

Fulfilling the Mission

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But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross 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 he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said, No. We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

[1 : 26] And he said, Into what then were you baptized? They said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.

On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 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 twelve men in all. And he entered the synagogue for three months, spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the way, before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

This continued for two years so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. So I want to begin tonight by asking a question.

What is the mission of the church? What is the mission of the church? Okay, Matthew 28, verses 18 through 20.

[2 : 36] Jesus tells us, Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. So the church is called to make disciples and to disciple disciples. And the question becomes, well, how should we do that?

I've seen some churches focus heavily on the disciple making side. They are good at reaching out to unbelievers and presenting the gospel and baptizing.

It seems like every event, though, that they have, every sermon, every ministry is geared specifically toward reaching unbelievers. And then once those unbelievers become believers, we hope, there isn't much depth to the rest of their ministries or really anything there to disciple them and help them grow in their knowledge of God's word or keep them accountable to their profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

They know the elementary principles of the Christian faith. But since there is a lack of sustenance, they don't grow or mature in their faith.

[3 : 58] And the author of Hebrews addresses a similar issue with his audience in Hebrews chapter 5, verses 12 through 14. And there it says, A new disciple, like a newborn baby, needs milk because they're not ready to eat or able to eat solid food.

This is one of the reasons why we read in Scripture that an elder must not be a recent convert. Eventually, a new believer, like a baby, should grow and mature and develop and have the ability to eat solid food.

It isn't wise to feed a newborn baby or a baby like steak or something like that. Not that any of you guys would try that, I would hope. But eventually, after they graduate, they grow, they graduate from milk to baby food, and then they get more teeth.

They're able to eat softer, solid foods before getting to the point where they're able to eat what mom and dad are eating for dinner. Have you noticed at our potluck in fellowship meals that we don't bring out a bunch of jars of baby food or bottles of milk?

None of us, besides our babies, have an appetite for that. In the same way, as Christians mature, there should be an increased appetite to learn more from the Bible and desire to grow in knowledge and in our faith in Jesus Christ.

[5 : 49] So nobody get any ideas and bring baby food to our next potluck. I'm sure maybe there's some babies who will eat it, but anyhow. So some churches can lean too heavily on the evangelism side of our mission, making disciples.

But some churches can lean more on the discipling disciples part. They aren't actively trying to share the gospel with unbelievers. They become close-knit groups who are weary of new people in the church.

I've shared the story before, but I had a pastor friend of mine who was at a church similar to this, and he was doing a lot of evangelism in his community. He was still kind of new to the church. And as a result of his evangelism, a lot of the people that he had talked to came and visited the church. And this one Sunday when they had a lot of these people visiting, one of the older members in his church came up to him afterward and said, just tugged his shirt sleeve and was kind of concerned.

He said, who are all these strangers in church today? And so he said, well, they're not strangers. They're guests. And we're glad that they're here. What I've seen in the Kansas City area, there was two really big churches.

[7 : 07] I mean, we're talking thousands of church members. Both of them were connected to the SBC. Our director of missions in the Kansas City area was telling me about, you know, the one was really effective at outreach, but they were very shallow in their teaching.

There wasn't much substance to the sermons or to the Sunday school classes or anything like that. And there was another one who was much stronger in that area. And so he'd say after about a year or two of people going to this one church that's very focused on outreach and evangelism, those members will often leave and go down to the other church because they're craving more substance to the teaching.

Some churches may seem to be more missions driven and focused on outreach, while others seem to be more focused on the teaching and discipling disciples. They're more focused on digging into the deeper, weightier truths from Scripture.

All this to say, as a local church, we need to try to strike a balance between the two. I know we're trying to do that more so in our church, I believe. But when you look at the big church, the Capital C Church, we do see that taking place, I think.

We see Christians using their gifts that God has given them to carry out and fulfill our Lord's command. Some are more gifted in evangelism and praise God for them. Some are more gifted in teaching and we thank God for them.

