

Priscilla & Aquila: A Couple We Owe Thanks

5-17-15PM

In Romans 16:3-4, Paul said *“Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles”*. We are a church of the Gentiles; why is it that we are to be thankful to this couple?

We meet Priscilla & Aquila in these passages: Acts 18:1-3; 18-19, 24-28. They are also mentioned in I Corinthians 16:19 and II Timothy 4:19. From these passages we get the sense of great workers in the church. They aided Paul (saving his neck) in his works; they equipped Apollos as an evangelist as well. But another point that they offer us is by demonstrating the value of Christian living and demonstrating effective partnerships.

It seems to be the case that throughout time, people have felt a need to have a title or status if they are empowered to act. Prisca and Aquila testify to the power of just being an ordinary, average Christian; in fact, they reveal that in being just a Christian, there is nothing ordinary or average.

Consider that when Jesus gave the gifts of different offices to the church (Ephesians 4:11), the purpose of these works was to generate functioning Christians (Ephesians 4:14-16). We often get this backwards, believing it is the job of the church to create elders, deacons, preachers or teachers. But the goal is clearly to create self-sufficient Christians to serve God. Prisca and Aquila are models of this pattern. They are not elders, deacons, or a preacher. Instead, they are Christians acting like Christians, using the authority of Christians, and changing the world because of it.

Just a few verses before Prisca and Aquila is mentioned Phoebe. She too is part of this model; a Christian, sans title, serving the church (note – she is not a member of the church in Cenchrea any longer, nor is she a member of the church of Rome yet; therefore, it is impossible that she could have been in the office of deacon, an office for which she was neither qualified nor located).

The point is this: we DO NOT NEED TITLES to serve God! In fact, the pursuit of titles in our service to God is strictly forbidden by Jesus in Matthew 23:6-8. There He makes it clear that titles (be careful to understand the difference between a title of authority and a work; for example, I am a father, but Jesus forbids me or anyone else having the spiritual title “Father”) are abominable.

A second consideration of Priscilla & Aquila is their effective partnership in the Lord’s work. Of course, we consider that they are a husband and wife working together (and therefore not violating the authority of I Timothy 2:12). But the point of the pattern is that it is a model of any partnership, and that the Bible promotes partnerships in Christian works. Consider Paul & Silas, Paul & Barnabas in Acts 13-17; the Apostles in pairs in Mark 6:7; the proverbial admonition in Ecclesiastes 4:9.

Conclusions: We owe Priscilla & Aquila some gratitude. First, for aiding in establishing the early church and equipping those Saints for service. Secondly, for setting the example of Christian service without titles, and the effectiveness of Christian partnership.