

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

- WELCOME!
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INTRODUCTION:

This morning we will be taking a look at a man of the Bible that was an excellent example for the church today.

- This man is only found in three different passages of the New Testament, however Scripture portrays him as a man that we should strive to pattern our lives after.
- In the eyes of the Corinthians, he was just as important as Paul and Peter in the spreading of the gospel and the converting of souls.
- He was apparently a man of very strong convictions and had a drive to accurately teach the word of God.

This morning, we will be considering the Christian qualities of Apollos.

- Our text will be coming from **Acts 18**.
- In our Wednesday night Bible class, we have been studying the book of **1 Corinthians** and we've been talking a little bit about Apollos.
- I would like us to first take a closer look at Apollos, because I believe there is more that we can learn from him.
- He was popular among the people and he had a number of strengths that are very important for Christians.
- As we take a look at Apollos, I would like us to notice the characteristics that he exemplified in his life.
- These characteristics I believe are the main reason that he was able to develop such a following.
- As we read from **Acts 18**, please pay careful attention to what the author says about the type of person that Apollos was.
- Please read with me... **Acts 18:24-28**...

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

At just a glance of his life here, we can see several things about him that are admirable qualities for a Christian.

- Now... I'm sure that if we knew everything there was to know about Apollos, we would find that he also had his faults.
- I'm sure that in some ways, he was just like you and me... After all Paul clearly expressed that "...*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*..." **Romans 3:23**
- But, here in this description, we find some qualities in Apollos that more of us should have!

I. The first quality of Apollos that I would like us to consider is that he was EDUCATED.

At the very end of **verse 24**, we find that Luke describes Apollos as one who "*was mighty in the Scriptures*."

- And in the beginning of the next verse... "*This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord*..."
- For clarification purposes, let us discuss what the phrase, "*mighty in the Scriptures*" means.

- The New International Version of the Bible says he had a “*thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.*”
- The Simple English says, “*his knowledge of Scriptures was powerful.*”
- And the New Revised Standard Version says he was, “*well-versed in the Scriptures.*”

There are other men that we know had a good working knowledge of the Scriptures, however, I did a search in several different versions of the Bible to identify if anyone else was identified the same way as Apollos was.

- But, he is the only man in the Bible that was referred to as “*mighty in the Scriptures*”, “*well-versed*” or identified as one with a “*thorough knowledge.*”
- Being referred to this way was an incredible honor!
- I hope that we all have that same desire to have such a solid grasp of God’s word.

One thing that really blows me away about Apollos’ knowledge of Scripture... Let’s put ourselves in his shoes for a second.

- In the first century, the manuscripts of God’s word were typically only found in the Synagogues.
- He couldn’t carry the entirety of scripture in a nice leather bound book like the ones we have today.
- What this means is that he had to commit all of those scriptures completely to memory.

My first thoughts about Apollos was that he must have had an incredibly high IQ, but when you think about it; even a parakeet can memorize words and repeat them.

- I don’t think that this passage in **Acts 18** is indicating that Apollos was more intelligent than anyone else.
- I think it is indicating that Apollos had made a significant effort to commit God’s to memory.
- I think he had decided to study and memorize scripture with the full intention of using that knowledge to help others understand the truth.

This past fall I was at the St. Louis Lectureships, and a speaker named Mike Hisaw used more scriptures than I think I have ever heard in one sermon... He never even opened his Bible, because every passage was memorized!

- The man who introduced the next speaker quoted **Gen 1:1 & Rev 22:21** (The 1st & last verses of the Bible) and said that he thinks that Mike quoted every passage in between these two.
- Mike Hisaw is a modern day example of one who is mighty in the scriptures.
- This must have been the type of impression that Apollos made on the people of Corinth.

I went to a Bible camp one summer in South Dakota.

