

The Perfect Church

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[0 : 0 0] We've come to the end of Paul's second missionary journey is where he is right now. It wasn't centered. So he's come as far as Corinth and he's just left Corinth last time we got together and he'll be heading down now into Ephesus.

A look at that. The mud green line up there. That's his third missionary journey is where he's going to end up. He right now is in Corinth.

He's going to leave there and come to Ephesus. That's that orange line. And that's where we're going to pick up right now in verse 19. He's not going to stay there long and he's going to, we're not going to hear a lot about any of his travels back.

Except he's got to get back to Jerusalem. He gets back up to Antioch by that red arrow down there. Spend some time there and then says, hey, I'm going back over the whole thing again to strengthen the brethren. And we'll end up back in Ephesus.

The different thing to note this time is, if you remember before, the second missionary journey, the right there. He was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia.

[1 : 0 6] Remember, he tried to go into Asia. He tried to go in Bithynia. The Lord wouldn't let him because he had to get over Troas and then across to Macedonia to meet. I'm sorry.

Troas was where Luke was. And then they went across to Macedonia. This time on his third missionary journey, he goes into Asia. And that's what's different there. He's going to be allowed to go through there.

And where are we in Paul's life? The Red Square. Just finishing his second missionary journey, going into his third missionary journey. And like I said, hopefully we'll look out in chapter 19 where he comes back to Ephesus.

Ephesus, he would have already written 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians. And then when he's in Ephesus, he's going to be there for like two and a half years. He will hear reports and get some communication from Corinth.

And he's going to start writing letters back to Corinth. He's going to be his problem child. So that's where we find ourselves. So Paul, again, to figure his age, take about 10 years off of whatever the year is.

[2 : 0 6] So where it says 80, 50, he'd be 40, so he's in his mid-40s at this point in his life. The title for tonight is The Perfect Church. Obviously talking about it.

No. It is. All right, so Acts chapter 18, verse 19.

Well, let's back up. Why not? Up into verse 17. This is after they have in Corinth dragged all of these men in before the ruler.

And it says, And again, we don't know for sure what that vow is.

It's some form of, it seems like a Nazarite vow. And he's heading back to Jerusalem to either part, some part of that, where he's either going to make a sacrifice for that.

[3 : 2 5] Well, he's not going to make a sacrifice because he knows there's no need for a sacrifice. He has this vow he's fulfilled. And in some part of his Judaism, this is a need to go back to Jerusalem.

And then in verse 19, he came to Ephesus. So now he's taken Priscilla and Aquila, if you remember who they were, right? He had met them in Corinth. Corinth, there were tent makers. And he had joined with them.

And now he's taken them with him. It's like this amazing ministry opportunity for them. And he's like, come on, guys, you're coming with me. And so Paul takes them and he goes to, like we just looked at, he goes into Asia, to Ephesus.

He had not been allowed to before. So now Paul ends up in a place, Ephesus, which means permitted or acceptable. And Paul has been permitted to go there.

It's acceptable. He ends up arriving there and finding out everything there is permitted and acceptable. That's where they're going to have, eventually we'll see where they bring all of their magic books and articles and whatever and magic the game.

[4 : 26] And they burn it and get rid of it. But Paul was now permitted where he'd once been forbidden. And God knows what? God knows best when to open and close doors, doesn't he?

And he also knows best when to close open doors. He knows best when to close doors, but he also knows best when to open those closed doors. For Paul, he just needed to continue on in the Lord's will.

And where at one time he might have been frustrated as he was trying to do ministry. And Lord, I'm just trying to fulfill the calling you've given me. I'm trying to go in this direction and you won't let me. And it was just a matter of time. So Aquila and Priscilla are excited.

They're like, whew, Paul's at the end of his second missionary journey. I think it says somewhere in the book of Acts is going to do a third one. Maybe we get to go with him. They're thinking, we're going to do ministry with Paul. They get to Ephesus and what happens to them?

They see their missionary experience with Paul. They see that door. Glam shut. It says in verse 19, he came to Ephesus and he left them there. And Paul, we thought we were going to be your guy.

[5 : 27] You got Silas and you got Luke, you know, and you got Timothy. Here we are. We're ready to go with you. And he left them there at Ephesus. Why would Paul leave such capable, like-minded brethren behind?

We're going to find out because God had needed them in Ephesus. In verse 24, we'll see that when we get to there with Apollos. Remember, God never leaves any of his people behind.

He's simply going on ahead to prepare the way. When it feels like you've been left behind, when it feels like I thought this was my moment, when it seems like God has moved on or some ministry has moved on or some people have moved on.

No, God is just going ahead to prepare the way. Never leaves his people behind. Behold, I go and prepare a place for you. If I go away, I shall come again and receive you to myself. And it's no different as we walk with the Lord now.

There is stuff the Lord has gone ahead of us. We don't even know. Believe me, right? You all have those stories. We all have them. I can rewind a year or two from this point. And I can rewind a few years before that and a few before that.

