

# Trusting and Engaged

Acts 18:18-28

*Halifax: 17 February 2013*

## **Introduction:**

Trusting and engaged!

- Those are the two qualities that ought to characterize all of you as God's servants.
  - By trusting,
    - I mean that as God's servants you ought to totally rely on Him. He has everything under control and you can leave it with Him.
  - By engaged,
    - I mean that as God's servants you ought to be conscientious and diligent in doing your work for God—
      - after all, you are serving the King of kings—He is to be honoured by your diligence...
      - And your work for Him has an eternal impact on your life and the life of others. Nothing is more important!

TRANS> Trusting and engaged—that is what you need to be!

But have you ever noticed that these two qualities seem to have trouble coexisting?

- In our partially sanctified state, it seems that one drives the other away.
  - One person trusts but is slack, another is diligent, but does not trust.
  - It does not have to be this way—but it often is.
- Someone says, “I am not going to worry about my kids—I am just going to trust God that they will turn out right. After all, we are saved by grace, aren't we?”
  - And what that translates into is that the person is not engaged the way they should be in parenting.
    - You won't find them sweating in prayer, wrestling with what they can do to helpfully address their children's issues, making a long term plan for their nurture, making sacrifices for their training...
      - “No,” they say, “I am just trusting God.”
  - This person is supposedly trusting, but they are not engaged.
- And then, contrasted with this, you have the person who is engaged but not trusting.
  - Sometimes this is exhibited in a dramatic way by the Chicken Little syndrome...
    - You know, the chicken that thought the sky was falling.
      - This person is always frantic and anxious that things are going wrong!
      - Little things always excite them and get blown out of proportion because the problem is multiplied by their fear and worry.
    - This person is very conscientious and engaged!

- They have to do *something*!
  - But often they are guilty and defensive (because they haven't done all that they should to gain total control), judgemental and harsh (because others haven't done their part) and frazzled because they have so much to do and can't get to it all.
  - They are engaged, but often they are not as helpful to others as they ought to be...
    - Rather than helping others, they are more likely to attack them even though they don't mean to.
    - They are always working, but their work is often misdirected—obsessing on details and missing the big picture—
  - But worst of all, their work is not done in faith!
    - If they have success, they do not see the hand of God and thank Him—and in the midst of their activity, they do not look to Him for grace—either for themselves or for those they minister to.
- And there is a variation on the Chicken Little theme too...
  - Sometimes the servant who does not trust God may be cool and calm...
    - but it is not because he is trusting in the Lord...
      - It is because he has confidence elsewhere—in himself, in other people, in fate—whatever.
      - This servant is confident that he has it all figured out and he doesn't sense the need to pray or receive help from God.
  - And then there are also those miserable souls who fall into the “it all depends on me mode,”
    - but who actually neither trust nor work—they just feel guilty all the time—
      - They know they ought to serve and they feel very responsible, but they lack discipline—
        - They live in perpetual guilt, neither trusting in God nor working for Him.
      - They are often labelled as depressed—and indeed they are!
- The ideal, of course, is to be both trusting and engaged.
  - That on the one hand, you are confident that everything is in God's hands, while at the same time, you recognize that you are an integral part of His plan and are to pour yourself into His work.
    - You look to him to help you work and to prosper your work, and you give yourself fully to the work.
    - You are both trusting and engaged.
- Theologically, it comes down to a proper understanding of God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

- By God's sovereignty, I mean the doctrine that God is absolutely in control and does whatever He pleases in heaven and earth—working all things according to the council of His own will.
  - This means that from start to finish, everything that happens is God's doing.
    - If enemies come to attack, God has raised them up and sent them.
    - The enemies are totally responsible, but God has done it.
- By human responsibility, I mean that we are responsible for what we do or do not do—and for the effect that has on the outcome.
  - For example, if I as a preacher am slack, it will affect the health of the congregation and I am responsible for that.
    - If a parent does not both nurture and correct his child, it will have adverse consequences and the parent is responsible.
- In our limited human capacity, we cannot understand how sovereignty and responsibility can co-exist.
  - But the Bible consistently teaches that they do co-exist.
  - Therefore, when it comes to our service to God, we are to absolutely trust Him at the same time that we diligently engage in His work.
  - We are to be trusting and engaged!