[8 : 40] Some are more gifted in discipling and we all work together and we all need each other to use our unique spiritual gifting to do what our Lord has commanded us to do.

The book of Acts is full of examples of God's people fulfilling our Lord's mandate to go and make disciples and disciple disciples. The section of Acts reveals and reinforces the importance of reaching unbelievers and teaching believers.

Many different people are involved and they all participate in the great commission work that the Lord has called us to do. Ephesians 4, 15 through 16 says, Rather speaking the truth in love, we are to grow in every way into him who is the head into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

And so in the body of Christ, we have those who maybe are more skilled in evangelism. We have those who are more skilled in discipling. We have those who are more skilled in teaching.

And collectively, all those things and the other things that we're called to do as a church, when we're each doing our part, we're strengthening the body. The body is growing. And as a result of that, we're more effective in our mission.

[9 : 59] So the main idea for tonight's study is that every member of the body of Christ is called and equipped by the Lord to fulfill his mission of making and teaching disciples.

Every member of the body of Christ is called and equipped by the Lord to fulfill his mission of making and teaching disciples. And so in our passage tonight, it mentions four people specifically. Apollos, Aquila, Priscilla, and Paul. And each of them has a role to play as they work in different ways to fulfill Jesus's mission for his church.

If you just think about our church on Sunday morning, for example, there's a lot of people doing a lot of different things as we gather together to worship the Lord.

We have our elders doing what they do. I'm preaching. Tyler's leading us in worship. Our other staff members are doing things. Our Sunday school teachers have prepared and they're teaching.

[11 : 09] We have an audio video team that's working behind the scenes to make sure that we can be heard when we're worshiping from the stage. And then also for those who are unable to come to church, that they are able to tune in and stay connected.

We have coffee and donuts as well. That's really important, is it not? I'm thankful for the coffee and donuts in the morning. We have a security team. We have greeters. And we have a lot of other people doing things that may not be as noticeable but are no less important.

They're inviting people to church. They're sharing the gospel with others during the week. They're praying. They're fellowshiping. And it's good. So we'll look at three people and four activities that they do to fulfill the Lord's mission.

The first is Paul following up with new churches. Paul is following up with new churches. Verse 23 again, If you remember from last week, Paul had just experienced the Lord's comforting him at a point in his life where he was tempted in Corinth to be silent.

The Lord reminded Paul that he was with him. Though he was falsely accused by opponents for his preaching the gospel, it was Galio, the unbelieving proconsul of the region, who spoke in defense of him.

[12 : 34] And then Paul remained in Corinth for many days before determining that it was time for him to head back to greet the churches and do some follow-up ministry with them. In verse 23, Paul's third missionary journey begins.

After stopping in Antioch in verse 22, probably giving reports about all that had transpired during his second missionary journey, Paul then begins retracing his steps.

He goes back and he checks on and follows up with the churches that he'd been used by the Lord to establish. And his route likely took him to churches in Derbe and Lystra and Iconium and Pisidian Antioch.

And Paul's burden here is much like what he expressed previously in chapter 15, verse 36, at the beginning of his second missionary journey. And there he says to Barnabas, Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaim the word of the Lord and see how they are.

Paul desired to follow up with the new churches that had been established. He desired to go to Ephesus, but he first wanted to see how these younger churches were doing, how they were holding up, how they were holding together.

[13 : 47] In Galatians chapter 4, verses 18 through 19, Paul gives us a glimpse of the love that he had for believers and the desire that he had to see new believers grow in their faith.

Galatians 4, verses 18 through 19 says, It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.

Paul wasn't content to just start churches and then leave them in the care of others and then never see them again, leaving them to, you know, sort of, well, just figure it out for yourself.

Paul didn't do that. He loved these people. He cared about these people. He cared about their spiritual health, their growth and development, and he sought to be used by the Lord to equip them to play the role that they had in the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4, 11 through 14 says, And he gave, speaking of the church, the Lord giving to the church, the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

[15 : 11] And so, like Paul, we should also have a passion, a desire for the spiritual growth and development of the members of our congregation.