[6 : 32] And there's things I never would have chosen to do, except that God had gone ahead to prepare the way. And then open the door and said, now follow me through here. And so Paul leaves them.

And I think that's in verse 19 where it says he came to Ephesus and left them there. I don't think it was like he got to Ephesus. He's like, sorry guys, I'll see you later. I think that's telling us what we're going to find out later in the chapter, why he left them there.

But it's telling us that he left them there. They had a work to do. And now he's in Ephesus. And he did what? He entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. Of course he did. What else is he going to do? It's Paul.

But Paul has this abnormal experience with the Jews. What's it say there in verse 20? When they desired him to tarry longer, a longer time with them, he consented not.

Usually when he gets to that point, either Paul didn't get to the resurrection and to Jesus being the Messiah. And that doesn't seem like Paul at all. Or this was a different type of response that they're like, we want to hear more.

[7 : 32] And Paul, what does he do? He says, well, I've been waiting for this forever. Of course, I'm going to stay here. Of course, I'm going to take this opportunity. He doesn't.

But he consented not, but bade them farewell. Paul recognized the fruitful opportunity he had at Ephesus, but he also knew that this was not the season for him. He had other things he needed to do.

And I was thinking about it where Paul's life, it almost looks haphazard as we read through this. It's like, well, he's bounced here and he's thrown out of here and he goes here. He's just the kind of guy that wherever he goes, the gospel's floating out of his mouth and he just can't stop himself.

I don't think so because we saw last time he was afraid. And the Lord had to come to him and said, don't be afraid to speak out, Paul. You know, I have a purpose for you here. So Paul was constantly in tune with the Lord and having to be, just like us, refilled and refreshed and re-encouraged and re-sent.

Like, this is what you're here for, Paul. But I think when you look at his life, his plans were always purposeful. Always. It wasn't haphazard. You look all the way back to it with their first missionary journey, where the Lord said, separate unto me Paul and Barnabas.

[8 : 41] You look at when him and Barnabas split. You know, Paul's plans were very purposeful. He said, I know what I want to do. We're going to go back and we're going to go to these churches and we're going to strengthen the brethren. But while Paul's life is clearly characterized by yieldedness to the Spirit, which would almost make him look like, you know, he's tossed to and fro by the wind, like we're told in John, we do not get the idea that his plans were ever haphazard.

It doesn't appear that way. And so while it might look like, Paul, why are you just throwing off this opportunity here? I mean, God has put this in front of you. You should take it. Jerusalem can wait. You don't need to go back.

Paul said, no, I have a purpose to do this. And I know this is the direction I need to go. Despite other opportunities put in front of me, this is where God would have me. So in verse 21, he bade them farewell saying, I must by all means keep this feast that comes in Jerusalem, but I will return again unto you if God will.

He sailed from Ephesus. God does well in Acts 19 verse 1. But at this time, Paul, he says, I have to go. But if God will. So he recognizes now is not the season for him.

But if the Lord will, he'll come back at the proper season. But whose season was it? Well, that's why he leaves them there. Because the church is, there's these Jews that are interested. There's the fledgling church, which has begun almost to kind of take root.

[10 : 05] So Paul says to Aquila and Priscilla, you stay here. You do the work here. I know you can, because remember when we were in Corinth, how we worked together. I know the capabilities that you have.

I know what God's done in your life. Sometimes you're a stay put person. Sometimes you're a go person. I'm a stay put person. I don't really, not call to go anywhere. When we were going to plant a church, when I thought the Lord was calling me to plant a church, I was like, where do I go?

Can I see South Carolina somewhere far away? I don't know where to go. To the beach. And the Lord is just very gently like, just where have I put you?

Well, right here. I was like, let's start a church. I'm like, okay. But where are we going to meet? Right here. Okay. The Lord just does that. So maybe you have a desire to go.

The Lord's told you to stay put. You have a desire to stay put. The Lord's told you to go. But I think the Lord wants us to be very purposed in our service to him. It's not haphazard. It's not just like, well, here's something to do.

[11 : 06] It's kind of like our relationship with him. There should be, you know, the God who created seasons and times and years and the sun goes up and the sun goes down. It's good to have routines in our lives.

It's good to be able to say, well, I read my Bible regularly. Not religiously. Regularly. Right? When was the last time you read it? Well, what is it? It's January?

Sometime in 2023. You know. No, we should be able to say, you know, I try and get to the word as often as I can. To have a routine in my life. Doesn't mean that I call up my boss.

Say, look, I overslept. I got to spend an hour in the word. Sorry. But pay me anyway. Right? No. But there needs to be that regularity. Anyway. So Paul, that's where I think he's at.

He's like, guys, I really would love to stay here. But I've got to go. I have a call in my life. And this is part of that. And God's going to use that. I think he blesses that decision.

[12 : 03] And he sails from Ephesus. And so that was if we looked back at our map. Back there. We can see he sails from Ephesus. And he just beelines it back to Jerusalem.

