

Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 24-26 **ALL IN THE FAMILY**

INTRO Turn your Bibles, or turn them on, to Acts chapter 18. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts. The 5th book of the New Testament, chapter 18.

Well, I have some good news and some bad news today. Which do you want first?

ILLUS: Speaking of good news/bad news: Here's some bad news. A guy falls out of an airplane at a thousand feet in the air. The good news is he had a parachute on. The bad news is the parachute didn't open. The good news is there was a huge haystack on the ground right where he was heading. The bad news is there was a pitchfork lying in the middle of the haystack, tines up. The good news is—he missed the haystack.

Ok, I'll give you the good news first. I'm preaching today on the subject, "All In The Family". That's good news! We all need to hear a sermon on our church as a family of believers and what that means to us. That's the good news. --- Now for the bad news. We're really all in the same family! That's right. That guy sitting over there, with all his messed upness, is part of your family! And not only him, so is she. And guess what? So am I. Ain't it cool?

1 Timothy 3:15 *"I am writing ...so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God,"* ---That word "household" is the term for family. It is the same word used twice a couple paragraphs earlier. Note...

1 Timothy 3:4-5 *"[An overseer] must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 5 If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?"*

The good news is, for those of us who believe, and have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are "All In The Family" together. NOW LET ME EXPLAIN. We are family because we have the same Heavenly Father. That's the only way into this family.

Now there is a general sense that all humans are children of God. Occasionally the Bible talks like that (cf. Acts 17:29). But most of the time the Bible's family language is more restrictive. For example, In John 8:31-47, Jesus gets in the face of some of his self-righteous religious adversaries by telling them that they are "children of the devil, not children of God." If they were children of God, he says, they would love and obey God rather than loving themselves and obeying their own man-made traditions. In Luke 12:46-50, Jesus defined his brothers and sisters (family) as those who obey and follow him.

SO, Let me make this crystal clear. Not everyone is a part of God's family. I hope all of you are. If you are, it is not because you are good or bad or rich or poor. It is not about being religious or trying to be nice to everyone. The family of God is not defined by the family you are born in, the rituals you observe, or the place you go on Sunday morning. A person becomes a part of the family by believing and obeying the Gospel of Salvation through Christ alone.

The church is family. We have the same father. We are then brothers and sisters.

So, if a church is a family, ...then it's about people, right? Not about programs, or popularity, or persuasion, but people!

Let's consider this thought for a moment... WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BUILD A GREAT FAITH FAMILY? It takes more than a super staff working well with the pastor, more than talented worship leaders, and more than dedicated elders and deacons to build a great church.

I'll tell you what I think it takes to have a great church... First and foremost, it takes a great God! You can't even have church without God. You can have a club. You can have a meeting. But you can't have a church without God. Second, it takes people who want to be great, dedicated to a great God! I HOPE WE WANT TO BE GREAT!

Let's look at our text for a moment... In Acts 18: 1-3, 18-19, 24-26 In these verses we have the story of a couple who was won to Christ by Paul. After becoming part of the "Family of God", they dedicated their lives to Him and His church. What an example!

Aquila and Priscilla became great in the cause for Christ. And they helped the church be great. Let's see how. Notice...

I) THEY WERE SAVED: vv 1-2 *"After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to visit them,"*

Allow me to reconstruct this story for you...this couple was living in Rome, Italy. The name Priscilla is a Roman name, and secular history tells us she was from a prominent family of nobility living in Rome. Aquila is a Jewish name. So we can see that a young Roman girl has married a young Jewish boy, and that was not acceptable back then...a huge wave of anti-Semitism had swept that land in those days, and the Romans hated the Jews. The Emperor Claudius had just issued an edict expelling all Jews from Rome. Paul had heard of this couple's faith and he made it a point to meet them. What he found was...

A) A Family under Pressure: vv 1-2 It's always hard to pick up and move, especially when it's moving away from the place where you have grown up. But this couple wasn't choosing to move, they were being forced to leave! They are also an illustration for the 21st century family of today...also under incredible pressure from without, and from within. Stress and tension are a huge part of the home today with the pressures of work, time, and finances we choose to live under. Then children enter the picture and the stress goes up, and more and more the older they get.

