

**TITLE:** A SUCCESSFUL REPROOF

**TEXT:** ACTS 18:24-28

**THESIS:** To use Apollos, Aquila, & Priscilla as great Christian examples of how to correct one another, and how to be corrected.

**INTRO:** Correcting, and being corrected, are difficult things. First of all, society today tells us we must be politically correct, **never** saying that someone else is wrong (even if they are). Of course, this is the easy way out, and we must ignore this rule, choosing to obey God rather than men. Then, there are so many potential obstacles to a successful reproof of a brother or sister. For it to be done God's way, it takes the right attitude on the part of the one reproving and the one being reproved. Apollos, Aquila, & Priscilla are excellent examples of this proper attitude.

### **I. CHARACTER (v. 24-25):**

- A. (v. 24) Born at Alexandria – many Jews lived here; a city well known for schools; largest ancient library was here.
- B. Eloquent (wise, knowledgeable; good speaker) – probably highly educated in Alexandria (subject to being puffed up -1 Cor 8:1).
- C. Mighty in the Scriptures (OT scriptures, considering the NT letters hadn't yet been circulated (it was AD 54), & considering he taught John's baptism only) – but he was able to prove Christ & Christianity by the OT (he knew Christ fulfilled the prophecies).
- D. (v. 25) He was instructed in the way of the Lord (possibly attended the Alexandrian schools; maybe was in Judea while John the baptist was teaching; may have been taught by disciples of John who came to Alexandria)
- E. Fervent (boiling over; enthusiastic) in the spirit - *his* spirit (the HS is part of Christianity, which he hadn't yet fully embraced). His enthusiasm shouldn't be overlooked. The church needs enthusiastic members – brothers & sisters boiling over!
- F. He spoke and taught diligently (accurately, exactly) the things concerning the Lord. What he knew, he taught accurately.
- G. But he only knew the baptism of John.
  1. All the other information about Christ and Christianity he knew and taught. The problem was with the actual process of becoming a Christian. What else could he be teaching incorrectly other than this simple process? The mode didn't change (baptism still meant "immersion"), so why did it really matter?
  2. John's baptism was valid until Christ died, rose again, & initiated the new covenant in the church. A change then took place and John's baptism was no longer valid. Scripture teaches here (& 19:1-7) that John's baptism was now wrong. This shows the necessity of understanding what we're doing when we're baptized. So many today, when taught the truth about baptism, ignore it by saying, "well either way I was baptized, so I'm okay" (even though they were baptized for the wrong reason)! \*The water is not enough (it's not holy water)! Doing it for any reason is not enough. You must understand the purpose (death w/Christ, etc.) and the results (sins washed away)!

### **II. CORRECTION (v. 26):**

- A. Apollos was *not* a false teacher (as per 2 Pet 2). But he was teaching an incorrect method of salvation. This required attention!
- B. He came to Ephesus & began teaching boldly in the synagogue. He was sincere, & unaware of his false doctrine. Again, he is to be commended for his bold teaching, done publicly. What reason would he have *not* to do this? **What reason do you & I have?**
- C. Aquila & Priscilla didn't ignore his error. They understood that love rejoices not in iniquity, but in truth (1 Cor 13:6).
- D. Aquila & Priscilla took him to themselves ("lead aside") – this was done privately, even though the error was taught publicly!
  1. When showing a brother his error, do so in such a way that it will be easy for him to accept the truth & repent.
  2. \*What might Apollos' response had been if Aquila & Priscilla had been ugly about it? Don't make it hard for people!
- E. They expounded (declared, explained) to him... They made his knowledge complete (filled in the gaps) re the new covenant.
  1. Once Apollos understood the truth, *he* could correct his incorrect teaching on baptism. This is a win-win situation.
  2. No details given on this meeting. But Apollos became a great influence in the church, being commended by Paul (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6 - "I planted, Apollos watered..."; 16:12 - "I greatly desired him to come unto you").
  3. No mention is made of this false teaching again (1 Cor 13:5 - Love doesn't keep account (keep track) of evil). Even when Paul deals with what is most likely the results of this incorrect teaching by Apollos (ch. 19), no mention is made of him.

### **III. CONCLUSION (v. 27-28):**

- A. (v. 27) Apollos then purposed to go to Achaia (probably Corinth), who probably needed his help (based on v. 28).
  1. The brethren, having encouraged Apollos, wrote to the disciples to receive him. Would they have done this if they thought he might teach error? Might they have been a little unwilling if Aquila & Priscilla had **publicly** and/or harshly rebuked him?
  2. Apollos helped the Corinthian brethren. His value as a brother and an eloquent teacher had *not* been diminished just because he had taught something incorrectly!
- B. (v. 28) He mightily [powerfully] convinced (confute, refute, defeat) the Jews (Judaism) publicly. He publicly debated them, proving by Scripture that Jesus was the Christ (sounds like Paul)!
  1. He knew the Old Testament scriptures (specifically the Messianic prophecies). They didn't have personal copies of the OT, so Apollos had probably memorized much of this.
  2. He knew the facts about Jesus' life, teaching, death, burial, & resurrection.
  3. We should be able to do these same things!

**CONCLUSION:** Correcting takes proper attitudes. A loving attitude is necessary in the one doing the correcting, as well as the one being corrected. **Aquila & Priscilla loved Apollos** enough to help him know the truth better (teaching him in love). They **loved the truth** enough to stand up for it. **Apollos also loved the truth** enough to be open-minded to it & to be reproved. He then was a big enough person to accept his shortcoming, rather than think too highly of himself and his education. There is no indication that he was argumentative or contentious.