

# Aquila and Priscilla - Fellow Workers for the Lord

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Preacher: Nigel Anderson

[ 0 : 00 ] 18. Jim read from the beginning of the chapter. Let's just read these first few verses again. Acts chapter 18. Find that in page 927.

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. He found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews. To leave Rome. You know, one of the many lessons that we need to learn as a church is the truth that God chooses whom he will in the work of the kingdom.

God chooses whom he will in the spread of the gospel. God chooses whom he will in the witness of the church to the Lord Jesus. You know, too often, something that really came to me a few weeks ago when I was preparing this before certain events happened, certainly, you know, it came to me that often in the Western church, I suppose in the Western church, particularly we're so often bombarded with big name preachers, the big name celebrity Christians, when the foot soldiers of the kingdom are so often relegated to what we might call almost spiritual invisibility.

And yet the work of the gospel continues and does continue through faithful servants of God, perhaps people whose names we never hear of, whose work we seldom hear of.

[ 1 : 39 ] But they're as much part of the Lord's army, as much a part of the body of Christ, as those who predominate in the so-called Christian media.

Now, I say this because, you know, there are times, many times even, when we can be downhearted. Whether downhearted as individuals or downhearted as a congregation. You know, when we think that, or tempted to think anyway, that we're, you know, of little or no consequence in the work of the kingdom of God. You know, when we see churches of many hundreds or even thousands.

And what for ourselves, we barely scratch 50 or 60 on a Sunday morning. Or we see and hear of Christians in the media who have tremendous influence in church and even in society.

And we think we barely register on the Richter scale of gospel witness. And we're tempted, at times anyway, to become deflated, downhearted.

[ 2 : 39 ] And we consider ourselves as little or even no use in the bigger picture of gospel ministry. Now, let me just say this in qualification. We thank God for those who are particularly gifted to preach the word and particularly gifted in writing Christian truth.

Those who minister to the needs of millions across the world in preaching and teaching and writing. You know, those whose impact in the world as Christians are, well, whose impact is immense. Names known by tens or even hundreds of thousands around the world because of their skills in communication. Proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

I, myself, have been particularly blessed by such individuals whom God has particularly used to influence the many. Not just in their own land, but overseas. I give thanks to God for particular individuals who've been used mightily by God in these particular ways.

But one of those whose voice is rarely heard. Well, rarely heard even beyond the limited confines of time and space. One of the faithful servants of God who rarely have ever heralded for their works in gospel ministry.

[ 4 : 00 ] There's surely faithfulness in whatever capacity God has blessed you with. That in itself is reduced to God's glory. And we give thanks to God for the many and the few who are used by God.

We give thanks for the foot soldiers of Jesus as well as the generals in the Lord's army. You see that truth in scripture. It's not just the Peters and the Pauls who are highlighted.

Others are shown for their service in the Lord for the Lord. Think of Jesus' disciples. Not all were prominent like Peter and James and John. You have James the son of Alphaeus.

You have Thaddeus. You have Simon the Canaanite. You know very little of anything about these individuals. Yet were chosen by Jesus to serve them as his disciples. And this long introduction, we come to the book of Acts here. And in Acts, so often in Acts, and very particularly I think in Acts, we see examples of those who are used of God to serve God in particular contexts, to do it in the spread of the gospel, and do it with people whose names we hardly register. [ 5 : 17 ] And over the next few weeks, God willing, we're going to look at particular individuals whose names are recorded in the book of Acts. People who were used in the building up of the saints.

People who were used in the spread of the gospel. People who were used as fellow workers with such as the Apostle Paul. People who were given particular gifts to use in the building up of the church and the spread of the gospel.

And so this morning I want to look at two such individuals used of God. Means that so often we pass by very, very quickly when we go through Acts.

And yet individuals who were used mightily of God in the work that God had given them to do. And I say all this so that you, so that I, so that we are encouraged in our work for the kingdom.