We don't get any other information here about him at this time. This is where I think. I think God was like, yes, Paul. This is what I want you to do at this time. And so then as we get down to verse 22.

And when he had landed at Caesarea and gone up and saluted the church. So that's Jerusalem. He went down to Antioch. Jerusalem is always down. Right? When I think of down, I think south. And up is north. But everything's down from Jerusalem because of elevation.

Because of its significance in the world. So that's a lot of travel. He just went from Ephesus to Caesarea to Jerusalem to Antioch. We're told nothing about that at all.

So when we read the scripture, it's important to realize this is what God has decided to put in front of us. So unfortunately, there are those who will try and find extra biblical accounts to try and fluff up and fill in some spaces.

[13 : 13] Well, that's okay. I mean, to find historical things. That's cool. But to try and equate that to like, well, God should have told me this and he didn't. And we know this because, you know, this archaeological dig and we found in these other writings of Josephus that this was happening.

That can be good to support the scripture. But it's never needed. Because God gave us everything we need in the scripture. I read those things too. I enjoy those things. Finding the history.

You know, I think it's interesting to find the background behind what was going on in Acts in the Roman Empire. So we're not told a lot about that, except that's what Paul's doing. And there he goes. And then he says, after he had spent time there, he departed and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Whoa. That was fast, Paul. Jesus went from Antioch all the way up back through Durban, Lystra and Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia. And we're not told anything about that because that's not what the Lord's pointing out here.

But again, I think this is Paul's purposeful plan. That Paul, he purposed this. This was his plan. It wasn't haphazard. He knew what he wanted to do. I think there's three things we can see about that.

[14 : 24] He was thorough. He said, we're going to go back. And we're going to go back over all of the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order. He was ordered. He said, I have a plan how we're going to do this.

I'm thorough. I'm ordered. And he's purposed. What was his purpose? To strengthen all the disciples. It wasn't just because he wanted to go on a fun missions trip. It wasn't because it was just an opportunity.

It was something that he was called to and then he was purposed to do. And then we get down into, we're back at Ephesus now.

That was a whole lot of country covered in two verses. And so Paul is currently strengthening all the disciples. That word strengthen means to render more firm.

That's what he's doing. He's going from place to place and firming them, confirming them in the word. And then in verse 24 and from 24 through 28, we're going to get that snapshot, which we saw in verse 19, where it says that Paul left them, left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus.

[15 : 28] Well, why did he do that? And that's what the Holy Spirit is going to put before us right now. So here comes this guy, Apollos.

Apollos just means of Apollo. And we are told a few things about this man between verse 12 and verse 25.

It tells us that he's an eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in spirit. He taught diligently, spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

So some of those words, as we go through there, the meaning behind those words. So Apollos, a man born in Alexandria, he was an eloquent man. He was skilled in speech.

He was powerful and strong in the scriptures. He firmly understood what these scriptures were and he could speak them with power. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord.

[16 : 43] The way meaning, it literally means the proper path. He was on the right path. And being fervent in spirit, or it means to boil, that he, you know, it welled up within him.

He just couldn't contain it. He spake and taught diligently. The word to therefore teach is to discourse for the purpose of instruction. And he did that accurately and exactly. Because why?

He knew. He knew what he knew. He only knew the baptism of John, but he knew it. And so here Apollos comes and he's very different than Paul. Very different. That's the whole problem that he's going to eventually go to Corinth.

In verse 1 of chapter 19, it says, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul comes to Ephesus. Doesn't seem like these guys overlap in their ministries as far as togetherness, being together. But Apollos goes back to Corinth and he stirs up a whole hotbed of trouble.

Because all of a sudden, here comes this amazingly eloquent, powerful speaker. Did he have more anointing than Paul because he was eloquent? No, not at all.

[17 : 47] Being a skillful, powerful speaker does not make you a good preacher. But it never hurts to be able to talk. It frustrates me to no end when I get going so fast and I run three words together and I try and back out of them and I'm still running them together.

And it's just like, whoa. It's just... So you have to be able to speak, to communicate so that we can understand one another. So Apollos comes. It seems almost like he surpasses Paul in ability.

And yet, he doesn't grasp the second half of the equation, as we're going to see. He only knows the baptism of John. What is the baptism of John? In Luke chapter 3, chapter 2 and 3, it tells us when the coming of John the Baptist from the wilderness, it says, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests.

There should only be one high priest, by the way. So that's a problem there, politically. The word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

So it says he knew only the baptism of John. What is the baptism of John? The baptism for repentance and for remission of sins. What does that mean? What does repentance mean?

[19 : 05] You all know that, right? It means to turn, right? Well, remission, to have your sins remitted or remission of something, is to let go. You know, you say your cancer is in remission.

It's been turned back. It kind of has the idea of repentance, but it's also the idea of releasing. When your sins are forgiven, the word in the New Testament for forgiven is to release. So if I say I forgive you, it's I release you.

