

Totally Involved in the Work

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

It's my honor and privilege to introduce to you Pastor Bo Carpenter. I think it's the first time he's preached here as pastor of a church. And he's now been called as the pastor of his church.

And he brought his lovely young wife, Lauren, with him. And if you're glad they're here, give them a good round of applause. All right.

If you would, open your Bible to the book of Acts, chapter number 18. And tonight I just want to share with you a few things that God's been doing at Vision.

And we've been studying through the book of Acts. And as we come to Acts, chapter 18, we find out an awesome truth. Up to this point, the book of Acts has been following the story of God's people.

[0 : 57] We have Peter. You see him preach on the day of Pentecost. And then you have Barnabas, and he's doing great things. And then you have Paul, and he's doing wild stuff. But as you get to Acts, chapter 18, you're going to find something else. You know, it's not...

Let me say this. I want to phrase this right. I used to think that the only people that God really used were the full-time pastors, the missionaries. But here's the thing.

Our God's such a good God. And you know what? He uses His children. He uses His people. He uses all of us. And as you come to this chapter, you're going to find that Paul, Barnabas, they were up front, but they weren't the only ones God was using.

There were a whole bunch of people that God was doing big things with. And in this chapter, we're going to trace the story of Aquila and Priscilla for just a few minutes. And you're going to see that God uses His people for His work, and that each of His people must be totally involved in the work.

For the Great Commission to be accomplished, it's not going to be just a select group of people. It is God's people totally involved in the work. You with me?

[2 : 02] That's what's going on in this chapter. So I want to share something. And I said I'm so thankful for His vision to be a model church because this is the culture that we're trying to build in Cobb County.

And I told them this. I said this is going to be part of our culture, that God's work is not just for a select group, but is God's people serving Him. That's what it is. It's not so much a vocation, but it's a lifestyle that we serve the Lord.

I said this needs to be what our culture is at vision. You know, because I texted one of our men the other day. His name's Josh. And I texted him and I said, hey, Josh, you know, I'm praying for you and I love you.

And I really, honestly, I wish there were a dozen more men like you. And I really do because he's a man that has a backbone and he loves Jesus. He's a great man in our church. And he may not do the same thing I do, but he is necessary.

He is vital. You guys know Samantha Boris. I wish there were a dozen more like her because she loves Jesus and she loves others. And it's evidence. And God's using her. God's using John.

[3 : 05] He's using their family. I wish there were a dozen more like Colin Victoria. You know why? Because they're steadfast. They love the Lord and they're serving Him. And it can't happen by just having a few people. But it's all of us totally involved in the work.

Let's look at Acts 18, verse number 1. It says, Go down to verse number 18.

See what's happening?

Paul meets this couple. He works with them for a time because he needs to make some money to pay his bills. They go with him to Ephesus and he leaves them there. Now look down to verse number 26. A young man comes into a town named Apollos.

And he's speaking boldly. And look what happens. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

[4 : 20] In this chapter we see how God used this couple, used their gifts, used them mightily in his work. So let's have a word of prayer. And I want to look at a few things. Father, I ask you to help us tonight to realize that all of us are so vitally important to your work.

And God, I pray tonight that we realize that each one of us, we must be totally involved in the work. If this thing is going to happen, we need everyone involved. You're a good God. It's amazing that you'd use people like us for your work.

We love you. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. First thing I want you to write down is just use your gifts to further work. Use your gifts to further work. As you go through Acts, you'll find that there's many people doing many things.

You have people who are praying together. They're giving. They're serving. They're working. There's people who are hosting the church meetings in their house. There's people who are assisting the preachers.

There's historians. Luke, the one writing down this account for us. They're all involved going through the work. You have in Acts chapter 6, you have the first deacons.

[5 : 18] And what has to happen? There was a problem. In the church, there's a bunch of widows. There's a couple of groups. And they're mad at each other because now everyone's getting taken care of. So what has to happen? There need to be some men.

We call them deacons today who need to come in and they start serving. And they start taking care of things. So the apostles, what can they do? They're doing the ministry of the word and prayer, right? That's what they're doing.

So there's people all doing different things. All are witnesses. All are sacrificing for the cause. All are going forward serving the Lord. We all have different gifts. We all have different talents. We all have different abilities.

The key is allowing ourselves to be used in God's service. And here's the thing. It's simply you saying, deciding, I will allow God to use what he's given me for his work.

That's what's happening. Aquila and Priscilla, what happens? They're there making tents. And then Paul comes along. And because they have the same occupation, they're working together. And they allowed God to use what they had to help the preacher, to help the cause all move forward.

[6 : 18] And they were serving side by side. You know what it was? The tent making wasn't the end. The tent making was a means to the end. They were doing their job. But if you're going to read that chapter, you're going to find that Paul's going into the synagogues.

And he's preaching. And he's sharing the gospel. And he's telling people, listen, Jesus is the Christ. He is the Savior of the world. What were they doing? They were allowing God to use what they had for his work.

