

PRAY

[Act 18:18-28 ESV]

18 After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow.

Here we have Paul back on the road, he crosses the five or so miles from Corinth to Cenchreae, you may remember from last week how brother Kris explained that this was a common route for trade goods and people to cut across the isthmus.

Paul brings Priscilla and Aquila of whom we will speak at greater length when we get to verse 26

I want to go off the “path” here a little about the last sentence in this verse, “At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow”.

It is amazing to me, as I research a study of how many varied opinions there can be about even this simple a sentence, there are divergent opinions on “who” cut their hair, Paul or Aquilla, taking the contextual clues, for the purpose of this study, we will stick with the logical conclusion, that it was Paul who cut his hair, because he was “under a vow”

With slightly less controversy, most of the bible scholars I read seem to agree that this vow was the Nazarite vow from:

[Numbers 6:2 ESV]

2 "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD,

The "rules", if you will, are laid out in Numbers 6:3 to 6:21

There is speculation that Paul undertook this vow of dedication in thanks for the Lord's protection and promise of success that was revealed earlier in:

[Act 18:9-10 ESV]

9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent,

10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."

We rejoin Paul, sporting his new hairstyle, and Pricilla and Aquilla on their journey

19 And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

Paul, as we have seen many times before, goes into the synagogue to reason with the Jews

But wait, back in Corinth, didn't Paul abandon the Jews:

[Act 18:4-6 ESV]

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

6 And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

Just because he (or you) might get rejected when spreading the message of the Gospel to one person or group, that doesn't mean you should never try again, lets say you come across a person and you try to talk to them about the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, what if they are so enraged that they react angrily to you, should that mean that you should never try to speak the truth about Jesus to anyone again?

Look what happened here with Paul:

20 When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined.

21 But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus.

They even asked him to stay, didn't stone him or run him out of town, but take note of what he qualifies his return on.

"If God wills"

As James tells us:

[Jas 4:13-15 ESV]

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—

14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

Solo Paul, with his short hair manages to make landfall

22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.

Paul, going up and greeting the church probably means that he went into Jerusalem, went to the Home Church and also to the temple to be able to complete his Nazirite vow .

For the rest of Paul's journey all we really know from the book of Acts is verse 23

23 After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Fair thee well Paul, we will catch up with you soon, for now on to:

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.

Apollos must have been something else, Paul circles back to him in:

[1 Corinthians 1:12 ESV]

12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

That is some group to have your name included in, Paul, Peter and Jesus, people are following him in such a way as to get this kind of a "shout out"

25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

In John's own words we turn to the book of Luke

[Luke 3:16 ESV]

16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

There will be more about this next week in chapter 19 of the book of Acts

Even though Apollos had yet to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Look it's our old friends Priscilla and Aquila, who are they:

For one they were tentmakers, as was Paul by trade:

[Act 18:3 ESV]

3 and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.

They hosted churches in their home(s)

[1Corinthians 16:19 ESV] 19 The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.

Paul called them "fellow workers"

[Romans 16:3 ESV]

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

In fact, one of Paul's last writings mentioned them:

[2Timothy 4:19 ESV]

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

Fun facts:

Pricilla and Aquila are mentioned six times in the new testament

They are always mentioned together, no mention of one without the other

Pricilla's name is mentioned first in four of the six verses they are in

It is unusual for the wife to be mentioned first, the prevailing thinking on why is that is because Pricilla was the more "learned or outspoken" of the two, we don't know for sure, maybe in their tentmaking business, she was the more customer serviced oriented. Other thoughts are that she might have been of a Higher social status than Aquila, or a better teacher there are even some that think it is possible that she was the author of the book of Hebrews.

Lastly, we return to the superstar Apollos:

27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,

28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

I don't have much to say after that, he powerfully refuted the Jews...Showing by the Scriptures that Christ was Jesus.

Isn't that what we are called to do, show the world who Jesus is, by Scriptures, but also by having him on our hearts and being as much like him as we can at all times.

Let's let Paul have the last word:

[1 Corinthians 3:4-7 ESV]

4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each.

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

Pray