I release what it is I feel you owe me. I release that indebtedness. It's the remission of sins. So you have the repentance and remission to turn, to let go of your sin and turn from them.

That's what he's preaching. He's preaching what John preached. You need to let go of your sin. You need to turn from your sin because Messiah is coming. Prepare the way. John preached the preparatory message of one's need to release and turn away from sin.

Because remember, John was sent to prepare the way. So that message is what needs to go to the world. That's what we're sent to tell people. We're sent to tell them to prepare the way.

[20 : 07] Hey, first of all, you need to release your sin. You have to acknowledge you have sinned. Well, I'm not a sinner. Well, okay, you're not going to need a savior. Release your sin and turn from your sin. You're not going to release your sin and turn from your sin.

You're not going to turn to Jesus, are you? So Apollos was a man skilled in speech with a powerful grasp of the scripture, who was on the right path, had an inner drive and passion, who knew his material and how to communicate it, who rightly proclaimed man's need for repentance and remission of sin.

However, Apollos' message was not complete. He knew what to turn away from. However, he did not yet know what or who to turn to. He was this powerful man saying, turn away from your sin, but he did not yet know who to turn to.

You know, repentance, we're going to see as we go on, repentance and grace are two sides of the same coin, right? They go together. You can't exist in repentance without it leading into grace.

Jesus said, speaking of when they cast out a demon, he says, if you cast out the demon, he goes and wanders through deserted places, finds seven more just as wicked, comes back, finds the house swept and clean and takes up residence.

[21 : 23] And the latter state of that man is worse than the first. The idea is you have to fill it with something. So it doesn't work for these men who would come. If you think of John's baptism, they came to the Jordan to be baptized.

They confess their sins. They say, what should we do? He says, hey, if you've taken extra, return it. Don't lay on any burden that's too heavy for them. Those are all good things, but they can't live in those, right?

Even if you gave up your sin, well, you're going to turn to another one. Scripture says you're going to either be like the dog returning to his vomit or you're just going to go find a different one. You have to fill it with something.

So while Apollos' message was a good message, it was a needed message. It was an incomplete message. It wasn't perfect. Not quite the perfect church yet.

So then what happens with this man? He began to speak boldly, verse 26, in the synagogue. Just like Paul. This is a synagogue that seems to be somewhat receptive to the message.

[22 : 23] Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. So it seems like Aquila and Priscilla also go to synagogue because they heard Apollos there preaching so eloquently.

What did they do? Something very interesting. When they heard him, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Interesting.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 28, 19 and 20, he said, Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Go therefore and teach all nations. Disciple all nations is that word there. Go and make disciples. Discipleship takes time and discipleship takes lives.

You can't remotely disciple someone. Discipleship is meant to be personal. Look how Jesus did it. Now, yes, we're to go and to teach. So part of discipleship is, you know, you're taught, you receive, we're edified in the word, and we grow.

[23 : 30] But you can't remotely disciple. Like, you can't exist watching someone online and sending in your prayer request to their text line and being like, yeah, I'm getting disciplined.

Well, not really. You're being taught, and you can grow in that, and there can be edification. But there's not the discipleship. Because Jesus, what does he say there? He says, you, go you, therefore, and teach.

You do that personally. Go and find someone. Go and do that. Go personally and do this. And what we see from Aquila and Priscilla, I think, is a few different things that can be instructive to this.

The picture of discipleship. What do we see there? Aquila and Priscilla did four different things. It says here in verse 26, Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard him, they took him unto them.

They took time to listen. They took time to listen to that guy. That takes some time in discipleship. It can't just be a one-way thing. I find it a lot easier to sit up here and do a lot of talking.

[24 : 29] And I do sometimes a lot of listening. And then interacting with that. And then sometimes I can be a little too like, well, this is what the Bible says, so just don't do it. God bless you.

But discipleship is the idea of walking with someone. And it's not that I grab them and say, well, I'm the teacher, you know, like Jesus, the master. And you're the pupil.

So come on. What did Jesus do to his disciples? He served them. Constantly serving them. Constantly taking time to deal with their dumb questions. Like some of those questions those guys ask.

You're like, you know, master, my mom's got something to ask you. Okay, John, what does she want? Can my boys sit one on your left hand and one on your right hand?

Sure. Yeah, just go away. Right? Crazy stuff. But Jesus took time. They took time to care. They didn't just go, did you hear what he said?

[25 : 25] That was off. Oh, my word. He doesn't even know the rest of the gospel. Going to be hard for him to do ministry, isn't it? You know, well, you know, see what happens. They took time to care. They took time to build a relationship.

They took him unto them. They brought him unto them. They didn't just talk to him. They didn't have to cherish it to say, hey. They said, hey, come on over for dinner. You know, let's just hang out. I doubt they said, Apollos, you have some explaining to do, and we're going to help you figure some things out.