- The camp director’s daughter was only about three or four years old and she was just the cutest little thing that you ever saw.
- She was a very sweet and friendly little girl that everyone enjoyed playing with during that week of camp.
- That little girl surprised us one night when they had a talent show.
- I don’t recall what chapter of the Bible it was, but she got up there on stage and quoted a very long passage of scripture.
- I remember being very impressed that this sweet, innocent little child who was able to store all of that information into her tiny little memory banks.
- If men like Mike Hisaw and if little girls like the one I met at camp can memorize scripture, any one of us can do the same.
- We just need to take the time and make the effort to do so.

Recently I have started asking people about their knowledge of scriptures... Do you have a Very Good, Good, Average, Poor, or Very Poor knowledge of God’s word.

- I have found that a number of people will express an average or better understanding of scripture, but then I’ll ask another very simple question and receive an incorrect answer.
- With just a little bit of studying of God’s word, we can improve our knowledge of God’s word.

What’s really sad, is that we don’t have the same excuses that Apollos could easily have used...

- “**The synagogue is always closed to the public and I don’t have easy access to the scriptures...**”

- Here's another excuse, he could have given... **"I can't have the scriptures on my night stand by my bed!"**
- That would have been a very good excuse. He had limited opportunity and he had limited access to God's word.
- But in America today, we don't have the same excuse...
- He was **"mighty in the scriptures"** because he made a deliberate effort to learn scriptures!

II. Which leads us to the next quality that we can see in Apollos. He was EAGER.

In **verse 25**, he is described as being **"fervent in Spirit..."**

- First of all, we see how eager he was by the fact that in **verse 25**, Luke says he was out **"teaching... the things concerning Jesus."**
- And in **verse 26** says that he spoke out boldly in the synagogue.
- He had been in the city of Ephesus and again we see his eagerness in **verse 27**, as he wanted to go across to Achaia, which is the southern tip of modern day Greece where Corinth is found.
- This wasn't just a day trip... It was a missionary journey!
- When Luke said that he wanted to go **"ACROSS to Achaia,"** he was talking about crossing the Aegean Sea to get there!

Apollos was eager to leave whatever family he had for a time.

- He was willing to set aside all of his own personal possessions... his own wants... his own needs were all set aside because he was ready and he was eager to serve the Lord.
- There is no doubt that he had to make many sacrifices for the cause of spreading the gospel.
- He chose to make his own salvation and the salvation of others a very high priority.

He was willing to go on this journey because he wanted to teach the Jews.

- The Jews were the ones that arrested and instigated the death of Jesus!
- The Jewish Scribes and Pharisees were the ones that had Stephen stoned!
- It was they who later killed the apostles James and Peter and Paul and many others!
- And where does Apollos go to teach the same things that Jesus and the Apostles taught?
- **Verse 26** says he spoke out **"boldly in the synagogue."** The Jewish synagogue!

Have you ever taken a stick to a hornets nest?

- Chances are, if you shake up a hornets nest, you're going to get stung!... Trust me... I know! 😊
- I'm sure that Apollos understood the danger in **"shaking up"** the teachings of the Jews, but Apollos knew that only the teachings of Christ would bring salvation to them.
- At one point in Jesus' ministry, He said to the Jews, **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also..."**
- Clearly Jesus was saying that salvation was only through Him.
- The only way for us to truly know God the Father is through the teachings of Jesus the Son.
- Apollos knew this and despite the sacrifice and danger he was eager to serve the Lord by teaching the Jews!

What about us? Are we eager to serve the Lord?

- What kind of sacrifices... What kind of danger (or even discomfort) have we faced in our efforts to do God's will?
- Apollos didn't just wake up on a Sunday morning and sit in a pew somewhere!
- We need to follow the example of Apollos as it pertains to being eager to do the will of our Savior.

III. Let's talk about the next quality of Apollos... He was EARNEST.

According to Webster, the definition of the word Earnest is this... **"Serious and intense; not joking. In a determined manner."**

- Dictionary.com goes a little further and says, “**Sincerely zealous. Showing depth and sincerity of feeling.**” And... “**Seriously important; demanding or receiving serious attention.**”
- Based on the passages that we have been looking at it is easy to see that Apollos took very seriously the spreading of the gospel.
- And because this was such an important task, he also took the accuracy of his message very seriously!

