

The Power of Investment

Paul, Priscilla & Aquila Invest in Leaders to Take Them to the Next Level

The Empowered Church Series – Pt. 33

October 28-29, 2023

Acts 18:24-19:10

Introduction

- **The Year of POWER** – This year of POWER here at Bridgeway (2023) is a **constant refocus on the fact that God's power is what we need to live rightly. We need his power to be saved, we need His power to do right, we need His power to be effectual in ministry, we need His power to do miracles. We need His power to do EVERYTHING that matters in this world.** The Book of Acts shows us what happens when God's people operate in His power more fully. We are trying to learn how it applies to our lives and context.
- **Key Theme = There's MORE** – a key theme this entire year is that there is **MORE in the Lord**. The Christian life we are living is only scratching the surface of what God intends for His people. It may not be as flashy as the highlights of the Bible (although it may be greater), but it is supposed to be MORE POWERFUL. **We are doing far too much in our own power and it's not getting the job done. Let me give you some examples:**
 - **Evangelism** – we are trying to save people, when in fact only God can save. **We are trying to think of better strategies**, which is important to understand people and be relevant, **but at the end of the day, it's going to be by the Power of God through prayer and the supernatural processes.**
 - **Prayer** – we are praying and operating in the Spirit one far too much of a practical level. We are kindly doing most of our prayer through petition (which is good and right in so many ways), but **we are not taking advantage of the authority and power that Jesus Christ already gave us to speak IN HIS NAME to make things happen.** We are too gentle in our prayers. We are too hesitant in our faith. We need more signs and wonders. Those will follow powerful intimate lives with Jesus and powerful prayer lives connected to that source.
 - **Righteous Living** – most of us are **struggling to be good**, yet the Bible says that the **Fruit of the Spirit** is good living. That means that it's not a to-do list but a **promise of overflow**. Instead of focusing only on what we shouldn't do, we would do well to **spend more time focusing on connecting more deeply so that those things fall away.**
- **Power Sharing** – **As we learn more about our identity in Christ and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, power is going to flow. Yet, WHEN it flows, we cannot keep all the blessings of that power to ourselves.** Our job is to let God pour into us and we pour into others what we have. Give it away!

Don't KEEP the POWER to Yourself

- **How?** – What would giving the blessings and power away to others look like? **This message is going to talk about that in a beautifully practical way.** Let's see what God may have for us.
- **Where we are at in our story**

- **Paul & Company = 3rd Missionary Journey** – Starting at the end of our last message in this series, Paul and his crew with Silas, Timothy (and maybe Luke) had launched out on their third missionary journey. They were currently doing some work encouraging the churches already planted prior in the region of Galatia and Phrygia.¹
 - **Summary of Paul’s Journeys** – by the time Paul is done with his RECORDED missionary work (he did more than that), he would have covered **over 10,000 miles, planted at least 14 churches.**²
- **A New Guy** – Our journey today, however, puts Paul on hold for a moment and opens up with a new guy in our story. A brilliant preacher named Apollos. Let’s take a look...

Lesson

- **Here Comes a Titan**
 - **Apollos Comes to Ephesus**
 - *Ac 18:24–25 – “Now a Jew named Apollos³, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord.⁴ And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.”*
 - **Apollos** – who is this guy? He’s a new character in our story here. He’s not one of the original Jesus team. He is not one of the original Paul & Company members. He is the next wave out. He was saved by the Lord through someone else’s ministry that is not named and now he’s on fire to reach the world around him. He is one of the few Biblically highlighted teachers as being really gifted and great at what he does. That sets him apart and we need to learn some lessons from him. So, what do we know about him?
 - **A Jew from Alexandria⁵** – Alexandria has a rich heritage. It used to be one of the greatest cities in the ancient Mediterranean world. **Even today it is the 2nd largest city in Egypt.** It was the center of Hellenistic scholarship and science (Greek), and learning, education and scholarship were held in the highest regard. It was **founded by Alexander the Great**, thus the name. **It was the capital of Egypt for almost 1,000 years** - from 332BC-642CE). It is a principal seaport. It is **where the massive Egyptian river Nile empties** out into the Mediterranean Sea (it begins in Lake Victoria – partially in Uganda). It had a MASSIVE Jewish population for a variety of reasons. During Paul’s day there were approximately **1 million Jews** in Egypt, primarily in Alexandria area. Jews held 2 of the 5 wards in in the city. Alexander the Great used this as his hub to purvey Greek culture into the world and hired his greatest architect (Dinocrates) to build its major buildings. The city had **one of the 7 wonders of**

¹ THE story of the third missionary journey begins at Acts 18:23. It began with a tour of Galatia and Phrygia to offer strength to the disciples there. Paul then moved on to Ephesus, where he remained for nearly three years.” William Barclay, NDSB Bible Commentary.

² <https://overviewbible.com/pauls-missionary-journeys/>

³ The full form of Apollo is Apollonius.

⁴ “CHRISTIANITY is here described as the Way of the Lord. One of the most common titles in Acts is the Way (9:2, 19:9, 19:23, 22:4, 24:14, 24:22); and that title shows us at once that Christianity means not only believing certain things but putting them into practice.” Barclay Commentary

⁵ “The gospel certainly reached Alexandria at a very early date, although the origins of Alexandrian Christianity are lost in obscurity (only in the second half of the second century does the obscurity begin to be dissipated).” NICNT

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Alexandria-Egypt>

the World, the great lighthouse called the Pharos of Alexandria. Lost now, it once stood 350 feet high (it was destroyed in the 13th century). Alexandria is still world famous for having the world's greatest library (of classical antiquity).⁶ It's believed that at one time it contained 700,000 volumes of the world's greatest written works. Between war and religious zeal, the libraries works are almost entirely lost today.