Today I want to look at the profiles of three very different persons who were trusting and engaged as servants of God.

- They are presented to us in Acts 18:18-28,
- So let's begin with the first profile...

## **I. The profile of a seasoned missionary that was trusting and engaged: the Apostle Paul.**

- A. It is striking to see how Paul is able to leave his work in the hands of the Lord.
- This “leave it in God's hands trust” comes out in a couple of ways in our text...
    1. First, that he is able to leave Corinth—though there was much yet to do there.
      - a. In verse 16, it says that after spending a lot of time there, he **“takes leave of the brethren and sails for Syria.”**
        - The work in Corinth had been very profitable—many people were saved,
          - but as seen in Paul's first letter to them, there were also a lot problems and lot of immaturity...
            - problems in their personal lives, problems with divisiveness, problems with idolatry, problems in the corporate worship, problems with doctrine, and problems with pride.
      - b. But the time had come for Paul to move on.
        - We do not know all the reasons for his decision, but we can judge to some extent by what he does...

- He ends up visiting the mother churches of Jerusalem and Antioch and then the churches of Galatia and Phrygia that he had founded.
- Many manuscripts include the words of Paul in verse 21 that explain that he felt compelled to keep the upcoming feast in Jerusalem—probably the Passover.
  - That would put him on a time constraint because the Passover for that year would have fallen in early April (AD 52),
    - and the seas were always closed for navigation until March 10<sup>th</sup>.
    - He would need to sail as soon as he could.
- We are also told that he had taken a vow—the procedure for a vow was that you let your hair grow after you made the vow, and then shaved it at the end of the vow...
  - The hair was then taken up to Jerusalem to be offered in thanksgiving to God for answered prayer.
  - It is a likely conjecture that Paul was giving thanks for his safe-keeping at Corinth, as God had promised...
    - especially since he shaves his head at Cenchræa which was one of the two ports at Corinth.
      - We are reminded that Paul lived in the time of transition between the Old and New Covenant when Jews were at liberty to observe Jewish customs.
      - Paul did this in part to ingratiate himself to the Jews, as he puts it, “becoming all things to all men.”

TRANS> But the point is that Paul was able to leave the work at Corinth in God’s hands when it was time to go...

- He often expresses great concern for the places he had left, but he does not suppose that it all depended upon him.
2. Notice secondly how he was able to leave Ephesus—even though there was an open door of ministry there!
- He was able to entrust that to the Lord too.
    - a. Surprisingly, the Jews in the synagogue at Ephesus were quite receptive of his ministry and, according to verse 20, asked him to stay!
      - That would be hard to pass up!
        - He usually met with such resistance in the synagogue, but these are asking him to tell them more!
        - But Paul told them that he must go now but that he would come back, if the Lord was willing.
    - In many ways, it was a great act of faith for him to walk away from people who wanted him to remain...

- But if Paul had allowed himself to be controlled by opened doors, he might never have left Cyprus—the first place he went to minister!
- b. This is reminiscent of the Lord Jesus (as recorded in Luke 4) who went off to pray when the multitudes were looking for Him at Capernaum...
- And who then surprised His disciples by telling them they must go on to the next cities to preach the gospel there!
  - If He had not done this, He might never have left Capernaum.
    - Yet, it was God’s will for Him to go throughout the cities of Galilee—and that meant He had to break away from the multitudes at some point.
- c. It is interesting to see how Paul took Aquila and Priscilla along with him to Ephesus—
- And apparently they ended up staying there—more about them later—
    - but from this you see that Paul, because he trusted in the Lord, was able to entrust the work at Ephesus to this couple.
    - It also appears that Timothy and Silas remained at Corinth.
3. Now what about you? Are you able to leave things in God’s hands when they need to be left there?
- Some of the most conscientious people in the world are not able to do that...
    - they act as if it all depends on them.
  - Some of you mothers, do you cripple your children by not entrusting work to them?
    - Do you let them clean the washroom or cook supper even though they might not do it quite the way you want?
  - And what about some of you fathers?
    - Are you able to say “no” to work in order to keep appointments with your family or to do ministry and service?
      - Can you say “no” to guard your times of worship? of Bible study? of reading?
        - or do you drop those as soon as someone asks you to do something else?
        - Jesus would have never prayed if He had not said “no” to people.
    - Can you leave matters in God’s hands?
      - I hear of many ministers who wreck their marriage and their children because they cannot say no to the demands of ministry.
      - They are unable to entrust the work to the Lord.
        - I know a divorced Baptist minister who would invariably cancel his family vacations because some need would arise in the church.