We should also desire to see people saved and to see them grow in their knowledge of the Lord and the knowledge of His grace and the truth of Jesus Christ.

You know, we have our conference here on Saturday, which I think is going to be really good. Dr. Fisher and Dr. Taylor will be here, and they're going to just, you know, primarily be teaching people how to teach the Bible or how to preach the Bible, if that's what they're called to.

And one of the reasons for that is there's a lot of good conferences like this in Tulsa and in Oklahoma City, but a lot of our pastors and a lot of our teachers are bivocational, and to spend a day out in Tulsa or Oklahoma City just is hard for them to do.

And so one of the reasons why we're having this conference is we're hoping that other pastors and teachers from our area will come to be equipped. And so I think it's just important to keep in mind that other churches are not our competition.

[16 : 30] Other like-minded churches are not our competition. They're our brothers. They're our sisters. We are to work together. And so, you know, I know my hope is that our church in our area will be one of those churches where we think of what can we do not only to strengthen our members, but what can we do to strengthen the churches around us?

Another application that is important as well is that we follow up with one another. In the church, we follow up with prayer requests. We follow up with somebody after they've recently lost a loved one. We follow up with somebody who confesses a sin to us that they're struggling with. We should follow up with the believers who, church members who move out of our area for whatever reason. It's good for us to love and to care about our churches and our church members and hope that they are spiritually healthy. Okay, second group here of people is Aquila and Priscilla, and they are filling the gaps in Apollos' teaching.

Filling the gaps in Apollos' teaching. Verse 24. Now, a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the scriptures. So while Paul was traveling, Apollos, a man from Alexandria, arrived in Ephesus.

[17 : 50] And Luke gives us his resume in verse 24, noting that he was an eloquent man, meaning that Apollos was a very gifted speaker. And given where he was from, Apollos would have been exposed to all kinds of literature, and he would have heard intelligent men speaking in ways that showed a mastery of the content that they were talking about and the ability to use their voice to keep their audience's attention.

I know for me, some of my favorite preachers, or one of my favorite preachers to listen to is R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is with the Lord now. He was a brilliant man.

He was very competent in the scriptures. I heard a story. I can't remember who told it. It would have been John MacArthur, I think, or somebody else who was closely connected to R.C. Sproul. But R.C. Sproul was scheduled to come preach at this conference or at this church.

He showed up a little bit late, though he wasn't late, but, you know, a little later than expected. He came in. He didn't have his Bible or anything. He just walked in, and the person telling the story says he just went into the sanctuary, and there's Bibles in the back of the pew, and he just grabbed a Bible out of the back of the pew, and he went up to the pulpit, and he preached this amazing sermon.

It impresses me, but it also scares me. Only someone like R.C. Sproul, few men can do that. But, you know, what made him such a great preacher wasn't just his knowledge, but his ability to communicate God's Word.

[19 : 19] He's somebody who is so intelligent in the way that he would break things down and explain things. He makes you feel smart listening to him. He makes you feel intelligent. Just the way that he uses his gestures and the way that he uses his voice, he keeps your attention.

At least he keeps mine. And he's one of the great preachers because not only did he know God's Word so well, he was just an excellent communicator of it. And so Apollos would have been similar. He was just an excellent communicator. Alexandria, where he was from, was renowned for its library. It was the place where the Old Testament scriptures were translated into the Greek language.

It was home to famous philosophical scholars, and later religious scholars like Clement, Athanasius, and Origen were from Alexandria. Verse 25 says that he had been instructed in the

way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

Verse 25, Apollos had been instructed in the ways of the Lord. He was fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he only knew the baptism of John.

[20 : 31] This tells us that Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord. Again, he was fervent or passionate in sharing this instruction about the way of the Lord, and he was mostly right concerning the things about Jesus.

At the end of verse 25, though, Luke tells us that he only knew the baptism of John, referring to the baptism of John the Baptist. So now the question could be, so what's the difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism?