Because God has called you who know him to serve him. And it may be that the name of Livingston Freed Church, or maybe your name, my name, doesn't register on the grand scale of things.

[ 6 : 22 ] That God has given us work to do. In the particular place that God has sent us. In the work that he's given us to do. For his glory. For the sake of his kingdom. So we're going to look at these two individuals who are recorded in, well not just in Acts.

It's interesting. Priscilla and Aquila here. Three times they're mentioned in Acts chapter 18. The only time in Acts they're actually mentioned. Three times they're mentioned in the three other epistles of Paul.

Now let's look at these two individuals from three standpoints. Providence and the gospel.

Opportunities and the gospel. And togetherness and the gospel.

So we read the first three verses there. Looking at providence and the gospel. You know in a recent midweek meeting.

I think it was a home Bible study. We were looking at the doctrine of providence. You know that doctrine that speaks of God's relation to the world. God's absolute control over the events of not just of individuals but of nations.

[ 7 : 35 ] In fact God in control of the very universe. Over the physical world. Over every person in birth, in life, in every circumstance.

God ruling and God overruling in man's plans. Psalm 57 verse 2 tells us. As I cry out to God most high to God who fulfills his purpose for me.

And here at the start of Acts 18. We're seeing God's providence. Exercised in the circumstances of. Well, what have we read in Apostle Paul meeting with these two individuals.

Aquila and Priscilla. And the more you look at these circumstances. The more you see God's providence. God ruling and overruling in these circumstances to bring about his purposes.

Look at the providence that we see here. Look at Paul. Paul leaves Athens. Where does he go to? He goes to Corinth. He goes to that large commercial city in the Roman Empire.

[ 8 : 38 ] Paul has gone there with the express purpose to further his missionary work. But at the same time as Paul goes to Corinth. Emperor Claudius passes a decree banishing Jews from Rome.

And one of the results of that decree. Is that there's an influx of Jews. Where? In the very city that Paul goes to. The city of Corinth. So, and two of these, those who are banished from Rome.

Banished for their ethnic origins. Are these two individuals mentioned here. Aquila and Priscilla.

Now, we're not told if these two were Christians when they left Rome. But they certainly were.

It seems when Paul met them there in Corinth. They're called his fellow believers. So, you know, already we've seen what we might consider different, disparate events.

From a human perspective, you see God's purposes welding this together. Paul going to Corinth to spread the gospel. And two Jews from Corinth, from going to Corinth.

[ 9 : 42 ] Obviously, they set up business there after they've been thrown out of Rome. But all under God's providence. And then what else do we find in God's providential care in this whole matter of spreading the gospel through human means?

Well, Paul himself is a Jewish convert. Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish in their ethnic origin. They're Jewish converts as well. But what else? They share the same profession.

They're tent makers. So, there's a common bond of faith coupled with a common occupational interest. What are we getting at here?

Well, surely this. There are no accidental meetings in God's providence. There are no mere coincidences beyond God's ruling and overruling.

As we read on in Acts 18 and in Romans 16, Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, they've become fellow workers. [10:47] Fellow workers in the gospel. Aquila and Priscilla, as we read in Acts 18, they accompanied Paul on his way to Syria for further missionary work.

All this foreordained by God. God in his perfect plan for the extension of his kingdom. Doing it through human means. At just the right time.

For just the right purpose. God had ordained that meeting in Corinth. That meeting between Paul, Aquila and Priscilla. Seemingly, as we said, remote, distinct circumstances.

But God combining these circumstances in his perfect plan for his perfect purpose. To further his glory through the work of these three individuals.

And you know, it's not just, of course, in biblical times that we see God's providence in action. We see it in our everyday circumstances of our lives. And as preparing this sermon, it so happened, again, it so happened.

[11:49] No, it's providence. But as we read in our two seemingly separate people. Just happening to meet at a university campus 50 years ago.

And these two individuals still being used by God in the ministry of God's kingdom. Events that just happened. No. All under God's overarching perfect plan.