- Apparently it all depended on him, but now he is divorced and his relationship with his children is strained.

TRANS> But of course there are some of you that have no problem at all taking time off!

- There are some of you that need to be working a lot harder than you are now.
  - Your problem is not with supposing it all depends on you, but with laziness and a lack of diligence.
  - Paul could certainly not be charged with that!

B. See how diligent he is to fulfil his responsibility!

1. He was, in many ways, always about his Master's business!

- So it was with Jesus!
  - And indeed, that is the way it should be with all of us!
  - Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God!
- That doesn't mean that there is no place for marriage or no place for secular work or playing games with your children!
  - That is part of your Master's business too!
  - But a lot of us should look at our schedules and see if there are not better ways to use our time.
    - Do you neglect your family because you are always wanting to be on Facebook or texting friends?
    - Or as a young man, do you spend half your day goofing off when you could be serving others or diligently equipping yourself for future service?
    - Do some of you neglect prayer for things that are not nearly as important?
      - Are there any things that you are doing that need to be cut out because they are not really for the glory of God?
        - Then cut them out!

2. Take a look at the diligence of Paul.

- He is very conscientious about serving Christ wherever he goes.
  - a. First, that in passing through Ephesus, he takes the opportunity to minister at the synagogue.
    - As he travels through, he does what he can for the kingdom of God.
    - He introduces at least one synagogue to the gospel so that he gains a foothold for the gospel there...
      - And apparently the response is so great that Aquila and Priscilla settle there and purchase a house.
    - Do you look for ways that you can do good wherever you go too?
      - Seize every opportunity—

- but one caveat—keep in mind that an opportunity is not an opportunity but a temptation if it takes you away from your God-given duty!
- b. Secondly, you see Paul going to encourage the mother churches at Jerusalem and Antioch.
- 1) It may not be apparent at first that he actually goes to Jerusalem,
    - but almost all Bible commentators agree that verse 22 indicates that he did when it refers to him going **up** from Caesarea and then **down** to Antioch.
    - Caesarea was the port that you would use if you were going up to Jerusalem...
      - And the custom of referring to visits to Jerusalem as going up was so well established that when you say that somebody went up, it means they went to Jerusalem.
      - Jerusalem, of course, was the mother church where the Lord had commanded his disciples to begin the preaching of the gospel.
        - It was from Jerusalem that the gospel had gone forth.
  - 2) And then verse 22 also says that Paul went to Antioch and verse 23 says that “he spend some time there.”
    - This, of course, was the base of the Gentile mission.
      - You will remember that it was at their Presbytery meeting that they were instructed to send Paul and Barnabas out initially.
      - And you will remember how Paul and Barnabas returned and reported to them how their prayers had been answered in the ministry among the Gentiles.
  - 3) Paul considered this work of going back to the mother churches to be very important!
    - a) They were praying for the work that he was doing, and it was a tremendous encouragement for them to hear how God had worked.
      - Luke doesn’t mention it here, but remember how such reports caused these churches to rejoice and to give glory to God?
      - That is what the work is all about—it is for the glory of God!
        - We must not underestimate the importance of missionary reports!
        - Pay attention to the reports that we get from Cush for Christ, Reformation Christian Ministries, Redemption Prison Ministries, Word and Deed, Gillespie, and others!
    - b) Paul’s visits were also important for preserving the unity of the church.
      - It was from his previous visit to Antioch that the matter of the place of circumcision for Gentiles came up...

