us to be teachable that we may teach. Amen. Thank you.