You see... he had been baptized before Jesus died on the cross and he apparently he was not aware of all the details surrounding Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection!

- So when **verse 26** tells us that Priscilla and Aquila “*explained to him the way of God more accurately...*” we see that he was open to correction.
- They had basically criticized him! I’m sure they were very gentle and approached him in love, but they told him that what he was doing, was not right!
- Being so “*mighty in scriptures*” and being so “*eloquent*” of speech, he probably could have “**land blasted**” them with all kinds of words to defend himself.
- He probably could have called for an open debate and who knows how many people would have followed his teachings?

Arrogance and pride cause a lot of people to close their minds to the truth.

- They think they are right, and they don’t care what anyone else says about it!
- But, the thing is... Apollos wasn’t arrogant! He accepted correction with humility because, he earnestly desired to teach only the accurate truth about Jesus Christ!

You know what grieves me most about being in the profession as a preacher?

- What is the one thing about my position here that brings me more sadness than anything else?
- ... It is seeing people all around the community, who really don’t have an earnest desire to understand the truth about Jesus and his teachings...

Let me illustrate what I mean...

- Some churches in Salem teach that one is born with sin and therefore babies must be sprinkled with water for the forgiveness of sins.
- Other churches in Salem teach that one is born pure and later when the child realizes they have sinned, they are baptized by immersion in water.
- Some believe the purpose of baptism is to become a member of the church, others believe it is as an indication that they have been saved, while yet even others believe that the baptism is for salvation.
- My question is... Which ones are right according to God’s word?
- Are we born with sin or are we born pure? The Bible answers this question!
- Should we be sprinkled in baptism or immersed? The Bible answers this question!
- Is baptized for salvation or not? The Bible answers this question!

My point is... Why don’t we earnestly care, like Apollos did? He wanted to teach about Christ accurately!

- He recognized that this was important and it was demanding of serious attention.
- When someone approached him with the truth, he was open to change.
- We have the answers to all things pertaining to baptism and many other issues in the scriptures!
- And we need to care about the truth! We need to know which beliefs are according to the Bible!
- Listen very closely to what Jesus said, “*If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*” (John 8:31-32)

First of all, Jesus said the truth is found in His word...

- Secondly if we continue in that word, (And only if we continue in that word) we are truly disciples (followers) of Him.
- Third, we can know the truth!
- And fourth, that truth will make us free!

If you are visiting with us today, I would like to encourage you to use the scriptures to verify what is being taught..

- In **Acts 17**, Paul and Silas had been teaching them about Christ and Luke describes the people of Berea in this way... *“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”*
- I always encourage our members and visitors alike to receive God’s word with eagerness, but also to examine the scriptures to see whether these things are so.
- I don’t want people taking my word for it. I want people to understand the truth about Jesus Christ based on the word of God!

Let’s talk about neglect for just a moment...

- Traci, the girls and I used to live in Crystal Lake, Illinois... In the news one day, we learned that just across town from where we lived there was a family that was living in filthy conditions.
- They had several children and animals in the residence and they did not clean up after themselves.
- It was one of the most severe child neglect cases I have ever heard of.
- One of the children was 15 years old and he only weighed 23 pounds! (1/4th of Katie & Kelsey)
- The mother of this child obviously knew that the right thing to do was to provide for her children and to establish a healthy home, but for whatever reasons, she compromised on what she knew was right and she made a lot of bad choices.

I sincerely believe that there are a lot of people in churches just across town who have grossly neglected to search the scriptures. They have neglected to feed upon the word of God.

- And they will not be saved, because they do not have the earnest desire to know the truth, like Apollos had.
- We need to earnestly and eagerly desire to educate ourselves in God’s word
- We can know the truth and it is only through the truth that salvation is available to us.
- Remember what Jesus said, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”* Truth sets us free!
- Let us all be earnest in seeking the truth!