- And this matter was settled by a council of the whole church at Jerusalem.
  - It was very important to stay in touch so that mutual trust and concord could be built.
- c) It is important for us to show up at Presbytery and Synod meetings and spend time with other churches.
- I will likely preach while in Ontario for Presbytery, and Kevin Bigney is planning to go as our elder delegate.
  - It costs money to send us, but how important it is for the unity of the church.
  - And you, when you visit other places—find the believers there and connect with them...
    - Encourage them and receive encouragement from them.
    - I am very thankful for the way you reach out to those who visit here from other cities.
      - This fall, it is our turn to host the Presbytery. Set aside that time and get involved!
      - Brothers will arrive on September 25 and we will meet on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

TRANS> The diligence of Paul is very helpful to us—

- Believe it or not, there is yet more that he does on this missionary trip...
- c. He also goes to strengthen the churches he founded
- Look at verse 23... It says:
    - **Acts 18:23: After he had spent some time there [in Antioch that is], he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.**
  - This is the third time Paul visits these churches...
    - You remember that even after his first missionary journey,
      - he and Barnabas want to go back to them again on their return trip and strengthened them by reminding them that we must enter God's kingdom through much tribulation...
      - He and Barnabas also ordained elders in each church.
    - But even though they had their own leadership, Paul continued to reach out to them...
      - He wrote to them when they were troubled by the circumcision party...
      - And then he and Silas visited them at the outset of their second missionary journey—Paul insisted that this be done!



- We know as well that he was always praying for them and always looking for reports about them to know how they were doing,
- And now he goes again to look in on them and to see how they are doing.
  - And, as the text says, he goes to strengthen the disciples!
    - In whatever ways they needed to be strengthened!
- You see that Paul is very diligent, a man with a very strong sense of responsibility to do good for the church!
  - Learn from his example!
    - Use God's word to strengthen the people around you—
      - Do you men strengthen your children, both in family worship and in daily conversation?
      - Do you talk of what it means to love God when you rise up and when you lie down and when you walk by the way?
      - Do you endeavour to encourage other believers in the church?
        - Do you have them over and encourage them in the hope that we all share?
        - Do you go out of your way to visit your brothers and sisters?

TRANS> Perhaps some of you will say,

- Well yes, but Paul was an apostle and that was his calling.
  - I grant you that—but in my applications I have not suggested that you do anything outside of what an ordinary servant of the Lord ought to do.
  - And now in our text, we come to the example of a couple that were not set apart to preach the word...
    - certainly Priscilla was not because the New Testament does not permit a woman to preach,
    - and there is no indication that Aquila did any preaching either.
- So let's look at this profile...

## **II. The profile of a lay couple that was trusting and engaged—Aquila and Priscilla.**

- A. See first of all that Aquila and Priscilla are able to trust God with their business.
- That is hard for some people to do—their business controls them.
    - But not so with Aquila and Priscilla.
  - 1. Last week when we were introduced to them, we saw that even though they had recently been displaced when Claudius drove the Jews from Rome,
    - They were not licking their wounds, but instead were reaching out.

- They had Paul come and stay with them, and also provided work for him, since they were all tentmakers.
- Corinth was a very good place for this kind of work, and it appears that they had a thriving business.
  - But you see that they are not so caught up with it that they are unable to take in this missionary who needed a place to stay.

TRANS> That is what we saw of them in our text last week...