Well, for centuries before Jesus' life on earth, the Jewish people used bathing in water as a ritual cleansing ceremony. There's passages in Leviticus that describe the necessity of bathing for those who have been healed of leprosy, or those who have had some kind of bodily discharge, and for those who have been in contact with people who are deemed unclean.

John the Baptist took the ritual of baptism, and he applied it to those who were in need of not just an external cleansing, but an internal cleansing from their sins.

And this was in preparation. His baptism was in preparation, preparing the people spiritually for the arrival of their Messiah. The baptisms John performed had this specific purpose, again, to ready the people's hearts for the coming of Jesus.

[22 : 00] In Matthew 3, 11, John mentions the purpose of his baptism. He says, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Paul affirms this purpose of John's baptism in Acts 19, 4. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is Jesus.

People came to John, confessing their sins, admitting their spiritual uncleanness, and committed themselves to follow God's law in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival.

However, there were some, the Pharisees, who refused John's baptism because in their minds, they were spiritually clean. And John had some words for them.

Matthew 3, 7 through 8. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the wrath to come, bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

[23 : 09] Now, Christian baptism symbolizes repentance too. It also symbolizes cleansing and commitment, but Jesus has given it a different emphasis.

Christian baptism is a mark of a person's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is a, it is representative of a cleansing that is complete, a commitment that is the natural response of someone who has been born again and made new in Jesus Christ.

John's baptism foreshadowed what Jesus's baptism would accomplish. Christian baptism is an outward symbol of an internal reality.

Outwardly, we are making a public confession or profession of our faith in Jesus Christ and our identification with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection.

This is a good time just to talk about baptism and the word baptism in the Bible. The Greek word is baptizo and it simply means to immerse.

[24 : 18] The word was not a theological word in the first century, but a common word used in daily conversation. When speaking of dyeing a cloth, for example, people would say it was immersed, baptizo, in the dye.

The reason that the English version of our Bibles says baptize is because it's a transliteration. So they're just taking the Greek words and they're using English words and they're not translating what that word actually means in our English language.

You know what I'm saying? Okay, so that's why it appears as baptized. The reason, again, that the English version transliterates the word as baptized instead of translating it as immerse is that by the time the Bible was being translated into English, various other modes of baptism were popular and the translators did not want to ruffle any feathers.

That tradition has continued to this day. When the Bible commands baptism, immersion in water is the most natural understanding.

There is no passage in the New Testament that speaks of baptism that does not allow for or require any other kind of baptism that isn't immersion in water.

[25 : 36] For example, in John 3.23, we read, Now John was also baptizing at Anon near Salem because there was plenty of water and people were coming to be baptized.

If sprinkling or pouring were in view, John's baptism could have been done anywhere. He didn't need to be by a body of water. Even the tiniest stream would have done. He needed plenty of water to immerse people.

Another example is the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts chapter 8. Philip explains the gospel to him and then, as they were going along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, See, here is water.

What prevents me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. If sprinkling or pouring was all that was necessary, Philip could have done that while riding along in the chariot using drinking water if that was okay.

There would have been no need to stop at a place that had water and certainly no need to go down into the water. Okay. I'll get off my little soapbox there.

[26 : 42] One thing that frustrates me is there's some guys I know who are products of our Southern Baptist seminaries who have served overseas as Southern Baptist missionaries.

There's some problems with our denomination. No doubt. For sure. But they get so angry about it that they're going into other... And this is not a salvation issue.

So hear me say that too. I mean, I just talked about R.C. Sproul. He was a Presbyterian. He sprinkled. And I love R.C. Sproul. And no doubt that he's a believer. This isn't a salvation issue, but it's just for me sometimes it's just what does the Bible say?

And you believed and you taught at one point that baptism is by immersion and now because you're angry about things, you've completely left and gone into another denomination that baptizes infants and you don't have a problem with that and I do.

So anyhow, back to this. Yeah. Well, I mean, just let's get it right. And even if we get angry, let's not be so angry that we're going to turn a blind eye to our doctrinal convictions.