IV. Let us very briefly consider another quality of Apollos. He was ELOQUENT.

Personally, I want to improve upon my own communication skills.

- There are times when I have something that I want to say and I know what I want to say, but to be able to find the right words to accurately express myself... is some times difficult to do.
- And this is one quality of Apollos that ALL Christians need to work on.

I don’t believe that Apollos was just born with this gift. I believe it took effort for hi to be eloquent!

- I believe that he was eloquent, because he knew what he was talking about.
- And he knew what he was talking about, because he was eager to do God’s will.
- The other qualities that we have been talking about, helped him to be eloquent!
- Anybody can deliver an eloquent speech, if they know their topic and practice their delivery!
- Apollos simply made the effort to know his stuff and he practiced!

I personally believe that the gospel message is withheld from those that need to hear it because we are concerned about how eloquent we are going to sound.

- We don’t want to sound silly and we are worried that we won’t know what to say.
- But until we earnestly seek to save the souls of those around us, we are not going to develop that eloquence.
- We must step out of our comfort zone, and we must personally share the truth with others and the more we share, the easier it gets.
- We can be eloquent too!
- We just need to choose to understand God’s word and we need to be willing to share it.

V. There is one final quality of Apollos that we need to look at. He was ENCOURAGING.

In **verse 27**, we see that he wanted to “*go across [the Aegean Sea] to Achaia.*”

- And his brethren in Ephesus encouraged him to do so and they even wrote a letter of recommendation to the Christians in that region.
- The end over **verse 27** says that he “*greatly helped those who had believed...*”
- **Verse 28** tells us why they were encouraged... because “*he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*”

The reason that I feel it is important to mention this, is that correcting those with false beliefs and misunderstandings about Jesus Christ is a very important thing to do.

- The Jews didn’t believe that Jesus was the Christ.
- And when people understood the truth about Jesus, it was very encouraging to them.
- Remember... he helped those who had already believed according to **verse 27**.

My point is this... Apollos demonstrated by the scriptures the truth.

- All of the churches in Salem could be unified and would teach the exact same things as each other, if only people would use the scriptures to demonstrate the truth!
- It is very encouraging to see someone understand the truth!
- It is encouraging to see a person make a positive change in their lives.
- And I sincerely believe that when each of us considers the qualities of Apollos and when we work on these qualities in our own lives, I believe that we will all be greatly encouraged.

SUMMARY:

Let’s review those qualities...

- Apollos was EDUCATED because he made an effort to learn.
- Apollos was EAGER. Serving God was his highest priority.
- Apollos was EARNEST. He was sincerely zealous about the truth and took it seriously.
- Apollos was ELOQUENT because of the effort he made to serve God.
- Apollos was ENCOURAGING because people’s lives were changed.

I would like to make a challenge to everyone here.

- I would like to encourage you to get out your Bible and read it every day if you are not already doing so.
- Even if it is for only 10 minutes per day...Get up 10 minutes early and sit next to the warm glow of a lamp and focus on God as you begin your day.
- If necessary, do it before the rest of the family gets up so you have no distractions.
- Wouldn’t it be great if we could all begin to memorize key passages of the Bible word for word?
- And when someone has a question, we can tell them exactly what the Bible says?
- When we become “*mighty in the scriptures*” like Apollos, we will be prepared to share our faith and to do so with boldness... people will learn the truth... and we’ll all be encouraged!

INVITATION:

At this time, I would like to extend the invitation... If you believe that Jesus is the Christ and need to make a change for the better in your life, I hope that you will share that with us.

- God does not wish for any to perish and wishes for all to come to repentance.
- If you have not changed from a life of sin and would like to confess the name of Christ, we hope that you will do so today.
- In **Acts 2:38**, Peter said, “*Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...*”
- If you have never been baptized by immersion in water, I would like to encourage you to respond today and to wash away your sins and rise up to walk in newness of life...
- Please respond today. Please come forward as we stand and as we sing.