2. But you see in our text for this week that they take a much greater step of faith.
  - a. Verse 18 shows that they accompany Paul on his journey as far as Ephesus.
    - Of course that is something in itself to leave their business to do this...
    - But we see that they also relocate to Ephesus!
      - They are willing to pull up stakes—this time voluntarily—for the sake of the kingdom of God!
  - b. We cannot tell if this was part of the original plan or something they decided to do after seeing the response of the Ephesians...
    - But it is a lot of work to relocate when you have a trade like they did.
    - At this time, it appears that the church at Ephesus is actually a synagogue that simply embraces the gospel.
      - If that is so, they already had elders and leadership—but Aquila and Priscilla stay to be a support to them...
        - because of course they had spent a lot of time under the teaching of the great Apostle Paul...
        - And it appears that Priscilla was especially keen because she is now mentioned first.
  - c. It is clear that this couple does not decide where to live on the basis of work opportunities alone...
    - They entrust their business to God and look for where they can be used in the service of the Lord.
      - This does not mean that it is wrong to move for work, but I think the choice to move becomes very questionable if you move to a place that does not have a good church.
        - Too often, disciples of Christ will move and then look to see if there are any good churches.
        - That is backwards!
          - Do not move unless you first find a good church that you can be a part of.
3. Furthermore, it appears that they later open their home as a meeting place for the rapidly expanding church at Ephesus.

- When Paul writes his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus a few years later (probably about 3 years later), he indicates this when he says:
  - **1 Cor 16:19: “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.”**
  - So you see how this couple places their business and their resources at God’s disposal to be used for the advancement of His kingdom.
- Some of you have also made sacrifices—passing up or not pursuing careers in order that you might help in establishing this congregation.
  - In the days to come, we desire that we might be able to start a daughter church, but we will all need to be diligent to do our part—whatever that part may be.
  - Decisions about where you live and where you work should be made under Christ

B. Now I want you to look at how this couple ministers to others...

- We get a beautiful example of how they are trusting and engaged servants when we look at the way they minister to Apollos.
  - According to verse 24 this chap shows up at the synagogue and starts preaching!
    - **Acts 18:24-26: a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue.**
  - He was a very powerful speaker—
    - and you know how there is sort of a tendency to be a bit suspicious of a stranger who you can tell is going to be influential!
      - And there were some problems with him.

1. But Aquila and Priscilla show that they are trusting in the Lord in the way they respond to him.

- a. They see his deficiency—they see that he only knows the baptism of John.
  - Let me explain this...
    - I would go a little farther than some and suggest that this probably means that he was (more or less) in the same position that Jesus’ disciples were in when they went out preaching the kingdom before Jesus had been crucified and resurrected.
    - They were indeed preaching the gospel, and those who believed could be saved by it,
      - but such persons needed to be informed of what had happened in the outworking of God’s plan!

- I say this because when it says he knew only the baptism of John, it indicates that he only knew the teaching of John that went along with his baptism...
  - You are baptised when you embrace the doctrine of the one who is baptising...
    - John called people to repent and believe in the coming one who had come to establish a kingdom of righteousness.
    - It was a message not a lot different than the message that Jesus preached before His suffering and resurrection.

TRANS> I think that was the deficiency of Apollos—he just needed to be informed...

- But whatever the deficiency was, Aquila and Priscilla certainly saw it...
    - b. But they show that they are trusting the Lord in that they do not fly off the handle!
      - They do not become terrified that he is going to lead people astray.
      - They do not wish that he had never come to town.
      - They do not run around like Chicken Little, and start warning people about his inadequacies or denouncing him publicly.
        - They do not do this because they trust the Lord.
    - c. I have seen situations where leaders overact and end up ostracising those they might have helped if they had been a little more judicious.
      - You can denounce someone who does not practice family worship, or someone who does not practice biblically regulated worship or infant baptism, or who is not clear about six day creation...
        - but maybe you should try to influence them first—
        - And though we would not have them preach, you can even do this if you meet a Christian who is fuzzy about abortion or same-sex marriage...
2. You see that Priscilla and Aquila, instead of flying off the handle about the deficiency in Apollos...
- judiciously and graciously reach out to him to instruct him in more perfectly in the way of the Lord.
  - Look at verse 26. It says:
    - **Acts 18:26: When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.**
- a. Way to go, Priscilla and Aquila!
    - If they had not been trusting in the Lord, they would have reacted and would never have had this opportunity.
      - Now this couple, who were not preachers themselves, are able to be used to help this man who is a very excellent preacher!

