

## Strong Families

Acts 18:1-28

### **Acts 18:1-11 (NKJV)**

*After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.*

*When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.*

*Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

### **Acts 18:18-19 (NKJV)**

*So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.*

### **Acts 18:24-28 (NKJV)**

*Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.*

It takes more than great programs to build a great church.

It takes more than sacrificial service to build a great church.

It takes more than money, more than a devoted staff, more than talented teachers, and more than dedicated deacons/leaders to build a great church.

What makes a great church is great people, great families, and great homes!

We strive to build a great church right here by building up people, building up families, and building up homes...if we do that, then together we will be building a great church, all to the glory of God.

We have a fine example of building a great church by building up people and building up families in our text in the form of a husband and wife team. Their names are Aquila and Priscilla.

I believe, as any real pastors do, that God intended for the Christian life to be a family affair. The Bible is filled with examples of entire families loving and serving God together.

A few examples, would be the Philippian Jailer in Acts 16. We know that immediately following the jailer's salvation experience his entire household experienced a life changing transformation, as each surrendered to the Lord.

And in our text, Crispus the synagogue leader was saved along with his family. (vs. 8)

And Timothy, Paul's "preacher-in-training" was raised by a Godly mother, who was, herself, raised by a Godly mother.

## ***2 Timothy 1:5 (NKJV)***

Three generations loving and serving God, each a foundation of the next.

In our text we see a young married couple (Aquila and Priscilla), worshipping and serving God together.

I want to show you 3 things that make a family great and will lead to building up a great church:

### **1. GREAT FAMILIES ARE SAVED FAMILIES.**

Looking at some background, we find that Aquila and Priscilla had been living in Rome, Italy. The name Priscilla is actually a Roman name, and history tells us she was from a family of nobility living in Rome. Aquila is a Jewish name.

So what we have is a young Roman girl marrying a young Jewish boy, which was not acceptable in those days, so Priscilla had to make a choice because there was a tidal wave of hatred and prejudice against the Jews sweeping through Rome.

The Emperor Claudius had just issued an edict expelling all Jews from Rome. Priscilla had to choose between her homeland or her husband.

Most of us know how hard it is to have to pick up and move, especially when it's moving away from the place where you have lived all your life. Yet this couple didn't choose to move, Aquila and Priscilla were being forced to leave!

Today's family is also under incredible pressure.

Stress and tension are a huge part of the home today with the pressures of work, time management, and the financial struggles that we often choose to live under. (that's a different sermon)

We need revival poured out in the home!

We need a spiritual awakening in our families that starts with moms and dads getting serious about living for and serving God!

We need families with a healthy fear of Satan's rampage and a heartfelt desire for drawing close to God and to one another.

I've said it before, I don't know how anyone can raise a family today without the Lord and without the help of a good church family.

Aquila and Priscilla were a family under pressure, but they were also a family under providence because God was working out their problems behind the scenes, not only for their good but for His glory!

God is in the process of bringing something awesome into their lives.

You see, at the same time they were being kicked out of Rome, traveling east toward Corinth, the Apostle Paul was leaving Athens and traveling west to the same place.

God was setting things up for them to meet face to face and when they did it was a life changing experience for Aquila and Priscilla.

Watch how God works.

Paul was a tentmaker, which was the very same occupation of Aquila and Priscilla. So Paul hired on with Aquila and Priscilla and as they worked I imagine they talked.

What would Paul have talked with them about?

The Apostle Paul would have talked about Jesus Christ, sharing the wonderful story of Jesus' birth, His life and His ministry. Paul would have told them of Jesus death and how He rose from the grave on the third day, just like He said He would! Even a little about his own conversion experience.

I can see this couple absolutely awestruck at hearing the greatest story ever told by someone who was there and somewhere in their conversation these two were gloriously saved!

When we get right with God and follow His will, He will set our paths to cross with others who need Him. Divine moments. He will do it at just the right time and in the just the right way.

Aquila and Priscilla began the journey toward becoming a great family by first becoming a saved family. but it takes more...

The second thing that makes a great family is:

## 2. GREAT FAMILIES ARE SERVING FAMILIES.

Everything else we read about this couple from then on is about them serving God together...

Years later Paul writes the church at Rome...

### ***Romans 16:3-5 (NKJV)***

What was happening to this couple is the same thing that ought to happen to each and every one of us after we get saved...regardless of our occupation.

Every believer's main business ought to be God's business!

We should be about worshipping and serving Him, teaching and helping others, winning souls and seeing people get saved!

This couple was hosting a Bible Study in their home.

I know several Christian's who own or run businesses but their main business is God's business.

1858, a man named Edward Kimball was a businessman in Boston. He was also a Sunday school teacher of older teen boys. There was a young man named Dwight in his Sunday School class. One Saturday Ed decided to visit each boy in his class just to make sure they were saved and when he visited Dwight at the store where he was working, Dwight got saved.

By 1879 Dwight was an evangelist preaching in crusades all over. There was a man at one crusade named Frederick who was pastoring a small church that was not doing too well, but after hearing Dwight the Evangelist, the Holy Spirit lit a fire under Frederick and he became a world-renown preacher. Preaching a crusade on a college campus a student walked the aisle and got saved one day.

This young man's name was Wilbur, and after he got saved he also went into the ministry. Wilbur mentored a guy named Billy to help him. Billy preached a crusade in Charlotte, NC that was so successful that the local businessmen's association decided to host another big crusade. Billy couldn't do it, so they hired a local preacher named Hamm.

At that crusade a young man came forward and got saved he was another Billy. His last name was Graham!

Many have been saved under his ministry, and many more through men like Mordecai Hamm, and the other Billy who was Billy Sunday.

Because of Men like J. Wilbur Chapman, and Frederick B. Meyer, and Dwight L. Moody, they were all making God's business their main business.

Way back in 1858 God began a work in a businessman heart for his teen boys, that would eventually reach a young man named Billy Graham, just so He could reach millions through Billy Graham. All because these men decided that their main business was God's business!

A heritage was passed down from each of these to their families, and to all they reached and just think how those saved at Billy Graham's rallies are now witnessing and preaching and reaching many others.

I'm thankful that Aquila and Priscilla understood that even though they were tentmakers by trade, their main business was serving God!

Great families are saved families. Great families are serving families. and...

### **3. GREAT FAMILIES ARE SANCTIFIED FAMILIES.**

The word sanctified means "set apart" ...separated for a purpose.

A sanctified family looks, sounds and acts different from the world around them.

It's strange how people expect their pastor and his wife and family to be sanctified but not so much themselves...

Each of us are to walk worthy of our calling!

#### ***Colossians 1:9-12 (NKJV)***

Did you know it was the 3rd Century AD before the church ever had such a thing as a building?

The church is a body of believers, and for more than 200 years the church met in the homes of people like Aquila and Priscilla.

The church didn't have any of the things that we today feel we **MUST** have in order to have church.

They didn't have a building or padded seats.

They had no PA system or projectors and screens.

There was no HVAC, no advertising, literature, websites, yet they did so much with so little and the 21st century church seems to do so little with so much!

This couple was a great family that had a great home, and it led to a great church.

So let me ask you something.

How about the church that is called your home?

Our highest calling as believers is our own children, our own marriage and our own home.

My prayer for everyone here is that you have a Saved family, a Serving family and a Sanctified family.  
A family set apart for the Master's use!

The Lord has spoken to me that in 2017 we are going to begin by praying and fasting for the restoration of our families and the revival of a great church.