[27 : 56] I know that for Presbyterians and for others who baptize infants or sprinkle, they have their reasons. I just think that it's clear to me that the Bible says it's baptizo, that word means immerse.

That's how we should do it. Apollos must not have understood or been told about the new covenant practice of baptism. That's the problem. Some biblical scholars think that maybe Apollos wasn't saved at this point.

I don't know. I think that he was. Maybe he wasn't. No doubt that he was saved. Whatever the case was, there were holes in his teaching. Maybe one of those holes was the difference between John's and Jesus' baptism and what he was teaching or saying about that.

Verse 26 says, He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and they explained to him the way of God more accurately.

And so here again, Priscilla and Aquila give us a good model of how to correct a good teacher.

They don't correct him publicly. You know, they don't wait until he's done preaching and then praying and say, You messed up on some things, so we need to talk about this.

[29 : 04] They don't embarrass Apollos. They don't shame him in any way. They are compassionate with him, but they also demonstrate their convictions. You know, there's some things that Apollos didn't quite get right and they weren't going to let those things go.

They wanted to tell Apollos so that they would help him become a better teacher. There were some holes in his teaching that they would not let go unfilled or unaddressed.

Again, their goal, I think, was based on their convictions to help Apollos understand some things that he wasn't quite getting to help him be a better teacher and preacher of God's Word.

I share a lot of stories about my time in seminary and especially the preaching class that I was in with Dr. Aubrey and it's a small class and they keep it small because everybody preaches and then after you preach, everybody gives a critique of your sermon.

So you preach it and then you go from student to student. They all give their critique. Dr. Aubrey's in the back of the class. He gives his critique last. And we wanted to be nice to each other because we knew, the smarter ones, I guess, we knew that eventually it's going to be your turn to preach and it's

going to be your turn to critique.

[30 : 23] And so if you want to be harsh with the person preaching, well, you're probably going to get it back at some point in time. We were for each other and we loved each other and we knew it was a hard class and it was uncomfortable and so I guess you could have done this better or, you know, this part was maybe a little confusing but it was a really good message and I remember after the first couple times doing that, Dr. Aubrey got all over us.

He's like, you guys are not helping each other and he said, you've got to be tough. Like, what you've been called to is really important. You've got to get it right. You're here to help one another be better and to be prepared for when you are actually preaching Sunday after Sunday in a church. His feedback was always constructive and in the class too, nobody ever put anybody down but then Dr. Aubrey, he would stay with each student after they preached, after he gave his critique. The critique was the hard part but then afterwards it was more of the, compassionate side.

A few years after I graduated from seminary, one Sunday, Dr. Aubrey came into our church. I was preaching that Sunday and he came into our church with his wife and I remember getting up to the pulpit and seeing him and thinking, oh no, I don't know if I'm still doing the things the exact way that he told me to do them and anyhow, afterward, he told me that my pastor in my church is on vacation and when he goes on vacation a seminary student preaches.

I know that seminary student's already nervous, I don't want to add to the nervousness so I came here and I'm going to keep coming here. Is that okay with you whenever that happens? I was like, well, yes, I guess so.

[31 : 59] I mean, I still get nervous as well but he was always kind, always gracious and I'm always and just thankful for that and you know, there's still times I appreciate those who come to me after Sunday.

I really appreciate those who maybe wait until the next day to say, hey, this didn't make sense. Could you clarify it for me or have you thought about this or have you thought about that?

We're always learning and we're always growing especially those who teach and preach God's word. Nobody has ever crossed the finish line where they know everything that there is to know about the Bible. Some of the best teachers are those who like Priscilla and Aquila who are willing to take somebody aside and just say, hey, I just want you to see these things and just notice these things and they help you be a better teacher.

You don't have to stand behind a pulpit to teach God's word. Apollos' attitude in this passage is instructive for us as well. You think about it, this guy was very educated, probably had more education than this couple combined.

He was a gifted teacher. He was also, though he was teachable. This is a reminder that we should never think we are beyond the need for further instruction from God's word.