- **Allegorical Biblical Scholars**⁷ – as a side note, it's worth mentioning that Alexandria biblical scholars favored an allegorical interpretation view of the Old Testament. This meant that although some of the stories were historical, there were deeper points them and the facts may or may not have been altered. The reason why this matters is that it may account for why Priscilla & Aquila needed to pull him aside to help mentor and disciple him better in the Word of God.
- **A Greek name**⁸ – Interestingly, although Apollos was a Jew, he had a Greek name. This all makes sense when you realize where he's from (see above). He was the perfect representation of a Jewish man born and bred in Hellenism (Greek culture). It's a strong name because Apollo was a warrior god in Greek/Roman folklore.
- **Traveling preacher?** – there is no explanation of why Apollos is out here preaching, nor who sent him. He's a long way from home (33 hour car drive today, 5 hour flight, totaling 1670 miles to go around on land or 760 nautical miles by ship). We have to assume that he got saved, got fired up, wanted to use his speaking gifts and went out under the direction of the Holy Spirit and here he is.
- **Eloquent/Educated man** – The word used here translated eloquent has multiple definitions. The most common is actually, 'learned' or 'educated'.⁹ Eloquent is a secondary usage but may we be appropriate as well.
- **Competent in the Scriptures** – Competency means that you know the information. He had been raised on education and in a Jewish worldview that meant that he knew the Old Testament REALLY well. Even before he became a Christian he was saturated with the Word of God. So, when he became a Christian he began to see connections of the Messiah all over the Old Testament, which set him up for preaching the gospel.
- **Had been instructed in the way of the Lord** – by whom? What did he know? According to the Western ancient text manuscript portions we have¹⁰ it adds, 'he had been instructed in his native place,' meaning back home in

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Library-of-Alexandria>

⁷ "Alexandria was the city of scholars. It was especially the place where scholars believed in the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament. They believed that not only did the Old Testament record history but also every recorded event had an inner meaning." Barclay commentary. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/biblical-literature/Moral-interpretation#ref598274>

⁸ "Apollo is a masculine name of Greek origin that will definitely bring out baby's badass side. While this name means "destroyer," Apollo is a figure that is iconic in Greek and Roman mythology. He has been seen as the god of so many things, from archery to the Sun, and was known as the "avertor of evil." If you want to inspire baby to protect the people they love no matter what, the name Apollo is sure to illuminate their destiny." <https://www.thebump.com/b/apollo-baby-name>

⁹ NICNT insight, FF Bruce

¹⁰ NICNT insight.

Alexandria. So it was not like he was saved on his trip here. He was saved and disciplined back home and then he went out on a mission trip.

- **Fervent in spirit** – This can also be translated, ‘**fervent in THE SPIRIT**’, which would make it more of an anointing instead of a personality trait. **Either way it’s important and lent to a fire in him.**
- **He spoke/taught accurately about Jesus**¹¹ – Martin Luther the famous reformer and theologian believed that it Apollos who wrote the Book of **Hebrews**. Most scholars disagree but it’s an interesting thought. The key is that he knew the tie in to Jesus being the long-awaited Messiah and the impact that had on mankind.
- **However, he only know the baptism of John** – This is a bit tricky because it’s weird to teach Jesus but only know the preparation message of John the Baptist. It leaves far too much empty to teach Jesus well. I’m not sure what Luke meant but we can assume a few things. It means that Apollos knew that the Old Testament taught that there was a coming messiah, and **that Messiah was in the Person of Jesus from Nazareth. John the Baptist knew that. John told his disciples to follow Jesus.** Where it ends up lacking is that John’s baptism in water, was a preparation of repentance talking about the inability of mankind to please God (sinfulness). It didn’t yet talk about the Holy Spirit’s baptism of indwelling and power which helps the believer to do so. We’ll talk more in detail about this concept (lack) later in this message.
- **Ephesus** – **Ephesus is a major city. Paul had already been there once** and started doing ministry in the synagogue but was called away by the Lord to **head back down to Jerusalem and back to the homebase of Antioch (ending his 2nd missionary journey officially).** **Ephesus was the capital of that whole region in Asia. Priscilla and Aquila were still there** ministering hoping for Paul’s return. Per recorded history, Paul ministered in Ephesus longer than anywhere else (although he may have done some work in other places referred to, longer).¹² Ephesus housed **one of the seven wonders of the world, The Temple of Artemis/Diana** (425 feet long, 220 feet wide, 60 feet high with 127 glittering pirian marble pillars each given by a king. The altar was carved by the greatest Greek sculptor – Praxiteles).
- **What can we learn from Apollos?** – I think there is a lot we can learn from this man. He was included in Scripture for a reason and that reason is for us to learn from him.
 - **His effectiveness came from the blend**¹³: **Knowledge, Communication Skills & Passion** – There were a lot of believers during the time this story was told,

¹¹ “Luther’s suggestion that Apollos was the writer to the Hebrews (in a sermon on 1 Cor. 3:4ff. in 1537 [Weimar edition 45, p. 389] and in his *Commentary on Genesis*, 1545 [Weimar edition 44, p. 709]) has been propounded afresh and supported with new arguments by (among others) T. W. Manson, “The Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews” (1949), *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Manchester, 1962), pp. 242–58; W. F. Howard, “The Epistle to the Hebrews,” *Interpretations* 5 (1951), pp. 80–91; C. Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris, 1952–53), I, pp. 209–19; H. W. Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York/London, 1964), pp.9–29.” NICNT

¹² “Paul’s work in Ephesus. He stayed longer there than anywhere else—almost three years.” Barclay.

