

Sermon Title: **Priscilla, A Noble Teacher**

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Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **Acts 18:1-3**

Thesis: **Priscilla and her husband Aquila, were strong supporters of Paul, the Apostle and she was one of the first women of the Bible to personally promote the Gospel message;**

Purpose: **We can learn from her faithfulness about being strong advocates for Mission.**

Key Word: "Mission"

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Acts 18:1-3** (Page 138 Black and 168 Red)

A) The Setting:

- 1) **We have spent this summer looking at Women of the Bible looking at Ruth, Esther, Mary, the Mother of God, Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha.**
 - (a) Today we will do our final study on this topic ending with Priscilla, a woman with a heart for mission.
 - (b) She was not a missionary of sorts; but, she definitely supported missions and missionaries.
- 2) **Do you have a passion for our Mission of the church?**
 - (a) Do you feel you are an advocate for missions?
 - (b) Well, I believe that we can learn a lot from Priscilla and her husband Aquila about our role as a church towards mission
- 3) **Paul has left Athens in the south of Greece.**
 - (a) He traveled west across the isthmus, which is a small land bridge between the mainland of Greece and the large island where Corinth is located.
 - (b) Where Paul meets up with this couple who we will now read about.
 - (c) **Let's turn to our scripture reading for today in Acts 18:1-3.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **Aquila is a tent maker, as is Paul and so they invite him to stay with them.**
 - (a) Paul spends his time mending tents with Aquila.
 - (b) All the while sharing Christ in the local synagogue trying to convince the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - (c) And so, Paul becomes close friends with Aquila and Priscilla
 - (d) And they become believers and followers of Jesus in the year and a half that Paul is there with them.
- 2) **Priscilla is the wife of Aquila and believed to have come from nobility.**
 - (a) I don't believe that she is a typical Jew as she presents as someone who is confident and has been educated.
 - (b) They were Jews who were expelled from Rome by the emperor when he ordered all Jews to leave Rome.
- 3) **When Paul moves on with his mission to go to Syria Priscilla and Aquila go with him.**
 - (a) Traveling and helping to support the work.
 - (b) While being schooled by Paul about Jesus, the Messiah.
- 4) **What do you think it means when we talk about Paul's missions?**
 - (a) What do you think it means when I talk about our mission?
 - (b) Do you know the mission for the church in general and for our church?
 - (c) Well, let's begin by coming to a common understanding of what we mean when we talk about our mission.
- 5) **When I looked up the word mission in the dictionary; I found no less than 10 definitions; here are some of the more common uses:**
 - (a) The action of sending or being sent on some special work or service.
 - (b) A group of people sent on some special business.
 - (c) A task or function assigned to a military unit.

- (d) A group sent by a religious organization to spread their beliefs.
 - (e) One's business or purpose in life.
- 6) **So, what are we talking about when I ask you about the mission of the church? . . . Glad you asked.**
- (a) While it can mean a variety of things depending on the context of what we are talking about I primarily refer to our general mission of the church.
 - (b) To put it in a better way I am talking about our general purpose for why we exist as a church of Jesus Christ.
- 7) **The Church exists to act as the body of Christ.**
- (a) When Jesus last stood on the Mount of Olivet ready to ascend to be at the right hand of the Father, he spoke some of His most important Words.
 - (b) What Jesus told them about their Mission, their special assignment is most clearly stated in **Matthew's** Gospel in **Chapter 28:19**.
 - (c) **"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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**
- 8) **The purpose for Christ's church is to make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them what they learned from Christ.**
- (a) That is the mission we all have been given as disciples of Christ.
 - (b) Paul was a missionary; but not all of us are missionaries.
- 9) **Paul was personally sent by Jesus to spread the teachings of Christ Jesus.**
- (a) Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned 6 times by Paul in his writings across 4 different books of the New Testament.
 - (i) Acts,
 - (ii) Romans
 - (iii) 1 Corinthians
 - (iv) 2 Timothy
 - (b) While they were not missionaries themselves; they were very supportive of the work that Paul was doing.
- 10) **Later on, in Acts 18 we learn that they had followed Paul to a couple more stops landing in Ephesus which today lays in western Turkey.**
- (a) Here they stay to help Timothy who is the young Pastor Paul left behind there to Pastor the church when Paul moved on to continue his mission.
 - (b) In time, another young traveling preacher comes along who is well schooled in the scriptures by the name of Apollos.
- 11) **While he is well educated in his studies he did not have a great understanding of Jesus.**
- (a) It was Priscilla and Aquila who took him aside and more fully explained it to him.
 - (b) They had learned much from Paul and when someone came along who needed guidance; they shared from their knowledge.
 - (c) In fact, Paul writes in **Romans 16:3-4** (NRSV) **"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, 4 and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."**
- 12) **That is what is part of the mission; just sharing what you know.**
- (a) And how do you know; if you don't study and learn.
 - (b) This is why we gather for worship; to encourage one-another in the faith and help us to better understand the scriptures.