What do we read in Proverbs 16 verse 9? The heart of man plans his way. But the Lord establishes the steps. Now just think of the many times in your life.

When God's used seemingly unconnected events. To bring together his purposes in your life. And yes, in the lives of others.

And think, even think of your conversion. You who know the Lord Jesus. Think of your conversion. The way that God used particular circumstances in your conversion. And indeed in your own ongoing life for the Lord.

[12:52] Seemingly random events. Leading and coming to faith in the Lord Jesus. A few weeks ago in church we noticed an example of that.

The central part that that young Israelite slave girl played in the healing of Naaman, the Syrian general. God's providence.

Even arranging the very details of a little girl being taken from captivity. Taken into captivity rather into Syria. Going to the very home of that general. And of course her abiding faith.

Her faith in the one true God. Leading her to direct Naaman the general. The Syrian general. To go to Elisha the prophet. Naaman eventually being healed. And recognizing God as Lord.

God as the one true God. You see, other examples of the book of Acts. The conversion of the Philippine jailer. The conversion of the Ethiopian official. No. God's provident.

[13:58] Ruling. In life. In lives. Bring about conversion to the one true Savior. The Lord Jesus. And you know, God continues to work through means.

To bring about conversion. Maybe the. Sunday sermon you hadn't expected to hear. That brought you to the Lord Jesus. I remember the late Kenny MacDonald telling me that he was converted. And this is a Kenny language. Those of you who remember Kenny. But he said to me once that he was converted. Under the worst sermon preached by the worst preacher. God had used the word of God.

To convert Kenny. Even through unusual means we might say. But God using. Even the feeble frail of man.

To convert the soul through the spirit. The Holy Spirit of power. Now, all this talk of providence. And the gospel of course. Seen supremely in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[15:04] Seen in his work of salvation for us. At just the right time. In God's perfect plan of salvation. The Lord Jesus came. To save sinners.

Not a moment too soon. Not a moment too late. God choosing Mary. To bear the Son of God.

Through the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' birth planned from all eternity.

Jesus' life planned from all eternity. Jesus' death. His substitutionary death. He planned from all eternity. Jesus' resurrection. Jesus' ascension.

Planned from all eternity. And the return of the Lord Jesus. Planned by the Father. From all eternity. God's providence in the work of the Lord Jesus.

For our salvation. Seen in God's perfect ruling. For our sake. And just remember this. If you trust God in that great work of salvation for you.

[16:05] Then you can trust God in every circumstance in your life. Because as Paul reminds us in Romans 8. All things do work together for good. To those who are called.

Who love God and are called. According to his purposes. We often forget that last part in Romans 8. Romans 8. Romans 8. 28. We're called according to his purposes.

And you see his purposes carried out in the life of Aquila and Priscilla. So. Let's just focus on a wee bit more on these two. Because we see.

Secondly. Not just providence. And the gospel. God working. Through these individuals. But we see opportunities. And the gospel. Look at verse 26. Acts 18.

26. Which seems to have a fascinating incident. That I want to say more of next Lord's Day. God willing. But just to touch on it this morning.

[17:00] Look at verse 26. He. This is Apollos. You know the name. I'm sure. Paul planted. Apollos water. God gives the ink. Here's Apollos. We're told.

Began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him. They took him. And explained to him. The way of God more accurately. I think this is one of the most.

Touching examples. Of. We might say. Spiritual assistance. Given in the New Testament. Here's. These two individuals. Priscilla and Aquila. Helping a Christian.

In what we might call. His defective understanding of scripture. As I said. We're going to think. God willing. A lot more of this individual. Apollos next week. But this week. Just our focus on a Priscilla and Aquila.

Now. In the synagogue. As I. I mean. If you know. The custom was. That one of those. Who attended. The meeting. Was invited. To come up. And address the congregation. And so.