¹³ “Apollos combined great knowledge of the scriptures with a masterly skill in expounding their messianic content, and this was coupled with spiritual fervor—an expression which probably denoted not so much an enthusiastic temperament as possession by the Spirit of God.” FF Bruce saw the same thing as I did. NICNT

but Apollos was different. The Bible highlights him as a specially powerful communicator and effective minister. With all humility, **I have found Apollos to be a guy like me** due to the elements that God built into him.

Unfortunately we don't know a lot about him so I could learn more, but I do feel that he and I are gifted and assigned similarly. Why was he so effective? What got him there? It was at least his combination of three key elements.

- **The power of Christian education (knowledge)** – Apollos was born and raised in an educationally-minded culture. Alexandria had the largest library in the WORLD. It seems that he embraced that part of his culture and soaked it up. That allowed him to have **the foundational knowledge, the core TRUTH that he needed to be effective for the Kingdom of God** and not go off the rails too far (like starting a cult, which a lot of gifted men and women communicators do).
- **The Power of Training** – **When we put in the time to learn and train in the Word of God, we become more useful to the Lord. Too often we only think about learning for our own benefit and once we get 'enough information to be personally convinced' we stop.** The heart of a teacher, preacher, evangelist, missionary is that they look through the lens of learning for others. Even if that is not your calling or assignment, there is great benefit to putting in the time and effort to know the Word of God backward and forward.
- **The power of great communication skills** – some communication skills and talents are natural, and personality based. Some are learned. The key reason this is so important is that **Christianity is a God & People business**. That means that most things that we will talk about are deep and need to be communicated with tender care, winsomeness, accuracy and relevancy. To do that well, we need to know how to communicate with other human beings. The better our communication skills the more articulately we can explain our faith. Now, that doesn't mean that if we don't have communication skills that we can't minister. Sometimes our 'showing and doing' of the faith is FAR MORE effective than talking about it. BUT, talking does matter. We must learn how to communicate well.
- **The power of passion & anointing** – **Whether** Luke, the author, was trying to indicate that Apollos was just a passionate person by **personality** (fervent in spirit) or **anointed with Power** (fervent in THE Spirit), the point ends up being similar. Passion and fire are attractive and effective in communicating with other people. People love to see someone fired up and listen to a passionate teacher. This **opens doors and keeps audiences**.
- **We only know what we know** – it's so tempting to compare with other believers and feel like we are always falling short because they know so much more than we do. But we can only know what we know. There's nothing wrong with needing to learn. **The responsibility and embarrassment comes when we've had the OPPORTUNITY to learn but didn't take advantage of it and we are behind.**

- **His life was bent on sharing his spiritual gifts and talents with others for the Lord** – Are we like that? **Are we using our gifts and talents for the kingdom of God?** We may be like Paul who have to have a **day job** where we use some of our skills to pay our bills, but what about the **spiritual gifts** we've been given? How are we using those for the kingdom? **WCCW Conference example.**
- **Even Mightier**
 - **Priscilla & Aquila Mentor Apollos**
 - *Ac 18:26–28 – “He began to speak 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.^{14 27} And when he wished to cross to Achaia,¹⁵ the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.”*
 - **He started a ministry in the synagogue** – he was new to town. He was a Jew so of course he started (like Paul did) in the synagogue.
 - **He spoke boldly** – Apollos was anything but timid. He was a powerhouse. Ironically he was strong regardless of his exact accuracy. We are about to see him corrected and trained better, but he was sure confident in the stuff he knew and didn't know.
 - **Priscilla & Aquila** – who is this couple again? We talked about them extensively in the last portion of this series so you can go back and learn more there, but they are the premier power couple of the New Testament. They are a husband and wife team, from Rome, who set up churches, run business, are wealthy, influential, and advanced the kingdom of God. They are both, friends, and partners, with Paul both in business and ministry. They are amazing.
 - **When they heard him preach they knew something was missing** – It is assumed by scholars that what was lacking was either: 1.) How he stopped short of sharing the power of the full gospel of grace and the Holy Spirit's presence/power; or 2.) how Alexandrian biblical scholars were trained more in allegory than in contextual interpretation, which made him stretch stories unnecessarily to make a point and slide out of context. Either way he was strong but not always fully sharing with accuracy.
 - **They took him aside (privately) and explained the way of God more accurately** – How cool of them to privately take him aside and not embarrass him publicly.
¹⁶ **If someone wants to inflate their own reputation they publicly correct, if they are interested in blessing the speaker, they privately correct.** Priscilla and Aquila

¹⁴ “Even after his further instruction, Apollos is not said to have received Christian baptism.” NICNT

¹⁵ “In the Western text v. 27 is expanded: “And some Corinthians who were on a visit to Ephesus and had heard him invited him to cross over with them to their native place. When he consented, the Ephesians wrote to the disciples to receive the man; and when he took up residence in Achaia he was of great help in the churches.” NICNT

¹⁶ “Priscilla and Aquila's procedure was admirable: how much better it is to give such private help to a teacher whose understanding of his subject is deficient than to correct or denounce him publicly!” NICNT

wanted to bless this amazing young man and make him better. They took him aside and instructed him. So, what did they talk about?