ILLUS: Here's an eye-opener for all of us today: if you have a child or grandchild that is 14 today and beginning as a freshman in high school, here's some things to expect by the time they graduate—

- 2/3rd's of their class will have used drugs
- 1 in 5 will be an alcoholic
- 2 in 5 will have consumed 5 or more drinks at 1 sitting
- 20% will use tobacco daily
- 46% of babies born out of wedlock will be to kids their age
- 1/3rd of all abortions will be performed on girls their age
- ½ will be sexually active
- 2nd leading cause of death of kids their age at graduation will be suicide

I) THEY WERE SAVED: vv 1-2

A) A Family under Pressure: vv 1-2 We need a revival in the home...we need a revival of families that starts w/ moms and dads getting serious about serving God! Secondly, this was...

B) A Family under Providence: v 3 "and he (Paul) stayed and worked with them because they were tentmakers by trade, just as he was."

God was working out their problems behind the scenes...for their good and for His glory! God is in the process of bringing something quite wonderful into their lives. You see, as they were being kicked out of Rome, and were traveling east toward Corinth, the Apostle Paul was leaving Athens and traveling west to the same place, and when they met face to face, it was the beginning of something wonderful that would last the rest of their lives.

Remember what Paul's trade was? A tentmaker. I imagine they were working together. And what do people do when they are sitting down working? They talk! And what would Paul have talked about? It wasn't the Atlanta Falcons...he would have talked about Jesus Christ. He would have shared the wonderful story of the gospel...of Jesus' birth, His life and ministry, His death and resurrection, and this couple would have been mesmerized at hearing the sweetest story they had ever heard...sounds for sore ears, and I believe they were gloriously saved because of it! That's how our God is...if we get right with him and follow His will, He will cross our paths with others who need Him...at just the right time...in the just the right way. Aquila and Priscilla became a great family against all odds.

II) THEY WERE SERVANTS: vv 18 "Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time.

Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila." Everything else we read about this couple from this point on is about them serving God together. Years later Paul writes back to the church at Rome...Romans 16:3-4 "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."

Do you know what's happening to this couple? The same thing that ought to happen to each and every one of us after we get saved...regardless of our occupation, our main business ought to be God's business! Worshipping and serving Him, teaching and helping others, winning souls and seeing people get saved!

ILLUS: In his book 70 X 7, The Freedom of Forgiveness, David Ugsberger tells of General William Booth, the founder of the salvation Army, who had lost his eyesight. His son Bramwell was given the difficult task of telling his father there would be no recovery. "Do you mean that I am blind?" the General asked. "I hear we must contemplate that," his son replied. The father continued, "I shall never see your face again?" "No, probably not in this world." "Bramwell," said General Booth, "I have done what I could for God and for His people with my eyes. Now I shall do what I can for God without my eyes."

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

I) THEY WERE SAVED: vv 1-2

A) A Family under Pressure: vv 1-2

B) A Family under Providence: v 3

II) THEY WERE SERVANTS: vv 18

III) THEY WERE SANCTIFIED: vv 24-26 *“Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord and was fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately about Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him in and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”*

Sanctified means “set apart” for the cause of Christ. They didn’t just accept Christ, they shared Christ. They disciplined others. They took Apollos aside and shared with him the full gospel. And they didn’t stop there. Paul wrote in Romans 16:5 *“Likewise greet the church that is in their house.”* That was the house of Aquila and Priscilla. They set themselves aside for the Master’s use!

CONCLUSION: This was a great family, that had a great home, and it led to a great church...so how about the church that is YOUR home? So goes your home, goes our church! We’re “ALL IN THE FAMILY” together. I owe it to you to be at my best. You owe it to me. We owe it to each other.

I hope everyone here can have a saved family, a serving family, a sanctified family...set apart for the Master’s use!

Let me tell you how to be saved...