[17:57] Obviously. In that. In that context. Priscilla and Aquila. Are there. Apollos. Well. We were told earlier. In the chapter. He is a Christian. In fact.

Verse 24 and 25. Tells us. Of his. Where he's. An eloquent man. Competent. In the scriptures. Instructed. In the way of the Lord. Fervent in spirit. Spoken.

Taught accurately. The things concerning Jesus. Though he knew only the baptism of John. But when Apollos goes up. To speak there. In the synagogue. It was obvious. That there were certain aspects.

Of Christian doctrine. That he hadn't fully understood. And again. In God's providence. Aquila and Priscilla. Are there. Now. This is now in Ephesus.

This is now in Syria. And they're there. They hear him. And they help him. And I just love the way that Luke the author. Luke the author of Acts here. He tells how Priscilla and Aquila.

[18:52] Used this opportunity. To correct a brother in Christ. A few things I want to draw to your attention here. Firstly. Look at the way that verse 26 tells us.

They took him. They took him aside. And I think the suggestion is. That they took him to their home. Or where they were staying. It wouldn't have been.

Circumspect to do this. In the middle of a service. In the synagogue. But certainly they take him. Out of public glare. They take him aside. And they used this opportunity.

To correct. A fellow believer. In what was. Or what he had. Was defective teaching. They weren't aggressive. They didn't. And of course.

They didn't ignore. What he was proclaiming. And they certainly didn't. Ridicule Apollos in public. Yes. They were obviously. More mature. In their faith.

[19:47] In their belief. In their understanding. But they had that desire. To rectify. This defective understanding. That Apollos had. And they were doing it.

For his sake. For the sake of the church. And for the sake of the gospel. So. These two individuals. Priscilla and Aquila. They got this opportunity. To help a believer. Who obviously.

In his teaching. Was unaware. Of his defective understanding. Of certain aspects. Of the gospel. And they used this opportunity. They didn't just sit back.

And let him carry on. You know. Speak as he was speaking. In a very defective way. They didn't. And they didn't want to. See Apollos remain. In his ignorance.

They had an opportunity. To correct their fellow believer. I certainly thank God. For brothers in Christ. Who have taken me aside. And corrected.

[ 20 : 42 ] My defective understanding. In certain gospel truth. Who have spoken. To me. The truth. In love. Who have explained to me. Biblical truth.

Without aggression. Without ridicule. Without public shaming. And so. I think we have a lesson here. For you. Who are. What's the same. The more mature in faith.

When opportunities do arise. If you know. Of a brother or sister. In Christ. Who's. Perhaps going astray. In particular. Aspects. Of the one true faith. Come alongside.

Take that person aside. Show him. We're here. We're. Where she's going wrong. Because you'll be helping that person. Grow in faith. And grow in understanding.

Of the Lord Jesus. And if you've ever been taken aside. In such a way. Remember it's not an insult. Because the motive. In that taking aside.

[ 21 : 37 ] Is to glorify God. And. For you to receive. That gentle rebuke. In the spirit. With which that rebuke. Is given. For your sake. For the sake of others.

For the sake of the gospel. But notice secondly. Something I think. Again. I think we pass by. So often. Who were involved in the. Correcting Apollos.

And his defective understanding. It was both. Priscilla. And Aquila. Notice. When they heard him. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him. They. Took him.

And explained to him. The way of God. More accurately. In other words. They were a team. They were. They worked together. Both of them. Had that passion. For the gospel.

And that passion. For the truth. Of the gospel. Was shown. As husband and wife. I would just say this. With so much in this.

[ 22 : 35 ] Priscilla. The wife of Aquila. She wasn't demeaned. In her ability. To help. In this way. Now. She wasn't simply. Teaching in the church. She didn't have any authority.

In the church. But there she was. With her husband. In the help. That they gave. To someone. Whose need was. Was great. To understand. The things of truth. And what we have to say.

From scripture. Surely is this. That the work of women. In the gospel. Is important. Is necessary. And truly. We give thanks. For godly women. Who are help meets.