Come over to our house so we can set you straight. He's not going to come for dinner. Like, ah, I think I'm good. They took time to build a relationship, and they took time to teach. They expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Expound their means to open it up, to set it forth, to expose it. They took time to expose him to the scripture and the scripture to him.

I think it's a perfect picture of just one little verse stuck in there of discipleship. Discipleship is meant to be personal. Just as Jesus gave not just his time but himself to his disciples, we too are to disciple personally and sacrificially.

[26 : 29] And again, discipleship takes time. Discipleship takes lives. And not the life of someone I'm discipling. It takes my life. I have to be willing to lay down my life for someone else.

I always have this picture of, like, climbing up a cliff, right? You can't see the top. It's kind of foggy like this. There's some clouds up there, really high. You look down, it's really far.

There's people climbing, right? And God takes us, and sometimes he moves us up and down it. And sometimes he goes, and he sticks us in a spot in the cliff. He says, you stay there. And he anchors us there.

And we're reaching down there and grabbing people. And taking them and shoving them up on the head. And we're grabbing the next one and shoving it up on the head. That's like discipleship. You know, it's like, I got you, buddy. And you're pulling him up.

But then you're pushing him on past you. You're like, well, wait, he gets to keep going? That's the hard part. When it's like, okay, you don't need me anymore. Goodbye. I like to be needed.

[27 : 26] But that's kind of that picture of discipleship. That it's not about me. I'm just there to grab that hand, yank the guy up, you know, and shove him up a little further. And then God may plant him somewhere.

Or he may have him keep climbing. But that's not for me to decide. So he set forth, they set forth the word of God. And here it says, more perfectly. Ah, our perfect church. We're getting to it.

That word just means more accurately or more exactly. That they said to Apollos, you know the scripture. But let me show you something, Apollos. Let me show you a better way.

Let me show you something even more. So they open up the scripture and accurately and exactly expounded it. They didn't just say, you know what? Just focus on the gospel. Don't worry about prophecy.

Don't worry about the Old Testament. All you need to tell people is Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Well, that wouldn't be expounding the scripture accurately or exactly, would it? Because that's not what the Bible tells us the word is all about.

[28 : 21] But I like this too, because Apollos, it tells us he was mighty in the scripture already. And yet there was more. And that's how it always is. The more you dig, the more there is. You know, it's like, wow, there's that and there's that.

You know, like studying for this. Sometimes I read a verse a lot of times and it's just there. It's a verse. It's interesting. It's just the face of it. And then all of a sudden the Lord just expounds it. He opens it. You're like, oh, it's a picture of discipleship.

Wow, Lord, that's great. The one little verse. He does that. There's a quote. The study of the word of God is an ever compounding interest. Just exponentially continues to compound itself over and over.

You're never going to get to the end of that ever. It continues to do that. Matthew 13, 52 says, Then said he unto them, Have you seen this one?

Oh, that's an antique. How much is that worth? Have you seen this one? This is brand new. Wow, I haven't seen that. That's what it's like when we study the word. And when we disciple one another. All right.

[29 : 37] So Paul, Paul was faithful to do this with Aquila and Priscilla, I think. I don't think that they were already at this point. I think it was their one and a half years in Corinth with Paul.

That they had learned his method. And we see that in Acts 20, when we eventually get to that point. Paul is going to, he's in Miletus, and he calls the elders from Ephesus. These people that he's eventually going to spend a couple years with.

And he calls them. He says, When they were come to him, he said unto them, You know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. What was that manner? I have not shunned, declare unto you all the counsel of God.

And so here, Paul has done what? It's such a cool picture of this. These incomplete people in these incomplete settings. But each one is building on the other one. Paul can't stay in Ephesus.

I'd like to stay here. I'm leaving this work incomplete. He leaves Aquila and Priscilla. There, there. Apollos comes. And God uses them to help complete Apollos. Then he goes back to Corinth.

[30 : 37] It's just this beautiful picture. But he's not shunned to declare all the counsel of God. I think as Paul disciplined Aquila and Priscilla, they turn around and disciple Apollos. Apollos goes back to Corinth and discipled the Corinthians.

And it's just this beautiful picture of discipleship. So Apollos now is loaded for bear. He's just discovered the grace of God, right? His repentance and his grace.

And Apollos has just discovered the end of the story. And verse 27 says, And when he was disposed, Apollos, to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him, whom when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.

For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. So Achaia, that is the area where Corinth is.

So when you see those different, you know, the Achaia, that is a region in Corinth that's in it. So he's heading from Ephesus, going back across the Aegean Sea. He ends up in Corinth there, is where he's headed to.

[31 : 47] But it says here that the brethren in Ephesus, they wrote to those in Achaia. And they wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him, one, that when he was come, or when it was come, he helped them.

So I think, again, there's a picture here, just as we saw in 26, a picture of discipleship. I think there's a picture of a healthy church here, which is kind of ironic because the picture of a healthy church is Corinth at this point.

