

I have one teacher in my family and my wife has two in hers. I highly respect each one of them. Doesn't matter what grade level they teach, doesn't matter what subjects. They deserve the highest respect for what they do. I know I couldn't do what they do day in and day out. Same goes for the teachers in our school. I give them all extreme praise because I see every day what they do. They have gifts from God to do things I could not.

Many of you feel the same way. You were taught by teachers throughout your life but many of you decided early on that you would never want to be a teacher. You realized you didn't have the gifts or the abilities to do it. Some of you probably disliked school so much that once you left you never wanted to return. Being a teacher was the last thing you wanted to think about.

The gift from God we focus on this morning is teaching. For anyone not a teacher or not having any desire to be involved in teaching, it might seem like a great time to check out. In fact I'm not a teacher so maybe I should check out. We all went to school, learned what we needed to learn; now maybe we want nothing to do with teaching or even learning. But if we stick it out and listen to God's Word from Acts chapter eighteen, we can realize something about ourselves. This morning I have advice for you on...

How to avoid becoming a teacher

In the ancient world the center of learning was Alexandria in Egypt. People came from far away to study and learn from the scholars that taught there, some of the greatest minds in the ancient world. The city also had a large population of Jewish people. **"Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures."** Apollos was working as a teacher and he knew his Bible. He knew about the Messiah and the prophecies. Being from Alexandria he departed from the ways of the philosophers there. Apollos did not explain parts of the Bible away as false like some philosophers did.

Apollos wasn't doing such a great job avoiding becoming a teacher. Having a thorough knowledge of the Scripture didn't help. Undoubtedly it was his parents growing up that taught him Bible verses to memorize. He learned the history recorded in the Old Testament, memorized the kings of Israel and Judah in order, and studied the prophecies that spoke about the coming Messiah. Apollos even knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

Are you satisfied with your educational background? What about how you were instructed in the truths of the Bible? You maybe had parents who taught you Bible passages and read you stories at bedtime from the Bible. You probably even had to memorize a few passages and some still stick with you I'm sure. Maybe you didn't learn or memorize the Old Testament, but there are stories in the New Testament that you can't forget. You've even seen how the prophecies of the Old Testament point ahead to a Messiah. Don't look now but with that kind of teaching you've got the beginnings just like Apollos to be a teacher.

If Apollos was going to look to avoid staying a teacher it could start with a limited knowledge of Jesus. that seems to be what he had too. His knowledge about Jesus stopped after the baptism of Jesus by John. There was a whole life of Jesus that Apollos didn't know about. He knew Jesus was the Messiah, he just didn't have the full story. If you remain uninformed about Jesus you too could avoid becoming a teacher. You become satisfied with the Sunday school lessons of your childhood. You get comfortable coming to hear the Christmas and Easter messages each year and the rest in between seem like repetition. You get to thinking that now as an adult there should be something more. Isn't there another book to study in because the Bible is so elementary? You might want some advanced studies book.

You are not uninformed. You know Jesus is the Savior and that's good. The Bible told you and confirmed that for you. You're comforted and assured by that message. But we can always learn more, be more sure, ultimately find more comfort and hope. The only place to do that though is back to the message about Christ. Reading again the story of Christ's death on the cross and resurrection teaches you the stories of the Bible and lets you know it better, making it part of your life. From the central message of sins forgiven in Christ the other things the Bible teaches flow. But never expect to find spiritual truths different than what the Bible teaches. Only the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is the only way to be saved.

Priscilla and Aquila were a Christian couple from Rome who worked as tent makers alongside the apostle Paul. They happened to be in the synagogue in Ephesus when Apollos stood up to speak. **"Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately; though he knew only the baptism of John."** Priscilla and Aquila could see that Apollos believed in Jesus. They could see God was using Apollos to spread the good news about Jesus. But he was missing information.

Apollos could have refused their instruction. He was already teaching. He had shown great gifts and remarkable abilities. Being further instructed after having such enthusiasm to preach and teach might have hurt his pride. But Priscilla and Aquila approached him privately and gently led him to see he wasn't dealing with all the information about Jesus. They weren't trying to stop him. They were encouraging him to continue, but do it fully informed about Jesus. **"When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately."** To have the widest knowledge of Jesus possible Apollos needed to know about things like Jesus' life, his death, and certainly his resurrection.

If you want to ensure that you can avoid being a teacher you could simply stop learning and not listen to anyone who wants to teach you anything. Just go ahead thinking that your neighbor can't remind you of Christ's love for you in the midst of trouble. Think you're dealing better with tragedy than other people by blocking them out when they want to share what God says about tragedy. Cut off further instruction from pastors and teachers to ensure you've reached the end of your learning. These are sure fire ways you can avoid being a teacher in the future. You'll always be lacking information and advancement.

The love of Christ destroys our sinful pride. Christ's love tells us we're not better than others but leads us to humility to recognize we can always grow in knowledge and faith. That love from Jesus is never ending and never changing. The many intricacies of God's undeserved love for sinful people mean we never exhaust our need to learn more of it. God's grace always can be applied in new ways to our today and always will find application in our future. So we dig deep into it, alone in devotions and meditations, and also jointly in Bible studies where we can learn and teach others by discussions we have with them. We get to plug into regular worship as a way to deepen our understanding of God's Word and his love for us in Christ.

Apollos was already teaching and Priscilla and Aquila became his teachers. Turns out they couldn't avoid becoming teachers. Neither can you. You have been given freely a gift, the gift of eternal life in Christ. You can't be silent about that. Once you know about Jesus sharing him with others becomes easier. The more you know about him the easier sharing Jesus becomes. So it looks like each one of you here this morning is already a teacher. Teacher of your children, teacher of your spouse, teacher of your grandkids, nieces, nephews, or anyone else you come into contact with. You don't need a degree or a position in front of a class. Jesus has made you a teacher simply by giving you his Word.

Every great teacher lives by one simple code, "It's not about me." Teachers of your children want to help them. Sunday school teachers want to serve those precious little ones. All teachers focus on the information to present. Christians are focused on their Savior. He was the one who could say, "It's all about me." There is the motivation, the desire, and the strength to teach about Jesus and we all have it. The entire Bible is about God's promise to send a Savior. The whole gospel tells about Jesus' death and glorious resurrection. These are critical pieces of information you already have. God provides the knowledge through the Bible, God provides the interactions and the opportunities. We rejoice in the gift of teaching as we teach.