The old word. Help meets. For husbands. In the work. That Christian husbands do. In the work of the kingdom. And of course. That were necessity. A prudence.

Dictate. You know. The coming alongside. A husband. In the work of ministry. We rejoice. So we don't demean. The role of women. In the extension. Of the kingdom. We rejoice.

[ 23 : 34 ] There are women studying. At ETS. Women teaching. At ETS. Or theological seminary. We rejoice. In the work. That women play. In this. Even this congregation. Rejoice.

We rejoice. That women. Such as Priscilla. That women. Were gifted. To be used. Of God. And the assistance. Given to their husbands. And the growing believers. In faith.

And understanding. And that of course. Really. Logically. Takes us on to a final point.

Togetherness. And the gospel. And really. This is the most beautiful. Poignant aspect.

Of these two individuals. Their togetherness. In the gospel. We've already noted. You know.

Sharing in the instruction. Of Apollos. But notice.

Notice carefully. That their. We might call it. Their team ministry. Wasn't just confined to. You know. To their own. Two selves. Or even to one individual.

[ 24 : 29 ] It was a much bigger picture. It's interesting. They're never ever mentioned. Separately. And all the six times. That they're mentioned. It's always together. Interestingly. Maybe something for debate.

A discussion. Often Priscilla's name. Is before Aquila. Maybe. For another. Focus. But the point is. That they had this bond.

As a couple. They had. Obviously love for one another. But their love for the saviour. And that necessitated. Their being together. And you know. Give thanks to God.

For the blessings. Of Christian couples. And the work of the kingdom. Don't underestimate it. Don't undervalue that particular work. Whether we see it in a congregational basis.

Whether we see it in a wider pastoral ministry. Even in a global scale. Christian couples. Working together for the Lord. We have to see that as a gift. As a gift to the church.

[ 25 : 28 ] Don't. As we say. Don't disregard that. Don't demean it. Now of course. And let's just re-emphasize this. There are different roles. Within that work.

There are different roles. Of course. Within the marriage. But different. There's. Of course. Compliment. There's that. Compliment. Complimentary aspect. Christian couples. Of course. Based in scripture.

We thank God. For the togetherness. Of Christian couples. Who serve the Savior. With one heart. Jim's speaking about heartily serving the Lord.

Well we give thanks to God. For the heartily serving. That Christian couples give. In the work of the kingdom. And we see that heartily serving. Here in the work.

In the example of Priscilla. And Aquila. In their togetherness. In the gospel. And for the gospel. And when that togetherness. Is genuine.

[ 26 : 20 ] When it's sincere. Then we'll see that. In evidence. In the work of witness. You know. Four. Some.

Four or five years. Later. After. This incident here. That's recorded. Acts 18. Paul would. As we read in Romans. Romans 16. Paul wrote of Prissa.

And Aquila. Prissa just a short version of Priscilla. He spoke of them. As my fellow. Workers. In Christ Jesus. And they weren't just fellow workers.

In name. They were fellow workers. In practice. That's why Jim read on. In verse four. Of Prissa. Priscilla. And Aquila. Who risked their necks. For my life.

To not only I give thanks. But all the churches. Of the Gentiles. Give thanks as well. And we can I suppose. Work out. From what Paul's saying here. That Priscilla and Aquila.

[ 27 : 15 ] Didn't just. Accompany him. On his trip to Syria. But. They did something. Well yes. Unspecified. Some unspecified action.

That saved Paul's life. Even to the threat. Of their very own life. And it was an action. Of course. That not only. Impacted Paul. But impacted the church.

As a whole. So that the church. The wider church. Were giving thanks. For the courage of Priscilla and Aquila. And what they've done. In helping to preserve Paul's life. They were in it together.

As we have to be in it together. Togetherness. And the gospel. Well of course. It reaches beyond couple. It reaches even.

Beyond single congregation. Togetherness in the gospel. Reaches. Across the Christ centred. Spirit filled.