- **The Power of discipleship/mentorship** – **There is a power and beauty to someone further along, taking the time to train up those who are not yet as far along.** It's called mentoring, discipling, or a variety of other training/coaching terms. But the point is that they are investing into others with what they have. It's what we are all called to do but **some of us are called by assignment of God to do this intentionally.** What they trained him in depended on what he was lacking, which we are only guessing at (see above). But it matters less the content and more that they did it. They used what they had to bless someone else.
- **Who discipled/taught him?** – again we see that **Priscilla is named before her husband Aquila.** That means that the woman had more influence than the male. It's most likely that Priscilla was the primary communicator and teacher to Apollos, which is a female training with authority over a male. Again, this makes us revisit what Paul meant in his letter to Timothy and see that it was a husband/wife abusive leadership context, not a normal teaching in the church which is **open to both males and females.**
- **Apollos wanted to sail to Achaia**¹⁷ – Where's Achaia? Why does he want to go there? Achaia is the **Roman way of talking about Greece.**¹⁸
- **The brothers** – who are they? This is likely the believing group that Priscilla & Aquila were a part of. The small church in Ephesus.
- **The church encouraged him and sent him with recommendation letters** – how incredibly cool is that? He wasn't staying at their church long-term, yet they wanted to bless him and make his life easier. They wrote personal recommendation letters, which meant they were staking their reputations on the line for him. **We are called to use our privilege, whatever it may be, for the blessing of others in responsible ways.**
- **When he got there he GREATLY helped the believers there** – With the letters of recommendation to get in the door and the anointing and design of God, he led a great ministry in the region of Greece, in the Corinth area (Acts 19:17). We find out that not only did he try hard, but he became a leader and VERY influential. We know that because in the letters to the Corinthians Paul talks about how a camp raised up to believe that Apollos was the best leader. Why was he so influential?
 - **Description of believers = those who through grace had believed** – this puts the emphasis back on **glory to God and not mankind.**
 - **He powerfully refuted the Jews in public** – before we make some assumptions about how harsh this sounds, let's break it down a bit.

¹⁷ "After some time, Apollos wished to cross the Aegean and visit Greece: according to the Western text, he was invited to do so by some Corinthians who made his acquaintance in Ephesus. At all events, he went to Corinth, armed with a letter of introduction from his friends in Ephesus to the Corinthian church." NICNT

¹⁸ "A Roman province in NT times nearly coextensive with the southern part of modern Greece. Augustus divided the whole country into two proconsular provinces, Macedonia to the north, and Achaia to the south. Achaia included Peloponnesus and the city of Corinth, which was its capital and the residence of the proconsul." Word Study Dictionary of the NT

- **Who are the “Jews” in this situation?** – This would be the Jewish population that were resistant to believing that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. Most likely all of the converts in this scenario to Christianity were Jews too, so we need to be very, very careful about believing that all Jews were resistant and anti-Christian. That is simply not true at all.
- **What is he refuting?** – Refuting means that there is a debate about information and facts. Apollos is arguing that Jesus is the Messiah and they are arguing that He is not.
 - **Showing by the Scriptures that the Messiah was Jesus** – Since he was working with the Jewish population who knew the Old Testament very well, that’s where all the debate remained. What did the Bible say about the Messiah and could it be Jesus. Apollos knew a ton of Messianic prophecies and knew the facts of Jesus to tie the two together.
 - **Why does it matter that he was doing it powerfully?** – He was doing it powerfully with passion and anointing. He wasn’t just talking as if it didn’t matter, he knew that it mattered for eternal salvation. He took it very seriously.
 - **Why does it matter that it’s in public?** - These weren’t private conversations (although that is wonderful too). He was standing up in the synagogue, the primary discourse place for Jews, and teaching. He was doing so publicly because all the Jews needed to hear about Messianic matters. This was not a private debate to have.
- **There’s More**
 - **The Holy Spirit Falls in Ephesus**
 - *Ac 19:1-7 – “And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country¹⁹ and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ² 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.” ³ And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴ 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.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.”*
 - **It so happened that** – that’s kind of a weird start to the paragraph. What does this mean? It almost sounds like an accident, but it seems that Luke is trying to

¹⁹ “Having visited the churches of South Galatia, Paul continued his westward way to Ephesus, “taking the higher-lying and more direct route, not the regular trade route on the lower level down the Lycus and Maeander valleys.” Part of Asian Phrygia, through which he passed, was popularly known as Upper Phrygia. He would approach Ephesus from the north side of Mount Messogis (modern Aydin Dağları).” NICNT

say something here. What is it? It seems like Luke is saying that God was doing powerful things simultaneously in multiple areas through multiple leaders.