[33 : 14] No matter, again, how long we have been a Christian or how long we've been teaching or how many degrees that we hold, we should be teachable as well. So now we come to Apollos.

Apollos faithfully teaching God's word. We've been talking about him, but now in verses 27 through 28, I think we're seeing him taking that constructive criticism and using it.

In verse 27, when he wished to cross 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. So Apollos decides to go to Achaia, that is Corinth.

If you remember, Galileo is called the proconsul of Achaia, and he was in Corinth when that whole thing transpired with Paul. So Apollos is in Corinth.

He's received a letter of recommendation from the Christians in Ephesus, which he took with him to the church at Corinth, and they welcomed him. Paul established the church in Corinth.

[34 : 13] We were just there not long ago, and Apollos was used by the Lord to greatly help those who had been saved through grace there. Later factions, though, arose in Corinth.

Some were saying, eventually, after this event, when Apollos goes, and he's their preacher for a while, they were saying, some of them in Corinth, I'm of Paul. And others were saying, I'm of Peter. And others were saying, I'm of Apollos. For whatever reason, people in the church were drawn to a person who was probably more impactful to their faith or maybe who was just their favorite preacher.

Paul confronts the Corinthians about that for creating factions in the church and especially for manufacturing, I think, a sort of rivalry between Paul and Apollos who did not see themselves as

rivals in any way.

They were brothers. They were co-workers. And he talks about that in 1 Corinthians 3, 4 through 9. For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not being merely human? [35 : 14] What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed as the Lord assigned to each. I planted. Apollos watered, but 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, you are God's field, God's building. In Acts 18, 27, Apollos is watering what Paul planted, but the real hero of their efforts, the one who deserved all the credit, is God who gave the growth.

While we should honor faithful teachers of God's word, we should not deify them and we should not be more devoted to them than we are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

And this ties back into the sermon from Sunday about Jesus' superiority to Moses. Sometimes a church's Paul or a church's Apollos receives a new assignment, and the church has a hard time letting them go and moving forward without them.

Sometimes we can become fanatical about a preacher or a teacher or someone in ministry, and we can treat them in a way similar to how our culture treats celebrities.

[36 : 36] When I've been to the Southern Baptist Convention, it's interesting because you'll see people like Al Mohler, who's the president of the Southern Seminary, who does the briefing every morning, who's very prominent, not just in our denomination, but in the Christian sphere.

There's other guys, you would know their names if I told you, who are just prominent pastors or preachers because they're the ones who are usually asked to speak at the big conferences or conventions.

And so when you're out in just kind of the foyer, you'll see these guys just walking around. And you'll see people recognize who they are and just start watching them and just this, that person and treating them like a celebrity.

And it's very strange that we do that. So we got to be careful about becoming more devoted to a teacher or treating them as if they're some kind of celebrity, almost like we're idolizing them instead of just being appreciative.

It's good to be appreciative that they're a servant of the Lord and thankful for what they've done. No problem sharing that with them. But Jesus is the hero and Jesus is the one ultimately who we worship.

[38 : 00] Just another story, I remember when John MacArthur came to Midwestern and he preached. Because sometimes prominent preachers treat themselves like celebrities if you didn't know that.

And they're busy men and I understand that. So, you know, we would have some well-known guys come and preach and they do a good job but almost all the time they were whisked away. As soon as they prayed, they were gone, they were going to the airport, they were getting back to their church, their family, I'm sure, or some other thing.

And I remember John MacArthur, the first time a prominent guy like that, after the service was over, he was still there down at the front. But then the weird part is you had all the seminary students coming to him and sign this book and take this picture with me.

But he was very gracious to do all of that. And I remember I was with Danny and she said, are you going to go take your picture with him? I was like, no, I think that's weird. But I appreciate what he's doing because he's a big deal to a lot of these guys but he doesn't treat himself like he is a big deal. So again, we should be thankful for those who plant, for those who water, but only the Lord is worthy of our worship because he's the one who causes the growth. In verse 28, Luke mentions that Apollos was a powerful evangelist as well.

