

When we hire a new pastor we, regard the pastor's new position as a call, not just a job. When we brought on Pastor Karlin a few months ago we said that he was answering a call from the Lord to this position here in Anchorage Alaska. We were very intentional when we preformed our search - this is a call, not merely employment.

When we think of a pastor taking a position at a church or a missionary heading out to the mission field, it is more than obvious to us that they have answered the call of the Lord Jesus. I mean, when we think of someone like Billy Graham, who could deny that he had answered the call of the Lord Jesus into ministry?

As we have been working our way through the book of Acts it becomes more clear with every passage that Paul was called by the Lord Jesus into ministry. But, make no mistake, Priscilla and Aquila are just as equally called into ministry as the Apostle Paul was; Priscilla and Aquila are just as equally called into serving the Lord Jesus as the Apostle Paul was. The call upon Priscilla and Aquila is the same call that is upon Paul.

Now listen to this: The call of the Lord into ministry is just as equally upon you as it is upon me and Karlin today. Let me say that again in a different way. Every single person in this room this morning who has given their life over to Jesus Christ, is called into ministry as equally as Karlin and I have been. Everyone, from the 5 year old who has just discovered Jesus to the 92 year old great grandmother - all are called into ministry, into service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I know what you're thinking, "I can't quit what I am doing to go into full time ministry."

You don't have to quit what you are doing to go into full time ministry. The reason you don't have to quit what your doing to go into full time ministry is, what you are doing is your full time ministry.

Understand that when you sit down and decide between job offers, or when you sit down and decide to forgo all job offers and be a stay at home parent, or when you decide that you will set full time employment aside and pursue higher education, or even when you are unemployed by circumstances beyond your control -- you are called into ministry.

## The Law Of Averages

Acts 18:1-8, 24-28

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Anytime you are deciding between several job offers or the like, you are not merely looking for the best career path, the best deal, the best offer, you as a Christian are choosing a call, exactly like Karlin and I did when we were called here to Anchorage.

In our passage today, we see that Priscilla and Aquila, are not apostles, preachers, or missionaries, they are tentmakers. Now, technically they are more than tentmakers, the word used there in verse 3 for tentmaker is a more general term that would include everything from making tents to leather goods. But, whatever these two are technically, they certainly are not pastors, apostles, prophets, missionaries or any kind of full time Christian vocation. Priscilla and Aquila are regular people, with regular jobs, but the impact that they have for Jesus Christ goes beyond many who were called to full time ministry in their day.

I have a friend back home, Michael. Michael is without a doubt a man with a call from Jesus Christ into ministry. Michael ministry is owning and running an auto body repair shop. Running an auto body repair shop may sound like the farthest thing there is from a church, but truly, Michael runs his auto body repair shop like a ministry, because it is a ministry.

Michael will always arrive early to his auto body repair shop and spends some time alone praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit for the day. Michael prays specifically for each of his seven employees and their families, only then is he ready to work. Michael's employees have little idea he is even praying for them as Michael makes sure he is alone during this time. Then, after the business opens, Michael keeps his eye open for opportunities to serve the Lord Jesus, and they come at him relentlessly.

Dealing with angry customers in a godly way, dealing with difficult insurance companies in a way that honors Jesus Christ and through it all answering the call Jesus has placed upon him. This a part of ministry at his shop.

There is the single mother without insurance whose car he quietly repairs for free or the used car he takes a loss on so someone will have something to drive to work. When an employee has a death in the family, guess who pays for the funeral or the reception? Or, when an employee is seriously injured, who is it that pays the man's salary for the full year he is in recovery? Michael of course.

Michael was telling me that he learned years ago that when he did something that others would regard as business suicide or going too far to help someone financially, somehow, things would always be covered. For example, when times were tough in the auto body repair industry and many people were losing their businesses, somehow, he always had enough work to keep everyone employed. Or, when he would fix a car for free, the costs would be more than covered by a specialty paint job that appeared out of nowhere. Michael is trained and certified by Ferrari in auto painting and so he will have people from all over California come to him to paint their collector cars.

Michael's employees know he is a Christian, and they see and experience his ministry everyday. Customers will routinely take him aside and ask why the invoice they just received is less than the original estimate and they learn about Christian honesty and integrity. When a car repair is done for free, or a car is pretty much given away, folks always insist on speaking with Michael and in bewilderment ask, "Why?"