- **While Apollos was at Corinth** – when did he get there? Is this the main city in Achaia that he wanted to go to? Yes, this was the point of going to Achaia. He went there when the brothers and sisters sent him out from Ephesus.
 - **Corinth** – I mentioned in a prior message that Paul had two mega-ministries outside of Jerusalem and those were in Ephesus (Turkey) and Corinth (Greece). They were powerful ministries because they were tough cities to minister in and he spent a lot of time there and God gave him a great harvest. We have letters to both the Corinthians (at least 2), and Ephesians. Those were important people to Paul. Maybe Priscilla and Aquila recommended that Apollos check out Paul’s other big ministry.
 - **Paul Planted, Apollos Watered** - 1 Co 3:3–9 – *“For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? ⁴ For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human? ⁵ What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸ He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.”*
- **Meanwhile, Paul goes BACK to Ephesus** – remember in the prior message that Paul had to leave the Ephesians after they wanted him to stay with them and preach more? He needed to get to Jerusalem for Passover. After that was done he headed back to finish what he started.
 - **Ephesus** – a key town in modern-day Turkey. Check with prior messages to know more about this important city.
 - **Paul found 12 disciples there** – where did these folks come from? We know there were 12 men there since it says that later in verse 7. Oddly, **I’m torn about these guys**. Commentator and scholar FF Bruce (who is way smarter than me) believes that the phrase, ‘disciples’ means they were disciples of Jesus of Nazareth and that if they were disciples of John the Baptist, it would have explicitly said so.²⁰ I disagree, respectfully. Although I understand his point that it DOES say **they BELIEVED**, which normally implies believing in Jesus Christ, **it seems very odd that they would have neither heard of the Holy Spirit, nor been baptized into Jesus Christ if they were followers of His. I believe they were Messianic Jews** that only knew the repentance and were

²⁰ “When the men are called “disciples” without further qualification, that (in accordance with Luke’s usage) seems to mean that they were disciples of Jesus. Had Luke meant to indicate that they were disciples of John the Baptist (as has sometimes been deduced from v. 3), he would have said so explicitly. How they acquired their knowledge of Jesus can only be guessed—it must have been from a source independent of the main Jerusalem-based stream which Luke traces in Acts—but when they heard of him, they believed in him. This at least is implied in Paul’s question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?... The clause “when you believed” renders the Gk. aorist participle πιστεύσαντες, the “coincident aorist participle” which “is doctrinally important” (J. H. Moulton, MHT I, p. 131n.). Cf. 11:17; Eph. 1:13.” NICNT

seeking more about the Messiah being Jesus but hadn't had sufficient instruction or inclusion yet. I could be wrong.

- **Power of Seeing Potential in People (investment)** – Paul had his eyes out continually to bless other people. When he saw open doors or potential he went in full bore. He wanted all believers built up and encouraged. This situation was no different. He was telling them that there was more in the Lord and whatever he could do to bless them he would. Are we thinking this way? **Are we seeing the potential in people? It's not where they are at today and criticizing, it's seeing what God could do with them and investing into that.**
- **The Holy Spirit Question**
 - **Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?** – what was he asking? How would they know? He was asking if they had the power of the presence of the Holy Spirit inside helping them. Initially they didn't know and they wouldn't realize they were lacking anything. You can only know what you know, right? Paul was trying to assess what foundation they were working off of.
 - **Response: No, we haven't heard that there is a Holy Spirit²¹** – how can this be? They got saved but didn't know anything about the Holy Spirit. How does that work? First of all we need to realize that they would have know a ton about the Holy Spirit as the Spirit from God. What they were lacking was that the Holy Spirit had anything to do with their salvation and indwelling them personally. This part was missing.
 - **Question: Into what did you get baptized?** – this is a strange question. Shouldn't it have been, 'into WHOM' were you baptized? What is Paul asking here? The key is realizing that **baptism has a couple different important elements and meanings: 1.) Immersion into – literally we see this with water dunking. 2.) Identification with – this is the idea that we aren't just getting wet we are having the public take notice of our affiliation with a group (Christians, Christ, Holy Spirit, etc.).** So, he's asking what they thought they were accepting entrance into? What did they believe and what did they think they were a part of? To what degree were they interacting with God at this point? That's what Paul was after.
 - **Answer: into John the Baptist's baptism²²** – what did this entail? This meant that they knew that mankind had a sin problem, and that Jesus Christ was

²¹ "Their answer must be understood in its context. Standing by itself, it might mean that the very expression "Holy Spirit" was new to them. If they had any Old Testament background at all, they would have had some idea of the Spirit of God, sometimes called his "Holy Spirit." (Cf. Num. 11:16–17, 24–29; Joel 2:28–32; and, for the expression "Holy Spirit," Isa. 63:10–11.) More particularly, since they had received John's baptism, they would presumably have been told that John's baptism was preparatory, in view of the approach of one who was going to baptize with the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ If so, they did not know that Jesus, in whom they had believed, was the one who would administer this baptism with the Holy Spirit, or that this baptism had now been inaugurated. Certainly they had never received the Holy Spirit. In this they were less advanced than Apollos, who when he came to Ephesus was already "aglow with the Spirit" (18:25)... Cf. 1:5; 11:16. With the wording of their reply, "We never even heard if there is a Holy Spirit," cf. John 7:39, "Spirit was not yet," where the Western and Byzantine texts add "given." NICNT, FF Bruce

²² "He assumed that they had been baptized (an unbaptized believer is scarcely contemplated in the New Testament), or else they themselves had mentioned their baptism. It was an anomaly in his eyes that a baptized person should not have received the Spirit, so he questioned them more closely, and learned that they had received John's baptism. Where and from whom they had received it is not said: it is conceivable that

the answer to that. They didn't know how Jesus was going to handle that or what His salvation would entail when it came to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But they did know **sin and Savior language**. John's baptism was the need and cleansing but not the power.