But it's what Ephesus, what they're writing to Corinth, they're saying, hey, this is a healthy response, church. This is how we should be acting. So Apollos there, where it says he was disposed, that word means deliberate.

The word pass means to walk, and he's going into Achaia. Achaia means trouble. So Apollos is deliberately walking into trouble, and he knows it.

He says, I am deliberately walking into trouble for the sake of the gospel. And so the brethren at Ephesus, they write, and they say, hey, look it, here's this guy, he's coming. In the picture of a healthy church, what do we see from the scripture here?

[32 : 51] In verse 27, and when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote. The first thing we see is the brethren, that they're brothers. It's a family. It's a unit. It's not just the church wrote, or the church of Ephesus, or the elders of the church, it's the brethren.

They're all collectively together. There's no hierarchy in the kingdom. There's not. There's a lowerarchy, right? We're called to serve, but there's no hierarchy. So any calling or what we think of as position in the church is just a lowering.

So I'm pastor. Hi. That sounded like, hi. All that means is I should be serving you. If I'm not, go find a different church. It just is, it doesn't mean any way of being elevated.

It's just a position to serve. If God calls you to serve, if he gives you gifts and calling, whether it's worship, whether it's helps, whether it's hospitality, it's because that's an opportunity we can humble ourselves and serve like the Lord does.

He says they're brethren. And the brethren wrote, I keep losing my place over here, exhorting the disciples. There were discipleship happening.

[34 : 03] There was disciples there. That means there's teaching. That means there's growth and edification. That means the word's being opened. He says to receive him. And secondly, to support him. So the church, a healthy church, their brethren, their disciples, they're receptive to what God is doing and the supportive, because what do they do?

They allow him to do what? Exercise his gift and his calling among them. Who, when he came, he helped them much, which had believed through grace. So Apollos, his ministry to the church at Corinth, it was what?

He helped them that believed through grace. He helped them. He helped bring them together. Same thing where it said about Paul up there, where he was going to go back through all of these places. He was going to strengthen the brethren to render more firm.

And so here you have Apollos doing that. He's helping bring them together. He's helping who? Those that believe. They believe. The word that believe literally means thought true. He's helping those that thought true.

They thought truth and they thought what was told them according to God's word was true. And then lastly there, grace. That was that missing piece by Apollos, wasn't it? Apollos had the repentance, the remission, and now he had the grace.

[35 : 14] He was able now to be a help and to strengthen those that had believed through grace. I was thinking of this scripture when I was thinking of grace. Psalm 116 verses 12 and 13.

It says, What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? What can I give back to God? God, what can I do for you? Can I serve you? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

You know what blesses God? When he blesses us? To receive his blessings. Isn't that crazy? Isn't that crazy? All of God's benefits that he's given me and rendered towards me. It's like, Lord, what do you want me to do?

Just take them. Just receive it and call upon me. That's the highest calling you have. Receive what God has given you and call upon him. When we serve out of that heart, it pleases the Lord.

And it brings true edification to the church. Because then it's not driven by a need, like my need to repay God or my need to feel needed. It's not driven by that.

[36 : 11] It's not driven by guilt or debt. It's driven by the same thing that God's heart is towards us. He says, I just want to bless you. Just receive this. That's how we should serve.

That's the picture of a perfect church. When we serve out of a heart where we just desire to bless one another. With nothing in return. And then it says, he mightily convinced the Jews.

So he's back in Corinth. If you remember back in verse 8. No, I'm sorry. In verse 6 of chapter 18.

It says that when he testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ, when Paul did this. They opposed themselves and blasphemed and shook their raiments. I'm sorry, they blasphemed and he shook his raiments.

They opposed themselves. If you look at what that meant. So that was the reaction of this church, the synagogue, I mean in Corinth. Now Apollos goes back. He's in Corinth. And it says, he mightily convinced the Jews.

[37 : 11] And that publicly showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. That word convinced is a strange word. It almost means like to stretch or to pull or to drag along.

Like unwillingly, these Jews have been dragged grudgingly to acknowledge that what he says is true. He had convinced them. Apollos' arguments literally forced the Jews to grudgingly acknowledge that the scripture did indeed proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah.

That's the wording there where it says he mightily convinced the Jews. And that publicly or openly showing by the scriptures that Jesus says was, but in the Greek actually is.

Jesus is currently the Messiah. Jesus is your Messiah. And he, where Paul didn't have the success, Apollos was able to. But you can understand why the Corinth, some of the Corinthians are like, oh, I'm with, I'm with Apollos.

Not me. I'm with the OG. I'm with Paul. I go back to Peter. You know, there's just this stupid, right? And what's that? That's thinking that, well, God has some kind of like hierarchy in his church.

[38 : 16] No way. You know, guys, I met Chuck Smith and shook his hand. And he was just some nice old guy, right? Personally, I don't think, you know, he's that easy to listen to unless I put him on double speed, right?

That's great. That's great. But God has used him mightily. Mightily. But he was the most self-effacing man. He just was, you'd ever, you'd ever meet.