It would be safe to say that more people have been blessed by Michael's auto body repair ministry and more people have come to know the Lord Jesus through Michael's auto body repair ministry than in the combined ministry in the majority of churches in his town.

Michael is called into ministry, yet he is not a pastor, prophet or missionary. You are called into ministry, and possibly a ministry more effective than any church in this city.

Priscilla and Aquila are our biblical example on how we can live out our call to Christian vocation, outside full time ministry in the church.

We see right up front that Priscilla and Aquila meet Paul in Corinth. The reason they meet up with Paul is that they both are trained in the same profession, tentmaker, and the only reason they meet Paul is that he is a tentmaker. Now Paul is a tentmaker as a second profession, he was trained as a rabbi first and a tentmaker second. In the Hebrew culture it was honorable for a rabbi/priest to have a second profession and so many rabbis did. In the Roman Greco culture it was looked down upon for a priest/holy man to have second profession as it was thought to dilute the office. Priscilla and Aquila are Jewish, so they see Paul as an honorable man to have this second profession.

Priscilla and Aquila used to live in Rome, but were forcibly ejected by the Emperor Claudius. The number of Jews had grown tremendously in Rome and at first Claudius had

banned them from meeting in connection to their religious customs, but when this did not work Claudius expelled them. It was previously theorized that Claudius expelled the Jews due to riots in the streets of Rome. This is because of a reference to a man named Suetonius who describes the situation, but this is in error, Suetonius is referring to distention within the Jewish community over the introduction of Christianity and is not connected to the expulsion by Claudius. So the expulsion of the Jews from Rome is not connected to the introduction of Christianity in Rome.

This couple are forced to leave their home in Rome because of their ethnicity and they meet Paul in the city of Corinth. The city of Corinth was strategically situated in a Greek isthmus and virtually all commercial traffic passed through the city's two ports, Cenchreae and Lechaem, as it made its way around the Roman empire. Now Corinth was a pagan city and was known for its very lax morality and would in all honesty be a difficult place to establish Christianity, but Paul's strategy is brilliant, for if Christianity takes hold in Corinth it will easily spread throughout the empire. Corinth is THE strategic city upon which the future of Christianity rests. Establish Christianity in Corinth, establish Christianity everywhere in the empire.

Now, for Christianity to thrive in Corinth, it needs to be established in more than just churches, Christianity needs to be rooted in the lives of everyday people. In, come Priscilla and Aquila. Paul may be a powerful speaker and teacher. Paul may establish new churches and accurately teach the word of God well, but it is people like Priscilla and Aquila who quietly make the Christianity thrive. Without a doubt, the Kingdom of God is built upon the backs of people like Priscilla and Aquila and not the people we imagine build the Kingdom of God.

Priscilla and Aquila take Paul in as a guest, and this is the first example we see in their call to ministry, they support those who are called into full time ministry. See, we all are given roles to fulfill by the Holy Spirit when we become Christians. Some are called to be pastors, but not all are called to be pastors. Being called to be a pastor or not being called to be a pastor doesn't make one higher or lower in the kingdom of God, and it doesn't make one greater in the Kingdom of God, it is the role the Holy Spirit has called a person to fulfill.

Because Priscilla and Aquila give Paul a place to stay, and my guess is they shared meals with him as well, they are giving Paul time and space to fulfill what God has called him

to fulfill. Without Priscilla and Aquila, Paul would be far less effective in his ministry, because he would have to spend more time making sure he had a roof over his head and food on the table.

So the first thing Priscilla and Aquila do in their ministry is they support others in ministry. For us today, as we carry out our own call to ministry, this clearly means supporting your own church. The people of this congregation do very well at this. But, I would also recommend that you go beyond this congregation in your giving. For example, Katie and I support a few children throughout the world through Compassion International. This is a ministry that makes certain sponsored children have enough to eat and also receive a solid education in third world countries. Now, I cannot be there to feed and educate these desperately poor children, I have a different calling, BUT, I am to support those who are called into full time ministry, simply so that they can accomplish their calling.

So, the first thing we see from Priscilla and Aquila is that we are to support those who are called into full time ministry. Here we see that Paul is effective so much so that the synagogue ruler Crispus becomes a Christian (verses 7-9). Paul is effective in part, because he is supported by Priscilla and Aquila.