They were totally involved in the work. But it doesn't end there. They took what they had. They used it for the work. They used their gifts for the work of the ministry. But then they even up and relocated for the gospel.

Let's look down here at the down about halfway through the chapter. Let's get down to round about verse number 18. Look what it says. Paul, he's been in Corinth, but he moves on and he goes to Ephesus.

Verse 19. He came to Ephesus and left them there. That's Aquila and Priscilla. But he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. And he moved. Paul's going to continue to move on.

[7 : 17] But he leaves Aquila and Priscilla there in Ephesus. You know what they did? They up and left everything they had and they relocated for the gospel. They moved their entire lives to take the gospel to another place.

It's kind of like what John and Sam and Colin Victoria did. And I think so highly of them for that. They said, hey, we could live in this place. We could go to this church. But we're going to up and move so that we can further the gospel.

So we can see God's word go forward. Now, how did that happen? How did they get to Ephesus where they were helping to found a church? It seems that they actually, the church was meeting in their house.

If you look at 1 Corinthians 16, 19, Paul's going to write back and he's going to say, listen, Aquila and Priscilla, they say hi. And the church in their house is going to send you greetings as well.

They had made a major investment for the cause. How did it happen? You know, I think it started with their love for God. They were talking to Paul. They were working with him. And I imagine as they're sewing the leather for the tents, they're not just, you know, listen to music.

[8 : 17] I don't think they had any radios that day. Do you? No, they're probably talking. And Paul's telling them, listen, this is who Jesus is. This is what he's done. I want to share how God's been working in my life.

And they started to fall in love with the Lord. And that's where it started. But they grew with their relationship with Paul. As they were talking to Paul, they said, wow, this is incredible. God wants to see the Gentiles get saved.

God wants to see the Gentiles come to Christ. Remember, these were Jewish people. You know what they said? We want to see the same thing happen. We see what God wants. We see his desire. And we're going to move.

We're just going to move to see it happen. It grew with their friendship with Paul, but then it culminated in a radical decision to move their lives to carry the gospel to the world. So I ask you, will you be totally involved in the work?

It could even mean that you're going to move to a completely different place to carry the gospel. But the question is, will you be surrendered enough to the Lord to say, no matter what he wants, I will do it, because he wants the world to hear about him.

[9 : 16] Aquila and Priscilla, they used their gifts for the work. They even said, hey, we'll move if that's what it takes. We'll go to another place for the gospel. And then here's one thing, the last thing I want to give to you. I think it's so good.

They helped the next preachers going forward. Let's look down there at verse number 24. When you get around here to verse number 24, it could be months, even years have passed.

And Aquil and Priscilla are there in Ephesus. And one of the amazing things you're going to notice here in a second, that their ministry, it didn't stop with their move to Ephesus. It wasn't their one big hurrah like, whoa, we did something for the Lord and now we're done.

Now we're going to give up. Those were our glory days in the past. I was reading something a week ago, and it talked about how one of the greatest things that kills a church is looking back to the glory days. It was great back then, but we're going to give up and we're just not going to do any more.

These people, they said, uh-uh, no, that's not how it's going to happen. You're going to see that in a second. Look what it says, verse 24. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born of Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

[10:20] This man was instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in the Spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. Notice what's happening. There's a man, Apollos.

He comes to Ephesus, and he's teaching. Look at his strengths. Notice what he says. He's instructing the way of the Lord. He's probably very intelligent. He was fervent in the Spirit. He was passionate about what he was doing.

He was getting the gospel out. He was speaking boldly. He wasn't getting the gospel out. Excuse me. You'll see that in a second. He spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord. He was working hard to get the message out about the Lord.

But look at the only thing he knew. Look at what it says. This was his major weakness. It says he only knew the baptism of John. Down at verse number 25. So here you have this young man comes into town, and he is working hard.

He's on fire. He's speaking boldly. He's reasoning in the synagogues. He's been sharing God's Word. But he only knows everything up to the baptism of John. He doesn't know Jesus dying on the cross.

[11:17] He doesn't know the resurrection. He doesn't know the Holy Spirit coming. So what has to happen? He needs some help, doesn't he? He needs to figure out what the real message is so that he can be doing the right thing.

Verse number 26. He began to speak boldly in the synagogues, whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Notice what they did. Well, let me ask you this first before you notice what they did. You saw what they did. But what happens as we get older? The people who come up behind us, the younger people, you can hear this with some older people say it.

Those kids, young people these days, right? They don't like them. We don't much like people younger than us. Because they're annoying. They don't know as much as we do. They're not as mature as we are.

So we just kind of set them to the side, right? Yeah? Okay. I mean, I'm serious. And I was talking to everybody down at Cobb, and I said, this is a big deal.

[12:13] And we had a bunch of folks, my parents age and older, and I'm talking to them and say, hey, this is a big deal here. Because what do they do? They don't kick Apollos out of town. They don't talk about him.