- **Paul explained John's ministry focus** – Paul was trying to explain to them that John the Baptist was a **forerunner** of the Messiah **so his ministry would only take them so far**.
 - **John baptized for repentance** – what is this? What does it do? Why is this not sufficient? Is this necessary for salvation? Although it is a beautiful symbol to allow us to publicly own our sin and cleansing process and notify our culture group that we are believers (and we should do it), it is not necessary for salvation. Salvation is not an outward act. Revelation is an outward act. Baptism is an outward symbol/revelation of inward reality.
 - **John told his followers to wait for Jesus and put their faith/trust in Him when He shows up** – John was the herald for the Savior. John didn't save. He prepared. Jesus saved. That means when Jesus Christ showed up they were supposed to follow Him and do everything He told them to do.
 - **From Danger & Responsibility to Grace & Holy Spirit help²³** – they key difference between John the Baptist's message and Jesus' message was that John mentioned man's inability which led to failed responsibility to honor God and thus spiritual death and wrath. Jesus brought the 'good news' that He fixed the problem out of His great grace and that once He purified the heart (salvation), the Holy Spirit would come in and indwell the believer providing them the power, strength, and ability to follow the Lord in righteousness (sanctification).
- **They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus²⁴** – what does this mean? Did they get back into the water?²⁵ **Yes, they were rebaptized** (that is not a

they had received it at John's own hands in Judaea a quarter of a century before, but there are other possibilities. There is no way of knowing if John's distinctive ministry was continued by some of his disciples after his death." NICNT

"The accounts of the preaching of John (Matthew 3:7–12; Luke 3:3–11) reveal one fundamental difference between it and the preaching of Jesus. The preaching of John was a threat; the preaching of Jesus was good news... John's preaching was a necessary stage, because there are two stages in the religious life. First, there is the stage in which we awaken to our own inadequacy and the fact that we are deserving of condemnation at the hand of God. That stage is closely linked to an endeavour to do better that inevitably fails because we try in our own strength. Second, there is the stage when we come to see that through the grace of Jesus Christ our condemnation may be taken away. Closely linked with that stage is the time when we find that all our efforts to do better are strengthened by the work of the Holy Spirit, through whom we can do what we could never do on our own." Barclay Commentary

²³ "These Christians knew the condemnation and the moral duty of being better; but the grace of Christ and the help of the Holy Spirit they did not know. Their faith was incomplete. Their religion was inevitably a matter of struggle and had not reached the stage of being an experience of peace. The incident shows us one great truth—that without the Holy Spirit there can be no such thing as complete Christianity. Even when we see the error of our ways and repent and determine to change them, we can never make the change without the help which only the Spirit can give." NICNT

²⁴ "Now that Jesus had come and accomplished his mission on earth, now that he had returned to the Father's presence and sent to his followers the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, an anticipatory baptism was no longer appropriate or adequate." NICNT

²⁵ "The twelve men then received baptism "into the name of the Lord Jesus" (the same form of words as is used of the Samaritan believers in 8:16). This is the only account of rebaptism found in the New Testament. The apostles themselves (or many of them) appear to have received John's baptism, but no question of rebaptism was raised for them. Probably their endowment with the Spirit at Pentecost transformed the preparatory significance of the baptism which they had already received into the consummative significance of Christian baptism. Similarly there is no suggestion that Apollos was required to receive Christian baptism over and above the baptism of John, which he already knew; his existing

normal expectation in the Bible. It wasn't done with the Apostles who likely had John's water baptism. The phrase 'baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus' is the same phrase as the Samaritans experience.

- **Paul laid his hands on them**²⁶ – what was this? Why did he do this? Paul knew about the concept of impartation (transference from one to another) and used it continually. He was going to pray for them to receive something that he already had (power and presence of the Holy Spirit), so he laid his hands on them to impart and pray that God would make it so (God was in charge).
- **The Holy Spirit came on them** – what was this? What does COME ON mean? Where is He coming from? Is it permanent or temporary? The phrase is commonly used in the New Testament as a signal like when Jesus had the Holy Spirit descend (down) like a dove at His baptism. It means that **the Holy Spirit is spiritual and resides in heaven, so as a demonstration of heaven coming to earth, there was a picture (in Jesus' case) and language (here and in our case) that the Holy Spirit 'comes down upon'.** The idea is resting both for indwelling and resting for empowering. Those tend to happen at the same time initially, but later we can have multiple empowerments (Holy Spirit fillings) but we don't need another Holy Spirit baptism (indwelling event). The Holy Spirit today comes as a package deal with Jesus coming into our hearts.
 - **They began speaking in tongues** – what is this? Does this happen to everyone? **It was necessary for this event (two groups gathering for the first time – connecting to the ministry of the Apostles or Paul) that outward manifestations occur so there would be no question of the legitimacy.** It does not need to occur every time and most times there is little to no outward manifestation. Speaking in tongues means they were praising God publicly/aloud in a language that they didn't know. Whether it was an earthly language (similar to the GIFT of tongues) or a prayer language (private) is unknown. I assume it's prayer language because not everyone gets the permanent gift of tongues (to be used corporately).
 - **They began prophesying** – What is this? Does this happen to everyone? This is **the ability to proclaim things about God and for God under supernatural direction and authority.** It means that they began to articulate things about God and for God that they didn't know previously. They may have been quoting Scripture (a common form of prophecy), or they may have been stating things about His nature (Truth/revelation), or

experience of the Spirit would have made such a requirement unnecessary. But the Ephesian disciples had no such experience of the Spirit. They were therefore baptized in a Christian sense." NICNT