[39 : 12] It says, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. Like Paul, Apollos had a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament and he used Old Testament scriptures to prove that Jesus is the Messiah.

Apollos was faithful to teach God's word to God's people, helping them grow in their knowledge and deepen their faith. He was also faithful to use God's word and to teach God's word to unbelievers, to the unbelieving Judas, in this case, and refuting them in public.

Apollos was an intelligent man. He was a gifted speaker. He was a skilled debater. He faithfully used his gift in service to the Lord. Now we come back to Paul.

Paul, finding disciples and a place to teach God's word, to make disciples. Finding disciples and a place to teach God's word, to make disciples. Verses 1 through 2 in Acts chapter 19.

And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples and he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said, no, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

[40 : 21] Paul's going to Ephesus. Again, he sees these 12 men. He notices something about their behavior, their demeanor, and is prompted by the Holy Spirit to ask them a question.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? John MacArthur refers to these men as Old Testament saints. Alistair Begg refers to them as almost Christians. What we know is these men weren't Christians because a Christian is someone who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit in salvation. There's many passages in the New Testament that teach us that. Romans 8, 9 is one of them. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

These men were almost Christians. They had never heard of the Holy Spirit. So then Paul asked them another question in verse 3. He said, Into what then were you baptized?

And they said, Into John's baptism. These men had been baptized by John in repentance in preparation for the anticipation of the arrival of the Messiah but they hadn't heard of the fulfillment of John's ministry or of Jesus' coming and the fulfillment of his ministry.

[41 : 33] They hadn't been informed about Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

And so Paul provides them with that information in verse 4. Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is Jesus.

In the light of truth of Jesus Christ dawn on these men's heart and we read in verses 5-9, On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus 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 twelve men in all.

R.C. Sproul, again, he talks about this being the last of three mini Pentecosts, three mini Pentecosts after Pentecost, in which the gospel is spreading to different people groups.

And so that's why we have a mini Pentecost like what we see here happening in Acts chapter 2.

The first Pentecost was the Jews, the second Pentecost was the Samaritans in Acts chapter 8 verses 14-17, the third was God-fearing Gentiles in Acts chapter 10 verses 34-38, and this is the last with these Ephesian almost Christians in Acts chapter 19.

R.C. Sproul said about this, and so all four people groups received their own Pentecost, as it were, because the point of Pentecost was to endow not some, not a few select taken out of the whole body of Christ, but that all members of the body of Christ would now be endowed for ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

[43 : 13] This group's speaking, these twelve men, they're speaking in tongues like the other Pentecosts, was tangible proof that the Holy Spirit had indwelt them, that they were saved, and that they were now a part of Jesus' church.

And it isn't always the case in Acts that when someone is saved, they start speaking in tongues. It only happens in these cases, in these small groups, when the gospel is first preached to these people groups, and the first ones from that group are saved, and the Holy Spirit gives this powerful, tangible sign of their salvation.

Tongues was a miraculous gift that had a specific purpose for a specific time. It was not, and never has been, the only evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.

Okay? Hopefully that's clear. We don't speak in tongues. And the other thing I would say about speaking in tongues is that these were languages that people spoke and understood. It's not gibberish talk like we see in a lot of Pentecostal churches and just a lot of other churches, unfortunately.

People could understand the language being spoke. That's the point in Acts chapter 2 is people are hearing the gospel in their native tongue being preached to them.

[44 : 35] The point of tongues was to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and who He is to different groups of people so that more would hear and that more would believe.

It's not just gibberish made up language and you don't have to speak tongues to be saved. I've heard and unfortunately that's the case in some of these churches. They look at these passages, these mini Pentecosts and they think that these unique and special situations are just normal. Like this is what should happen for everybody. And so I've heard and talked to some people who said that the church they were at said they weren't saved until they spoke in tongues. And so what they did is they just made it up.

Say this or say that and you'll be baptized, right? So I need to get back on track here but it's interesting to go back and look at when did this phenomenon start?

