

The Quest for Recognition
Acts #21 | Acts 18:1-28
February 21, 2021

Pre-Sermon Remarks

- Monthly email / Lent (Thank you to Elizabeth)
- Things That Are Hard to Do Series

PRAYER

Introduction

- Super Bowl: who gets the credit for the win, Brady or D-line?
 - Article: 150 rings given out to the team to distribute as they wish
 - Players, injured reserve, practice squad, cheerleaders, front office
- This chapter has many connections to other parts of the New Testament
 - Romans: Priscilla and Aquila, rivalries and jealousy
 - 1 & 2 Corinthians: Apollos vs. Paul, rivalries and jealousy
 - 2 Timothy: Paul's instruction to Timothy, *fulfill your ministry*
- Have you ever wondered if people notice the work you do? What about God?

Big Idea: Where do you seek recognition?

Priscilla and Aquila

¹ After this, he left Athens and went to Corinth, ² where 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 came to them, ³ and since they were of the same occupation, tentmakers by trade, he stayed with them and worked. ⁴ He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks.

- Corinth: big, important city in the Roman world | 1 and 2 Corinthians
- Emperor Claudius expelled Jewish people for "impulsore Chresto" (Suetonius)
 - Aquila and Priscilla were forced to leave | Refugees!
 - When Claudius died and Nero became emperor, the edict was abandoned
 - So they go back to Rome to help the splintered Gentile/Jew church
- Tentmakers: more than just for camping. Military, streetside shops, various materials
 - It was common for rabbis to have another source of work and income
 - These are working-class folks, not nobility

Priscilla and Aquila: business-owning, faithful and godly members of the church

Silas and Timothy

⁵ When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself to preaching the word and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. ⁶ When they resisted and blasphemed, he shook

out his clothes and told them, “Your blood is on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

- Silas: leader in the Jerusalem church, joined Paul after the split with Barnabas
- Timothy: Jewish mom, Greek dad, from Lystra.
- Something about them showing up enabled Paul to devote himself to more full-time ministry. A financial gift? Just the support?

Silas & Timothy: associate pastors

Justus and Crispus

⁷So he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, along with his whole household. Many of the Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized. ⁹The Lord said to Paul in a night vision, “Don’t be afraid, but keep on speaking and don’t be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city.” ¹¹He stayed there a year and a half, teaching the word of God among them.

- Titus Justus: most likely a Gentile God-fearer, hospitality
- Crispus: Jewish leader of the synagogue

Crispus and Justus: a non-paid elder and a deacon of hospitality

Paul stays for a year and a half, longer than anywhere thus far!

1. Divine vision of reassuring
2. Team of people that God is assembling!

Gallio the Ruler

¹²While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack against Paul and brought him to the tribunal. ¹³“This man,” they said, “is persuading people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.” ¹⁴As Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or of a serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you Jews. ¹⁵But if these are questions about words, names, and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of such things.” ¹⁶So he drove them from the tribunal. ¹⁷And they all seized Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal, but none of these things mattered to Gallio.

- Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeanus is the brother of Seneca, the famous Roman philosopher who tutored Nero
 - Seneca, writing of his brother: *No other human being is so charming to just one person as he is to all people.*
 - Basically, he thinks this is a sectarian fight: one group of Jews vs. another
- He doesn’t intervene, because he wants people to like him, perhaps?

Sosthenes: next leader up? (likely) another leader in the synagogue. Same as who wrote 1 Corinthians?

- A guy who we really don’t know much about. But God knows.

On To Ephesus

¹⁸After staying for some time, Paul said farewell to the brothers and sisters and sailed away to Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. He shaved his head at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken.

- Nazarite vow: no grapes, no cutting hair, for a period of serious dedication | Num 6

¹⁹When they reached Ephesus he left them there, but he himself entered the synagogue and debated with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he declined, ²¹but he said farewell and added, "I'll come back to you again, if God wills." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

- Very brief stay in the 3rd largest city in the Roman empire!
- But don't worry, we'll be back there next week and *whoa boy, what a riot*

²²On landing at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, then went down to Antioch. ²³After spending some time there, he set out, traveling through one place after another in the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

- This signals the end of his second missionary journey

Apollos the Preacher

²⁴Now a Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, an eloquent man who was competent in the use of the Scriptures, arrived in Ephesus.

- He's Jewish, but from Alexandria | Septuagint, Philo the Jewish historian

²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately about Jesus, although he knew only John's baptism.

- Truth, but incomplete!

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

- Paul left Ephesus, but they're still here
- I wonder, was it hard for them to do that? Correct/teach this gifted man of pedigree?

²⁷When he wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers and sisters wrote to the disciples to welcome him. After he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

Can You Relate?

Related to ministry, but also personal contexts

1. Paul | Unique calling and gifting
 - a. *I'll get my recognition from how important my work is*
2. Aquila & Priscilla | Supportive and wise
 - a. *I'll get my recognition from helping and supporting the very best*
3. Silas and Timothy | Secondary role
 - a. *I'll get my recognition from being in proximity to greatness*
4. Justus and Crispus | Faithful leaders
 - a. *I'll get my recognition from proving myself through work*
5. Gallio | Good-natured and pleasant
 - a. *I'll get my recognition from not making anybody too upset with me*

6. Sosthenes | Small role in a big story
 - a. *I'll never get the recognition that I deserve, victim identity*
 7. Apollos | Uniquely talented and gifted
 - a. *I'll get my recognition through exercising my unique gifts*
- *Does any of this apply in work? Family? Volunteerism?

Recognition From God | GOSPEL

1. Uniquely created by God | Psalm 139:13-16
2. Uniquely known by God | Luke 12:7
3. Uniquely saved by Jesus | Romans 5:8
 - a. If you're not, this is the day!
4. Uniquely rewarded at the end | Matthew 25:23 *Well done, good and faithful servant*

The only accolade that truly matters is being united by faith to Jesus!

Looking At Your Own Heart (Church, Family, Workplace) | It will come out in all arenas

1. Accurately self-assess | Romans 12:3-8
 - a. ³For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one. ⁴Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, ⁵in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. ⁶According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith; ⁷if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; ⁸if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.
2. Put jealousy to death | 2 Corinthians 12:20
 - a. This church always struggled with selfishness and comparison (love ch. in 1 Cor.)
 - b. ²⁰For I fear that perhaps when I come I will not find you to be what I want, and you may not find me to be what you want. Perhaps there will be quarreling, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambitions, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder.
3. Trust Jesus with your reward | Matthew 20:1-16
 - a. Workers in the vineyard, same reward for different work
 - b. Do you want man's praises now, or Jesus' praises later?
4. Recognize and encourage others | Romans 1:11-12
 - a. ¹¹For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— ¹²that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

Benediction

Romans 15 ⁵May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.