²⁶ "when Paul laid his hands on them, they received the Spirit in pentecostal fashion, with audible signs of his entering into them. There may be an intentional parallel here between the imposition of Paul's hands on these men and the imposition of Peter's (and John's) hands on the Samaritan converts at an earlier date...Luke appears deliberately but unobtrusively to trace a number of parallels between Peter's ministry and Paul's; e.g., both, at an early point in their ministry, heal lame men (3:2–8; 14:8–10); both exorcize demons (5:16; 16:18); both have triumphant encounters with sorcerers (8:18–24; 13:6–11); both raise the dead (9:36–41; 20:9–12); both have miraculous escapes from prison (12:7–11; 16:25–26). Cf. the exposition of v. 12 below (pp. 367–68)." NICNT

they may have been forthtelling the future in His power. It's not clear. What was clear to Paul and Co, was that **God was flowing in them and through them, and that the Holy Spirit was present.**

- **The Power and Understanding of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit – It is very important that we get our theology of the Holy Spirit and His workings as clear as we can.** We may never fully understand the mysteries of the Holy Spirit or be able to articulate them fully but that doesn't mean we don't need to educate ourselves and learn. The clearer we can be and articulate that truth the healthier the church will be. So, here are some **key things to know:**
 1. **The Holy Spirit indwells at conversion – asking Jesus into your heart** to be Lord and Savior is akin to asking the Holy Spirit to control your life and live inside you. It's a combo-pack. A more accurate way to see how God saves is to see that the Father's love initiated a plan/strategy to save us. He sent His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ into the world to save us. Jesus came and died on the cross for our sins to cleanse us and allow a reconnection to our God by purifying our spirits. The Holy Spirit then comes into the cleansed location and seals it with His presence permanently which allows God-with-Us.
 2. **Water Baptism and Holy Spirit Baptism are one-time events (Identity) –** we don't need to get re-water-baptized, nor do we need to get a separate Holy Spirit baptism. Baptism means **identified with or connected to.** That happens at conversion when we get saved. It's permanent.
 3. **There are multiple Holy Spirit fillings (empowerment) –** this is when we pray to the Holy Spirit to refresh and empower us again and again do go out and do things in His power. This is more like going to a gas station to get filled up and then we use it all up and come back for more. This is a **daily bread/manna thing that creates relationship and bonding and partnership.**

- **Maximum Impact**

- **Paul's Ministry in Ephesus**

- *Ac 19:8-10 – “And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief,²⁷ 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. ¹⁰ This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.”*
- **Paul ministered in the Ephesus synagogue –** there's a lot going on in this synagogue. It was Priscilla & Aquila, and then it was Apollos rocking it, then now it's Paul again.²⁸ Sheesh.

²⁷ “Gk. ἠπειθοῦν, “were disobedient.” NICNT

²⁸ “Paul had already established relations with the Jews who met in the Ephesian synagogue, when he paid them a flying visit on his way from Corinth to Judaea. Then they had pressed him unsuccessfully to stay longer. Now, however, having completed his business in Judaea and Syria, he had come back to Ephesus and resumed his synagogue discourses in accordance with his promise. But the familiar pattern of events began to

- **He ministered for 3 months** – that’s a long time. Paul sets up and does as much as he can do before moving on.
- **He spoke boldly** – We always assume that Paul speaks boldly but a couple of times in his letters we see that Paul struggled to do so. He wanted to. He was under tremendous pressure and fear for his life on so many occasions. But at this point the Lord had given him the grace to press in.
- **He reasoned and persuaded them about the Kingdom of God** – What does this mean? It means that he presented evidence that Jesus Christ was the Messiah and ushered in a new covenant where the Kingdom of God became present here on earth in a new way.
 - **What is the new way of the Kingdom of God?** – The new way of the Kingdom of God is that it’s **heaven invading earth**. That means that prior there was more of a separation and Satan was the prince of the power of the air with authority here to move through our sin-filled world. But **when Jesus came, He defeated the devil and allowed His saved and empowered kids to go around and expand God’s influence and kingdom-reality on the earth**, forcing back the powers of darkness. It means that **Jesus is exercising some of His kingship to rescue and provide for people. It’s a message of hope, breakthrough, freedom, joy**. That is the outpouring of the gospel (good news).
- **But, When the rejection became too much, he moved ministry sites** – Paul was willing to do the tough work but unwilling to just pound his head against a closed door for too long. Why? Because **he didn’t need to beg people to be saved, he needed to present it and press in**. The point is not to force people. Even Jesus talked about casting pearls before swine was foolish.
 - **They became stubborn and continued in unbelief** – Paul knew that he was bringing convincing and ample evidence of Jesus as the Messiah, so **it wasn’t a matter of them not being able to know, the problem was that THEY DIDN’T WANT to know**. It was at this point that he stepped out.
 - **Speaking evil of the WAY in front of the congregation** – This means that they began slandering Christians openly. This meant that **it was going from an open door to a toxic situation that would last long after Paul moved on to another town**. He wasn’t willing for that to happen. He moved on.
- **Paul moved his ministry** – it says that he gathered the disciples that he was working with (probably more than the 12 he had met prior) and moved locations to set up shop in another location.
 - **Hall of Tyrannus²⁹** – it says that Paul met here in the Hall of Tyrannus. Do we know anything about it? Not much is known about this guy. He may

reproduce itself. For three months he enjoyed the freedom of the synagogue, debating with its members and setting forth the truth about the kingdom of God—that is to say, all that is implied in the death and exaltation of Jesus.” NICNT

²⁹ “Tyrannus (a name otherwise attested in Ephesus) is usually supposed to have been the lecturer who regularly taught there; it is just possible, however, that he was the owner of the building, who was willing to rent it to Paul at times when it was not required by the regular lecturer (or lecturers). According to the Western text, Paul had the use of the building from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Whatever the textual basis of this reading may

have been a philosopher/teacher of the day who was wealthy and influential or just wealthy hall owner.