And it started not that long ago in the history of the church. This was not common in the early church and it's not common in the New Testament. Paul following his pattern finds the Jews in the synagogue and he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

[45 : 44] Paul had previously visited the Ephesian synagogue in Acts chapter 18 verses 19 through 21 but now he's able to stay a little bit longer and as he does he reasoned with them from scriptures proving that Jesus is the Christ and he did that for three months and verse 9 tells us about the results.

But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief speaking evil of the way before the congregation he withdrew from them and took disciples with him reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

Like Jesus' parable of the sower in the soil, some of the gospel seed that Paul was casting fell on good soil, some fell on hard soil. Paul decided to stop casting his pearls before swine and he left with those who believed to continue teaching them, discipling them as he sought to continue to make disciples for the Lord.

Paul went to the lecture hall of Tyrannus. Tyrannus was most likely the owner of the lecture hall or he may have been a philosopher who taught students there.

He may have been both, both the owner and the one who taught there. The name Tyrannus means our tyrant. And so some biblical scholars speculate that this was a nickname that Tyrannus' students gave to him.

[47 : 00] He's our tyrant. We've got a nickname for Willard. Willard is most excellent Willard. I think we need a nickname for Lee, our other Bible study teacher.

So Lee is our Tyrannus. Most excellent Willard and Lee, our Tyrannus. And they meant it because they love their teacher, Lee, so that's the way we mean it too.

Some New Testament manuscripts add that Paul taught in the school from the 5th to the 10th hour. This would have been from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., which would have been a time when Tyrannus dismissed his students for a midday rest, which, you know, reading that, I was like, that's a really long rest.

That's when most of us are really getting into work. But since the hall was a public place and it was empty, Paul could evangelize all sorts of people, both Jews and Greeks, and that's what he did. Verse 10 says, this continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

During this time, biblical scholars think the churches at Colossae and probably the other churches mentioned in Revelations chapter 2 and 3 were founded. And Paul was, again, used by the Lord effectively to find disciples, to find a place to teach them, to make disciples, to disciple disciples, who then went on to make more disciples for the Lord who were discipled in his church.

[48 : 30] So how do we adjust to what we've heard? Be used of the Lord to make disciples and disciple others in their faith. Be used of the Lord to make disciples and disciple others in their faith.

In this passage, Luke, inspired by the Holy Spirit, once again presents us with a range of people who needed Christian instruction, who gave Christian instruction, different people who were giving it, different people who were receiving it.

Some people were already saved and they needed some encouragement, they needed some reinforcement, they needed some correction. Others needed doctrinal clarity. Some needed to hear the gospel for the first time.

The encouraging news from this passage is that the Lord will use our efforts to fulfill His great commission. The world needs Christians who are word-driven, disciple-makers, who will teach others in their homes, in public places, in market places, and anywhere the Lord has them to go.

We don't know who God will save, but we can trust, since the Lord hasn't returned yet, that there is still work for us to do, and so we should go and share the good news of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

[49 : 45] Okay? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time that we've had together, and Lord, we thank you for this passage in Scripture where we see you using different people in different ways to accomplish your mission.

Lord, we thank you for the gifts that you have given to different people in the church. God, these are gifts that you've given to us with the expectation that we use them. And so, Lord, for those of us who are just more gifted in evangelism, I pray, God, that we would seek to use that gift for your glory.

For those of us who are more gifted in teaching, that we would likewise do the same. And God, for just all the different things that take place in your church that your people do, sometimes that go unnoticed, but are very important.

Father, I pray that for each of us, we would just know where you want us to serve, and that we would serve you in that place diligently and gladly and joyfully, and that you would receive the glory from all of it.

Lord, thank you for the blessing of knowing you, for the blessing to be a part of your church, for the blessing to be discipled by mature believers, for the opportunity then to disciple others.

[50 : 52] And Father, we pray you would just open our eyes to the opportunities that you provide us to share the good news of who you are, to share the good news of what you've done, and the hopes, Lord, that more will be added, and that we will be successful in achieving the mission that you've given for us.

We love you, Lord, and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.
you