It appears that Priscilla and Aquila were already Christians when they meet Paul and the benefit they receive from Paul is a greater and deeper understanding of the Scriptures and how to apply Christ to their everyday lives. We see that they follow Paul from Corinth to Ephesus.

If we jump to verse 24 we see that Paul's teaching has prepared Priscilla and Aquila for Apollos when he arrives in town. Earlier in our study of Acts we saw how significantly Africa has influenced Christianity, and here again we see a man from Africa turn up spreading the Gospel. Apollos is from the city of Alexandria which was one of the very early centers of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Apparently the Alexandria church is sending out missionaries too.

Apollos has a great passion for the Lord, but his theology isn't so well rounded. We see that Apollos is instructed in the way of the Lord, which means that Apollos was instructed in Christianity, and we do see that he speaks accurately of Jesus Christ. Now, we do not know exactly how Apollos deviated in his accuracy in communicating the Gospel except for the fact that he only knew of John's baptism and did not know of Christian baptism.

Now understand that when it says that Apollos spoke with great fervor, the scripture means that the power of the Holy Spirit was very evident in Apollos. Apollos is effective because he has the Holy Spirit with him in power.

Notice what Priscilla and Aquila do, do they publicly confront him? No, they quietly invite him home and explained what he was missing in his teaching. Now, we need to comprehend how popular and how significant the person of Apollos is. Apollos was one of the most popular and respected teachers of the New Testament early church. It would be equivalent in our day to taking Pastor Rick Warren aside to quietly correct him.

We ought to note that Apollos goes on to be a very effective preacher and missionary for Christ. Priscilla and Aquila help make that happen by gently applying the knowledge they have learned from Paul to help grow effective leaders. Here we see the second thing that Priscilla and Aquila do in their call to ministry, they come along side those who are full time in ministry. Clearly they have been working alongside Paul as they move with him, along with their work, to Ephesus.

They are still working as tentmakers, just average people, but look, they have matured so much in Christ, that they can take aside one of the most popular teachers of the day and gently build him up.

Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned several times in Scripture, and always positive things are said about them. We see in 1 Corinthians 16:19 that Priscilla and Aquila are host to a church meeting in their house. These two make themselves available to the Kingdom of God in whatever way that they can.

Priscilla and Aquila could be described as your average type people, with an average occupation - but sometimes, it is the purest most average things in life that are the best.

In high school I had the opportunity to spend a week on a working dairy farm with a couple other high school kids from my church. Though it was a family operation it was a big dairy farm. The farm milked cows 24 hours a day. They had so many cows, that the stalls and corrals seemed endless.

The first night I was there we all sat around the kitchen table for dinner. As we sat down to eat the parents sent one of the kids to get some milk to drink for dinner. A few minutes

later this little girl entered with a large pail of milk, about one and a half gallons of milk, they sent her out for more saying that one pail would not be enough. I was about 17, and I was thinking, "This is crazy, there are eight of us here eating dinner, and three of the eight are little kids," so I spoke up and said that I thought one pail milk would certainly be enough. The parents had a good laugh and they sent the kid out for more milk. She soon arrived with a second pail and so we had about three gallons of milk for the eight people around the table.

Now, I don't know if you have ever had ice cold milk taken literally minutes from a cow, but let me tell you, it tastes nothing at all like milk from the supermarket, nothing at all. To this day I have never had a glass of milk be even in the ball park to the milk I drank that night. We weren't even halfway through dinner when the poor kid had to go out and get another pail of milk.

This was just regular, ordinary milk, but it was milk in its purest state, and we could not get enough of it. Priscilla and Aquila were regular average people, but because they saw their profession as a ministry, average had nothing to do with the equation.

Clearly we are called to work for the Kingdom of God in whatever life circumstance we have been given. With the example of Priscilla and Aquila we see that these two come along side those in full time ministry to support them, we see these two come along those in ministry and use the knowledge they have gained to lift up the person in full time ministry and they use what is available to them for advancing the church, here we see that they let the church use their house to meet in.

Certainly Priscilla and Aquila did much more than has been mentioned in these brief passages, but what we see here is an example for us, and that example is that we are called into ministry, in whatever vocation we are in. If we follow the example of Priscilla and Aquila we might possibly have a more effective ministry than any church in town.

Look, if a guy can turn a auto body repair shop into a ministry, certainly you can make something happen in the situation you are in also.