- **Reasoning daily** – Paul was again, locking in with the Gentiles after giving the Jews his best efforts. He did this daily since they didn't only meet on the Sabbath. The Western text says that he preached for **5 hours a day** (5th to the 10th hour, which equals **11am-4pm**).³⁰ **Most of the ancient world in that area would finish their main stuff by 11am**, especially philosophical dialogue, so it would have gave opportunity for Paul to speak there since he had been tentmaking/leather-working all morning. The ancient world in that region utilized a **siesta around 1pm**.
- **He did this for 2+ years!**³¹ – this is a massive amount of time for Paul and incredibly significant. He knew that he was primarily called to the Gentiles, but always gave the Jews the first and the best. But at the end of the day he spent 2 years with the Gentiles running a very successful ministry after building up a Christian church.
- **New Center of Gentile Missions work** – the main hub of Gentile ministry was Antioch (on the Orontes), but this was the new main outpost.³² It was during this time likely that much of the region was reached. **Epaphras seems to have reached the Lycus valley (Laodiceans), Colossae, Hierapolis**. Many assume all 7 churches of Revelation were reached and set up churches during this season.³³
- **The Result: All the residents of Asia (Jews/Greeks) heard the Word of the Lord** – How is this possible? It's a figure of speech. **Not all the people, but all those willing to hear**. Our job is not to get everyone in church that is in our community, but it is our job to try to get everyone who is willing to hear about Christ, into church. Successful ministry is obedience to what God is

be, it probably represents what actually happened. Tyrannus (if he was the lecturer) no doubt delivered his lectures in the early morning. At 11 a.m. public activity came to a stop in the cities of Ionia (as in many other parts of the Mediterranean world), and Lake and Cadbury are no doubt right in saying that more people would be asleep at 1 p.m. than at 1 a.m.²² But Paul, after spending the early hours at his tentmaking (cf. 20:34), devoted the burden and heat of the day to his more important and more exhausting business, and must have conveyed something of his own energy and zeal to his hearers, who had followed him from the synagogue to this lecture hall, for they were prepared to forgo their own siesta in order to listen to Paul." NICNT

"It is not certain just who Tyrannus was. There were lecture halls in gymnasia to be found in every Gr. city where a philosopher, orator or poet could expound his views or give a recitation. Tyrannus may have been a Gr. rhetorician living in Ephesus at that time, having his own private lecture hall. Meyer thinks he was a Jewish rabbi, in whose private synagogue Paul and his doctrines were more secure from annoyance than in the public synagogue (H. A. W. Meyer, *Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles*, in loc.). The Western text adds, "a certain Tyrannus," indicating a particular individual. It may be that the "hall of Tyrannus" was either a building for hire, named after its owner, or the private residence of a sympathetic donor. Whatever the case, Paul's regular and unmolested use of the room for two years, with such a wide hearing, indicates his exclusive use of a spacious, well-situated room for a period of each day." <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Tyrannus>

³⁰ "The Western text adds "from the fifth to the tenth hour." NICNT

³¹ "The period indicated in v. 10 may have been rather more than two years; then, if we add the three months of v. 8, we have something approaching the three years of 20:31—probably from the fall of 52 to the summer of 55." NICNT

³² "G. W. H. Lampe, in pursuance of his thesis, finds that Paul's coming to Ephesus marks "another decisive moment in the missionary history." Ephesus was to be a new center for the Gentile mission—the next in importance after Antioch on the Orontes—and these twelve disciples were probably to be the nucleus of the Ephesian church. By this exceptional procedure, then, they were integrated into the church's missionary program." NICNT

³³ "While Paul stayed in Ephesus, a number of his colleagues carried out missionary activity in neighboring cities. During those years his colleague Epaphras appears to have evangelized the cities of the Lycus valley, Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis—cities which Paul evidently did not visit in person (Col. 1:7–8; 2:1; 4:12–13). Perhaps all seven of the churches of Asia addressed in the Revelation of John were also founded about this time. The province was intensively evangelized, and remained one of the leading centers of Christianity for many centuries." NICNT

doing. We are partnering with His successful plan and strategy. We don't know all the details of it, but He does. Therefore **we walk through the doors He opens and move on from the ones He doesn't.**

Conclusion

- **Supernatural Ministry = Power Evangelism** – we will learn next week that a lot of Paul's success in ministry happened because the Holy Spirit did extraordinary miracles through Paul during this time and in this region (anointed sweat rags/handkerchiefs and work aprons – healing and casting out demons). This year of Power we've been realizing what's possible and that there is always MORE in the Lord. Let's keep pressing in.
- **We learn best by role modeling** – what we are seeing is a bunch of people dedicating their lives, their gifts, their talents, to bless others. **Apollos used his gift of speaking for the gospel. Priscilla and Aquila used their vast knowledge and wisdom to mentor Apollos. Paul used everything he had to minister to anyone that would listen. May we be people like that.**
- **Give it Away Now** – In this year of Power, **everything you get from the Lord figure out a way that you can share some of it with someone around you.** If you get anointing, lay hands on someone else for their empowerment. If you get resources, share them. If you get opportunity, bring someone through that open door with you, that may not have the same opportunity. The more we use our stuff for the Kingdom, the more God gives us more.