- They approach him in a way that he can receive it—not publically during his sermon...
  - but they take him aside and speak to him.
  - And he listens and then they are later able to commend him to their friends in Corinth!
- b. What great lessons there are for us here!
  - Parents, don't freak out at your children—when they do something foolish—
    - Approach them about the seriousness of what they have done, but do it in such a way that they can receive the instruction.
    - The purpose is not to drive them away, but to draw them in to the truth.
      - When you fly off the handle and are harsh, it is often more about you being embarrassed or hurt than it is about helping them.
  - You cannot be properly engaged in Christ's work unless you are also firmly trusting in the Lord.
    - When trust is there, you can speak to people in a way that will truly help them!
    - I do not say, of course, that whenever you do this, they will always respond well!
      - Not at all!
      - But at least their poor response will not be due to the way you approached them.

TRANS> And this brings us to our third profile...

### **III. The profile of an apologist Apollos who was trusting and engaged**

A. Here is a man that is tremendously gifted and engaged...

1. We have already seen how verse 24 describes him as “an eloquent man who was mighty in the scriptures.”
  - a. The word translated *eloquent* here indicates a man who was both highly educated and articulate.
    - It carries both the idea of able to speak and highly learned.
    - Paul himself, though highly educated, was not particularly gifted in his speaking ability—
      - He was clear and profound, but not particularly polished.
    - Alexandria was a city with a lot of highly educated Jews, such a Philo who was a contemporary of Christ,
      - So Apollos probably obtained his education from there—and also probably ran into disciples of John the Baptist there.
      - There were disciples of John all over the world.

- b. And of course John expounded the Old Testament, setting forth the promise of Christ and His kingdom...
  - And here we are told that Apollos was “mighty in the scriptures.”
  - That means that he really knew the Old Testament well and was able to expound it in a way that was both clear and convincing about the Messiah!
  - He was not a man that could easily be refuted!
    - Not only because of his abilities, but also because he spoke from a clear understanding of scripture...
      - And of course, it is the scriptures that have the power.
  
- 2. Added to this, we are told that he was also fervent in spirit!
  - In other words, he was not a dry intellect—he was passionate about the truth and set it forth as if it mattered!
    - He understood it to be the word of the Lord and he urged it upon his hearers with appropriate reverence and authority.
    - He preached as a dying man to dying men.
  - Putting this together with his learnedness, we may say that he had both *heat* and *light*,
    - a combination that every preacher and every believer ought to strive for.
    - The outcome was that he taught accurately the way of Lord!
  
- 3. Apollos’ excellence was the result of trusting the Lord and giving himself fully to his work.
  - a. We are told in verse 25 that he had been instructed in the ways of the Lord.
    - And the reason he knew so much was because he was fully engaged in his work as a preacher.
    - As Paul exhorts Timothy in 1 Tim 4:15, he gave himself entirely to his preaching—
      - He was into it!
  - b. And my brothers and sisters, you must do the same in the Lord’s work...
    - It is something you must give yourself to—whatever that work may be.
      - Men, there is no place for half-heartedness in cherishing your wives—God calls you to love them as Christ loves the church!
        - The only way to get good at it is by doing it.
      - Elders, there is no place for half-heartedness in your overseeing the church—God says that you must give an account for the souls of the members!
      - Parents, there is no place for half-heartedness in training your children and correcting them with the Lord’s correction!

- Unmarried persons, use your status to reach out in service to others—no room for half-heartedness, for Jesus calls you to be devoted to Him by serving others.
- And so it is in all that you do for the Lord—
  - Half-heartedness is not acceptable in prayer, in worship, in Bible reading, in giving, in serving, in encouraging each other, in anything!

TRANS> So this man was fully engaged in God's work...