TS: **So . . .**

D) This is the Mission of the American Baptist Churches of Maine (ABCOM)

1) We are an American Baptist Church; which means:

- (a) That we have joined ourselves through an association of like Churches, the Kennebec Baptist Association (KBA), to the American Baptist Churches of the State of Maine.
- (b) In general, the American Baptist Churches of Maine or ABCOM as they are often called exist to support the associations and local churches to do their ministry and mission better.

2) The American Baptist Churches of Maine has three areas of focus which are:

- (a) AFFIRMING
- (b) SUPPORTING
- (c) CHALLENGING

3) ABCOM is Affirming:

- (a) Serving the local Church is a fundamental unit of mission.
- (b) This is done by facilitating communication and needs throughout the body of churches.
- (c) A big part of their mission is assisting to provide Pastoral needs for local churches.

(d) ABCOM helps to share Local ministry stories:

- (i) Green Shoots - the on-line ministry magazine.
- (ii) Communication through Emails to pastors and churches with important information of celebration, needs, and prayer requests.
- (iii) Providing opportunities for Holy Conversations within the body that will benefit the church of Jesus Christ.

(e) ABCOM assists with Church Celebrations such as:

- (i) Installation Services
- (ii) Ordination Services
- (iii) Historical Anniversaries
- (f) ABCOM provides Accurate record keeping, data bases, files for our churches in Maine.
- (g) ABCOM provides yearbook/directory to local churches helping to promote and encourage our networking.
- (h) ABCOM assists in creating unity with other Christian Communities.

4) ABCOM is Supporting by:

- (a) Assisting local churches in calling Pastoral Leadership and counseling the search committee, and identifying potential candidates.
- (b) Working with seminaries, ABCOM Institute of Ministry, Bible Schools, and parachurch organizations
- (c) ABCOM helps provide background checks for workers of the church.
- (d) They encourage pastors to meet ABC/USA ordination standards
- (e) Assist local churches in conflict resolution.
- (f) Assist churches in finding Ministry resources.
- (g) Assist local churches in Mission Stewardship.
- (h) Assist Auxiliary Organizations such as China Lake Camps and Conference Center.

5) ABCOM provides CHALLENGING opportunities to:

- (a) Motivate local churches to honor Christ's mandate for the whole Gospel for the whole world.
- (b) Encourage the Associations in the work of the Gospel.
- (c) Encourage mission engagement at all levels with resources and missional learning opportunity experiences.

(d) Building relationships (networking) with local churches.

- (e) Preach Biblical sermons when given the opportunity.
- (f) Help congregations understand ministry trends and best practices.
- (g) Provide ABC/USA resources such as books, national gatherings, etc.

6) In short, ABCOM's purpose is to support the local church and the Associations

- (a) We can help ABCOM be more effective by participating and supporting both with our physical presence and financial assistance!
 - (b) Our church has ABCOM as one of the ministries we support with our budget and at time through special offerings.
- 7) **Our Mission is to support missions like ABCOM as well as other Missions and Missionaries who carry on the work making disciples.**
- (a) We do this partially through our support of Go-Global Missionaries. (*Directed Giving*)
 - (b) **We do this through our Annual Special Offerings like:**
 - (i) One Great House of Sharing which goes for disaster relief efforts.
 - (ii) **Retired Ministers and Missionaries** Offering to show appreciation for their lives of dedicated service.
 - (iii) The **America for Christ** Offering supporting mission work in the United States and Puerto Rico. (*28% of every dollar supports American Baptist of Maine*)
 - (iv) **United Mission Offering** (*where 65% of every dollar supports ABCOM and 35% supports national ABC partners.*)
- 8) **We used to do the World Mission Offering; but we have supported the Go Global instead.**
- (a) The World Mission Offering used to help our missionaries stay in the field.
 - (b) However, a change was made that it would go to help support the work that they do; but they had to come up with the support for their funding to stay in the field.
 - (c) By giving defectively, we are giving it directly to the missionaries.

TS: **So, what can we say about Priscilla as we close this out?**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **Priscilla was a significant enough person to be listed first 4 out of the 6 times she was mentioned with her husband.**
 - 1) She was a good enough teacher to correct along with her husband a very learned scholar in Apollos
 - 2) She probably would not have had the courage or confidence to challenge one so well versed if she was not well versed herself.
 - 3) Like her, we should study God's Word so we are prepared to speak with confidence.
- B) **Second, when Jesus gave us the great co-mission it means that we have been given a mission.**
 - 1) But it is a co-mission meaning that we are not in this alone.
 - 2) The last part of his statement as the end of Go, make, Baptize, and teach was "**And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**"
 - 3) Jesus was sending a helper, the Holy Spirit which is in part Himself to help guide us.
 - 4) We just need to learn to listen for His leading and have the confidence that He will do that.
- C) **Finally, we need a passion for the mission of our church which is Christ's church.**
 - 1) We can be active without being missionaries.
 - 2) Because every missionary needs a team supporting the work that they do.
 - 3) But it is important to be involved.
 - 4) Stay connected with the work they are doing through letters, cards, email and the such.
 - 5) **Be excited for their successes; because we play a part.**
 - (a) And be in prayer for their challenges;
 - (b) Because we play a part in that too!
 - (c) Missionaries rely on others to support them in prayer in the some times dangerous work they do.

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**