And it was all, it was interesting at that when we'd go to East Coast Pastors Conference when I was up in New York. And the few times he came before he got too sick. And then he would kind of like come in by video conference.

And, but he seems like when you're sitting up there, he's just this old guy in his Hawaiian shirt. He seems so out of place. Like he didn't seem like the big wig he should be.

It was just, you think of Paul and you think he must have been so powerful. No, he wasn't because the Corinthians, they didn't like the fact that he didn't come so powerfully. He said, oh, your appearance is weak.

[39 : 15] And just so, all you want to do is just talk about Jesus in the Bible. And you're not a lot of pizzazz and eloquence. And you don't have a commanding presence on stage. You don't walk around and pump your fist. And he was just, I think Jesus was a lot like that.

I think Jesus was just so chill. He had to have been. The way he responded to those Pharisees, that they didn't want to always stone him. You know, when you turn to him and be like, you hypocrites.

Well, does your Bible say? No, he didn't say. I think he's just like, you guys are such hypocrites. What did he say about me? His delivery was with such love.

Anyway, so that's Apollos. He's there. He's doing what Paul was not able to do. And God allowed that. And Paul's eventually going to circle back around now to Ephesus. We're just going to real quick get through verse 6 and end this.

I want to see Paul coming back to Ephesus. So it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus finding certain disciples. He said unto them, have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?

[40 : 17] And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. So Paul comes back to Ephesus now. How long Apollos has been at Corinth? I don't know. But here he's back at Ephesus.

God has laid the groundwork. It wasn't time for Paul to be in Ephesus. He's going to be here now two and a half years. But at that time when he was here earlier, it wasn't time. God needed to do some work and lay some groundwork.

Would Paul have been the right man to disciple Apollos? Probably not. They seem very different. But God knew who was. He had Aquila and Priscilla there. And so now Paul comes to the fledgling church.

When it says that he passed through the upper coast, that would be Phrygia. And so that is at about Durban, Lystra, where before he went up around Asia at that time, he kind of takes that line and goes right in this time.

He's returning to Ephesus. So the church at Ephesus was growing, but it still was not perfect. It was not complete. It was not exact. And it was not accurate. Because he sees these disciples.

[41 : 16] It says they're disciples. That means they're part of the church. They're believers. They were what would be considered Christians. Christians, right? And he says to them, he notices something different about them. He says, have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?

And they said unto him, we've not so much heard whether there is any Holy Spirit. And he said unto them, what then were you baptized? And they said, what? John's baptism. Guess where they heard that from probably?

Apollos. Probably some that have believed but have followed the teaching of Apollos, not realizing all that there was beyond that. Then said Paul, John verily, he truly baptized with the baptism of repentance.

And that's good. Saying unto the people that they should believe on him, which should come after him. That is on Christ Jesus. Repentance wasn't the end, guys. It was preparation for who should come next. And when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

And all the men were about 12, receiving the Holy Spirit. Very interesting topic. Obviously, there's a couple things we can learn about this. Right off the bat is Paul was able to tell that something was off with these guys.

[42 : 24] They were not living within the power of the Holy Spirit. And then he equates it with baptism, doesn't he? There's a picture here of it looking like baptism.

So in verse 2, what do we see? We see the Holy Spirit is to be given and received. He said unto them, have you received the Holy Spirit? Well, that indicates what? It indicates someone gave it to me, and I have to receive it.

If you then, being evil, didn't know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask? It takes place after salvation. Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?

Ephesians 1.13, Paul says that we had been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise when we believed. So there's two different works happening here.

There's the Holy Spirit, which is sealing us and dwelling within us. But then he's saying, well, there's another Holy Spirit experience that happens after you believe, since you believed. And it's expected to be a part of every believer's walk, isn't it?

[43 : 24] Because he said to them, guys, have you not received the Holy Spirit yet? So this experience that happens after salvation needs to be received. It's supposed to be a part of every believer's walk. It clearly is understandable and knowable because Paul is explaining this.

He's not like, well, I can't really, I'm not really sure what it is. He's kind of like, ooh, and things happen. You might talk with another language. You might get slain. You might jump up and down. You might have gold dust fall on you. I don't know.

That's very understandable. Very explainable. And he said unto them, unto what then were you baptized? So here he's equating it with baptism.

He's saying, well, wait, you should have known about the Holy Spirit because guess what? You would have been told about it at baptism. You would have been told like as you go down into the water and come up out of the water in the same way God wants to pour his Holy Spirit upon you.

That just as you're completely immersed and submerged in water, just as the water is upon you and you are drenched, God wants to completely immerse you and drench you in the Holy Spirit. You should have been told about this at baptism, guys. It's part of what we do.

[44 : 24] He says, this is the groundwork I laid in Ephesus. What's going on here? Well, there's this guy Apollos. It's equated with baptism. And then Paul said, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, you should believe on him which should come after him.