They don't shut him down. Look what they say. They took him unto them. Verse 26. They took him unto them. That means, Priscilla, you probably cooked a good meal. I don't know what they made.

Maybe they made lamb or something. They cooked a meal. They probably brought him in. And look at what they did. They expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. You know what that means? They just taught him what the Bible says. They told him the gospel.

They said, listen, you know a lot. You're passionate. You're young. You're working hard. But let's help you with a little bit more. Let's help you see what that Old Testament says. And you notice what happens?

After that, look at verse 27. And when he was disposed to go pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him, who when he was come helped them much, which had believed through grace.

[13 : 06] This man moves on, and he is so much better because he ran into Aquila and Priscilla. They helped the next man go forward. They did something that most, when most people would have been settling into their recliners, and he would have been building a tent-making empire, you know what he did?

He said, I'm going to invest in a young man who's coming up after us. I'm going to invest in the next man that's going to shake the world. So I want to ask you a few things. First thing, are you going to use your gifts for the Lord?

Are you going to say, hey, I'm all in. I'm totally in the work. Would you even be willing to relocate, make some sort of radical decision for Christ to get the gospel out? And I want to ask you, will you invest in the next generation coming up?

I see that's what Aquila and Priscilla did. Did they not? They said, hey, Paul, whatever you need. We'll use what we have. We're going to help you. He said, hey, Paul, you're going to Ephesus? We want to help you. We'll help you found a church there. Apollos comes into town and says, hey, Apollos, you've got a lot to learn, buddy, but we're going to help you.

We're going to help you go forward. So I'm speaking to you tonight. You're here at this church, and you might think, I don't have a big role to play. But you do. You do. Because back in Willard, Ohio, where I'm from, there was a man named Paul Tackett.

[14 : 15] He was a janitor in a high school. But you know what he taught me? He taught me to pray. He taught me to be bold about sharing the gospel. He taught me to love God's word.

You can say, ah, Paul, he wasn't much. No, but God says, hey, I'm using him, and I'm doing big stuff with him. There's a family named the Vorces that say, hey, we're going to relocate.

We're going to go to another part of the city so that we can see a church started. You could marginalize them and say, oh, no, they're not doing much. But they are. You could look at the men in this church who are doing foundations with the younger men and helping them learn the Bible, learn how to do things.

You could say, ah, they're not doing much. They're just talking to these kids. But it's a big deal. And maybe you're sitting on the sidelines, and you're not really doing anything. But you could be totally in the work.

You could see God use you in a monumental way. You might think, ah, I don't have much. But here's the thing. If you'll allow the Lord to use you, you'll see big stuff happen.

[15 : 19] See it with a quote in Priscilla. They're making tents. But then one day, they say, hey, we're going to let God use us. And he starts doing some real big stuff in their lives. And then at the end of Paul's letter to the Romans, he says this about a quote in Priscilla.

And I just want you to think, what if he said that about you and I? He said, 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.

He said, I want to let you know that Aquila and Priscilla, I'm excited about what God did through them. They laid down their life for me, but I'm not the only one giving thanks to them. He said, all the churches of the Gentiles are giving thanks to them.

Because they're saying, wow, look what God used Aquila and Priscilla for. Look at how he used their lives. And I told them on Sunday morning, I said, you know what? It might be one day soon that there will be a church in Hapeville, right by the airport, or in East Point, somewhere downtown Atlanta, that's going to look back and say, I'm thankful for the forces.

Because one day, there's going to be a church down there. And they're going to look back and say, it all started with that family that would say, we're going to give up the comforts we could have.

[16 : 34] We're going to move to a new city. We're going to allow God to use us. And I was talking to them and saying, listen, because God's been good. There's a few young guys at the church that are showing some interest. I'm super thankful for that.

I've been praying for that. But it's not going to happen with just me talking to them. It's going to take Josh talking to them and help them to love the Lord. And it's going to take John talking to them and help them love the Lord.

It's going to take Cole talking to them and help them love the Lord. How's it going to happen in this church? Same way. You are a part. You're involved. Be totally involved in the work. We are going to shake the world with the gospel.

And it's going to take all of us. Take the gift that God's given you. Use them. Take the opportunities that he puts before you. And make radical decisions to serve him. Don't give up.

When we get older, we want to get our comfort. We want to slow down. Don't slow down. Seek to go further. Remember what Paul said at the end of his life? He said, I want to know him. He said, I'm striving so I can know him more, so I can finish my course, so I can see God work through my life.

[17 : 37] I want to challenge you tonight. Be totally involved in the work. That's what this is about. Quill and Priscilla said, we'll be in. We're in. We're in this thing. And Paul said, they've made a difference. They've made a monumental difference.

Here, in Ephesus, in Corinth, around the world. He said, all the churches of the Gentiles, they look back to Quill and Priscilla and say, thank you for what God did in your life. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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