[ 28 : 13 ] God glorifying church. What you do for the Lord. Impacts not just. Doesn't just have an immediate impact. What you do for the Lord. Has an impact.

Beyond the immediacy. Of your immediate location. And will impact. Even those. At a distance from you. Geographical distance from you. And you know.

We see that in the example here. Priscilla and Aquila. What they did for Paul. Had an impact beyond Paul. To the wider church. And again. You know.

We see this togetherness. In the gospel. In the example. Priscilla and Aquila. We read in 1 Corinthians 16. Of Priscilla and Aquila.

When Paul's writing the letter to Corinth. They're actually now in Ephesus. And we're told in 1 Corinthians 16. 19. That they've got a home. So obviously they're wealthy enough to have a home. A home.

[ 29 : 09 ] For fellow believers met in worship. So. What they're doing. Together. Is for the benefit of the church. For the glory of God. And.

Bring up this all together. In a servant lifestyle. And that servant lifestyle. Yes. Testified to the reality of the risen Lord Jesus.

In their lives. That servant lifestyle. That was seen. In the way that they interacted. With fellow believers. Whether it be in Corinth.

Or in Ephesus. In their heartily. Working. For the Lord. I've been very aware.

In the last few months. Of true fellowship. In the gospel. I've certainly learned that. In my own. Current situation. And I know. For you.

[ 30 : 05 ] Who have your own. Particular needs. You are very aware. Of. Fellowship. In the Lord. Togetherness. In the gospel. In the gospel. You can see it in so many different practical ways.

In words of support. And coming alongside. Even. Jim taking the service this morning. Jonathan this evening. There is that. Fellowship. That togetherness.

In the work of the gospel. That tells of the genuineness of faith. In the one true Lord. That tells of. That togetherness. In walking. In Christ.

Christ. Looking to him. Who gave himself. For us. In his fellowship. With sinners. And I pray that. You know. As we continue.

In the work of the gospel. Here. In Livingston. That we'll know that. Togetherness. In the Lord. That we'll use the opportunities. That God gives us. In his providence. To further the kingdom.

[ 31 : 00 ] And that we'll. Seek to. To honour. Our saviour. In our heartily. Giving of ourselves. For the Lord. That you'll know that.

Fulfillment. That satisfaction. In knowing the Lord Jesus. As saviour. And working for him. In true fellowship. One with another. And if you don't.

As yet know the Lord Jesus. As saviour. Where's your fulfilment? Where's your satisfaction? Who are you glorifying? If not yourself? Come to the Lord Jesus. Be satisfied in him.

And you'll know that. True blessing. That's found in no one else. As Priscilla. And Aquila. Knew that blessing. From God. And they are having turned. To know the Lord Jesus.

As saviour. As they served him. As they gave their lives. To him. Amen. Let us pray. Lord our God.

[ 31 : 55 ] Our heavenly Father. You who. Save your people. By your grace. We thank you Lord. For the example you give us. In your word. Of these individuals.

Priscilla and Aquila. And their work for the kingdom. Lord. We pray that you will bless. The work that is done. In this congregation. By your servants. And that truly.

We will know that we. Do it. To serve the Lord. And not man. Help us then Lord. We pray. To honour you. In all our ways.

For your glory sake. We pray. Amen. Well let's. Sing now. In closing. In Psalm 133.

On page. 424. Just a short psalm. A psalm that speaks. Of the unity. Of God's church. Behold how good a thing it is. And how becoming well.

[ 32 : 51 ] Together. What was that word? Together. Such as brethren are. In unity. To dwell. The whole of Psalm 133. To God's praise. Heaven won't be with the sign.

One. God's traitor. Now. I Was it only. Did I ever believe? Moon. Come is my passing. earth be with the sign. The oxide. The effects. The fire.owadness. Theinder.

The fire.lilil". That's low. To be good. Now. Thee. Planet. The fire. Theças. The nyan.