That is on Christ Jesus. Receiving the Holy Spirit is equated with baptism, but it also has this idea that it's like we said about repentance.

Repentance points and prepares us for Jesus, but it's not the end. So he says, well, John did truly teach repentance. And that was a very good thing. And it prepares us for Jesus. Grace, as we said, completes repentance, doesn't it?

The two sides of that coin. But the Holy Spirit completes the believer. Grace completes repentance. The Holy Spirit then completes the believer.

You can be a believer having repented and received salvation through grace, but you're not complete. You're not, as the scripture would say, accurate, exact, and complete without the Holy Spirit.

[45 : 33] And the last thing we see is Paul lays hands on them. So we see that the Holy Spirit is conveyable. And it's evidenced, isn't it? That Paul laid his hands on them. He could convey this. This is something that one believer could do to another believer that God would honor.

And it was evidenced that there should be evidence. So receiving the Holy Spirit is to be given and received in verse 2. It takes place after salvation. It's understandable and knowable.

It's expected to be a part of every believer's walk. It's equated with baptism. It's conveyable and evidenced. So what I would say to you is the same thing Paul says. Have you received the Holy Spirit?

If you have, you should be able to see the evidence of it in your life. I don't know anywhere in Acts where people receive the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, if you want to call it that. But they don't know it. They always know it. It's a knowable, understandable thing. God wants to be part of every believer's experience.

[46 : 29] That's what completes us. As we close, there's that picture of the guy climbing. You reach down and grab him. You pull him up. You push him on ahead.

Paul tells us in Philippians chapter 3, speaking of this idea of this perfection in Scripture, you know, it means what? Exactness, wholeness, completeness, accuracy. Paul says, He says, He says, He says this, But wait!

He just said, And he says, Well, there are two different variations of that word. This word you can replace with mature.

Let us, therefore, as many as be maturing. Or let us, those of us, we know we're not perfect. We know we've not apprehended, but we are continuing to grow in this. We are continuing to mature in the things of the Lord.

Let us, therefore, as many as are continuing to pursue and be mature, be thus minded. What mind? The mind that I've not yet apprehended, but by golly, I'm going to try and get a hold of it.

[48 : 12] And I'm going to forget that which is behind so that I can let go of it to reach for what's before. Right? If you're still holding on to what's behind you, you can't grab what's in front of you. That's the mind we're to have. And if in anything, you'd be otherwise minded.

Hey, guys, if you're not exact, you're not accurate, you're not perfect, you're not whole. Don't worry. God shall even reveal this unto you.

There was one of those words. God shall reveal even this unto you. God is so faithful that he makes his church whole. Perfect church? Yeah, we're a perfect church, guys.

We are perfect in Christ. We have everything we need in him. As we saw with the discipleship from Paul to Aquila, Priscilla, Aquila and Priscilla to Apollos, that that which was lacking, God had a plan to make it up for each of these people.

And then we see Paul getting to Ephesus and he says to these 12 guys, all the men were about 12 in verse 7, he says, hey, you're lacking something, guys. You're lacking something and God wants to fill you up and make you complete.

[49 : 15] So let's be a complete church. Perfect church, right? Perfect according to what the word means in scripture. Not what it means today. Let's pray. Father, I thank you that we can be exact and accurate, not ourselves, Lord, but because of the word of God.

That we can be complete, again, not because of ourselves, but because of the Holy Spirit that completes us. Lord, I thank you for the repentance and remission that you have allowed to take place in each of our lives, Lord.

We can each look at things we've had to let go of, we had to repent of, turn away from. And I don't think any of us miss them. I don't think the sin that once hounded our lives or the flesh or the self-centeredness is something we miss.

We had to let go of that. We had to turn away from that, to turn to you. And then, Lord, grace, so beautifully completed repentance. Because as we let go of one thing, we reached out and our hands are filled with something so much better, Lord, with grace.

And then, Lord, to be a new bought, new washed, new made child of God. And then, Lord, to be given an unending battery pack of the Holy Spirit that completes the believer.

[50 : 27] Not left on our own, not left to figure this out on our own. But, Lord, to be led, to be filled, be empowered by you. And, Lord, as we look in this book, in the book of Acts, there's so much happening, Lord, that we're not told about.

We're not told about all the political stuff that's going on, the wars and rumors of the world. We're not told about that. We're not told about, in each town Paul goes into, if they're left or right, conservative or liberal.

We're not told that. We're not told when the elections are going to happen. We don't see any of that. Lord, we just see these men and women who have let go of those things that were behind them so they could reach forth.

And that they could press on to that prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. But, Lord, let us live that way in these last days as the world evolves into chaos. As good is bad and bad is good and up is down and down is up.

Lord, as we go into this year of an election year, Lord, let's let go of all those things that have no value in eternity in the kingdom.

[51 : 31] And, Lord, we reach forward with open hands and we ask you to fill them with your grace, fill them with your word, and to fill our lives with your Holy Spirit, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Amen.