

*"You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether."* – Psalm 139:3-4

This series has served us well. We have tackled some big issues – topics which many churches may try to avoid – which have stirred and inspired us as a church. Having addressed so many of the various situations and circumstances we face in our lives, we need to consider how we respond - and how the truth that we are known by God in these times should change us. Giving our selves to God - in a life of service - is an important part of helping with some of these issues. Aquilla and Priscilla – a couple talked about 6 times in four different books in the New Testament, and commended by Paul – are a benchmark, even today, of living a life of service to God, and a couple to learn from.

1. Who Aquilla and Priscilla Are

Read Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 24-26.

They are a husband and wife team – always mentioned together, and on occasion, Priscilla is mentioned first. Evicted from their home town in Rome, moving against their will. They set up a new life and business in Corinth. They meet the Apostle Paul, who has also had a rough journey. They work together in the tent-making business, serving the community well, and financially supporting themselves and the work of the church. They spend a year and a half with Paul, learning from him – to the point that the travel with him on his mission. Paul sees growth in their life, and trusts them to continue the good work in Ephesus, as he moves on to further his work. Aquilla and Priscilla knew what it was like to suffer.

2. What We Can Learn From Aquilla and Priscilla

Life doesn't always go the way we expect or think it should. We need a biblical view of circumstances when things don't turn out the way we expect them to, trusting that God has a plan for our lives (**Proverbs 19:21**). God is involved in every detail of our lives – and works for good in the lives of those who love Him (**Romans 8:28**).

Aquilla and Priscilla served as equals in their work and ministry. They were extraordinary in marriage, serving, hospitality and ministry. They were willing to spend their lives serving a cause that was greater than themselves. Life-long friends with Paul, and they fed into the life of Apollos; it is important to invest hard in good-quality, godly relationships – those around for years and decades, and those who are around for just a short while.

They are great examples of how to live godly lives, and we also should be great examples – so that people see God's work in our lives and points people to Christ. Despite not knowing the reasons behind the trials and suffering, they knew God had a marvellous plan for their lives – and we can know that same promise that God has a plan for our lives.

How can our obedience and faithfulness (particularly in tough times) act as a great example to our friends / family?

3. Characteristics of Ordinary People God Uses

a. Prepared to Partner with Those in Ministry

Aquilla and Priscilla partnered in business, in hospitality and in ministry. Sharing everything they had they worked alongside Paul. Paul thanks them for their support – as do all the churches of the Gentiles (**Romans 16:3-5**). They do not seem to have an agenda, and do not become the elite in the Early Church. Their faithful service, partnering in business, opening their home and diligently studying the Bible – all in the context of working with Christ. They are ordinary, understated people, yet they made significant contributions to the work of Paul and the advancement of the Gospel.

How can we struggle with supporting the work of others, while we remain hidden in the background?

What role can you play in supporting the advancement of the Gospel?

b. Will Be Discipled and Disciples

Aquilla and Priscilla were ordinary people. They were discipled by Paul, and learnt much from him. They weren't great theologians or scholars. They weren't paid professionals, and nor did they leave the work to those who were (**Acts 18:24-26**). Apollos was a scholar, and an eloquent man. Aquilla and Priscilla did not shy away, because he was educated. Instead they took him, and discipled him – explaining the scriptures. Apollos became an influential leader in the Early Church, but without Aquilla and Priscilla, he made not have achieved that. The impact of proclaiming God's word to others has huge potential that we sometimes fail to understand. Our obedience to share the scriptures can lead to great things in the lives of others.

In what ways can we be tempted to leave discipling and supporting to the professionals?

Who are you learning from / being discipled by? Who are you teaching and encouraging / discipling?

c. Persevere in Sacrificial Service

Not many of us will be headline figures. Some seem to be working for this goal, but not Aquilla and Priscilla. They worked solidly, opening their homes, suffered representation damage – putting the needs of others, and the Church, ahead of their own. This amazing couple stand by Paul, and though many desert him, they stay loyal. There would have been opportunity to give up, and would likely have moments where it felt like too much hard work – but they were willing to persevere. Perseverance isn't something we see often these days, but it is often through perseverance that our lives are transformed and bring glory to God.

What sacrifices are we asked to make in service to God? What temptations do we consider to choose not to serve?

Looking back, how can you see God's transforming work in your life when you have persevered with Him?

As we finish the *Known Series*, there is an opportunity to discuss how the truth we have learnt throughout the series can encourage us to live a life of service to God, and how the truth of being *Known* encourages us to persevere.