B. But it is also clear that Apollos trusted in the Lord.

- He was not there for himself but for the Lord—doing the Lord's work.
  - Why do I say this?
- 1. I say this because Apollos, this man of great learning, great eloquence, and great zeal shows that he is more interested in the truth than in his own image!
  - This greatness is perhaps even greater than his greatness as a preacher!
    - He was not preaching himself, but the Lord!
    - He was not making a show, but was a humble servant before the Lord.
- 2. This is evident because this man is willing to sit at the feet of and learn from a woman and her husband who heard him at the synagogue!
  - They have information that he lacks and he is not too proud to receive it—even to welcome it!
    - He does not take on a posture of defensiveness or put on a know-it-all attitude!
    - As soon as he sees that they have information about the Messiah that he has been proclaiming, he is ready to hear it!
- 3. O my brothers and sisters, don't be too proud to be corrected!
  - That is one of the most debilitating things for the servants of Christ.
    - If you see parents that seem to have it together and you don't, go and talk to them—tell them of your struggles—ask for their help!
    - If someone comes to you and they know more about something from God's word, welcome their instruction!
      - Why wouldn't you?
        - Are you more concerned about saving face than you are about learning from the Lord?
  - A willingness to humble yourself and learn is the pathway to excellence in service!
    - Be willing to learn from those who are not even as gifted as you are or as educated...
      - If Christ has taught them something, sit at their feet and learn the way Apollos did!

- C. The result is that Apollos became even more useful as a servant for the Lord!
1. He heard about the need in Achaia (Corinth), and off he went with commendation from the saints at Ephesus.
    - Look at verse 27:
      - **Acts 18:27: And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him;**
  2. And how very useful his work was at Achaia!
    - Verse 27 goes on:
      - **Acts 18:27-28: and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.**
      - Notice that it says he was used to help the *believers*!
        - They were having to contend with the Jews—Rabbi Ben-X and Rabbi Ben-Y—and they were not always able to handle them...
          - and Paul wasn't there anymore...
        - But you see that Paul's absence was supplied by Apollos—who may in fact have been even more gifted than Paul at apologetics!
          - He vigorously refuted them!
  3. And we know from Paul's letter to the Corinthians that he looks at Apollos as virtually taking his place at Corinth when he says,
    - **1Co 3:6: I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.**
    - With this you can see that Paul was fully justified in believing that the Lord would look after the Corinthians after he left.
      - He did so by raising up Apollos and by continuing to bless the ministry of the word.
      - In this you see God's faithfulness to the church!
        - Yes, we must be responsible to be engaged in doing the Lord's work, but when obedience to the Lord takes you away, the Lord will provide someone to take your place if it is needed.
    - It is the Lord's work, and He cares for His people far more than any of us do...
      - Yes, He even cares for your children far more than you do.
      - So don't ever think that it will harm your children for you to do what God says.
        - When people try to avoid persecution in the name of love for their children or their spouse, they do what they can to take away God's blessing.
        - Only Jesus is indispensable—not you.

**Conclusion:** Now what about you?



- Are you trusting and engaged as a servant of the Lord?
  - Are you able to let go of your fears and your pride and simply serve your Master, resting in His sovereignty?
  - Are you faithfully engaged in His work—is that what your life is about?
- If not, then I need to ask you what you **are** engaged in and why?
  - And why aren't you trusting in the Lord?
  - Is there something else that is greater than He is in your mind?
    - Do you see how silly that is?
- Oh but how short we all come!
  - When we see the profile of these servants, we can see that—how much more when we look at the service of Jesus!
  - Our coming short reminds us of how much we need Him and the work that He did!
- You know about that work, don't you?
  - He lived a life of perfect service as our representative!
  - He went to the cross to pay for our sins!
  - Anyone who trusts in Him is accepted on the basis of His perfect obedience and His atoning sacrifice for our sins.
- And then there is grace from Him...
  - You come to Him for salvation, and then He pours out His Spirit upon you so that you can become a more and more faithful servant!
    - So that you can be both trusting and engaged!