

# Apollos

by Carl Armerding

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*Apollos was a spiritual leader who was used by God to contribute to the church through his conversational Bible reading ministry and his ability to convince others of the truth of the scriptures.*

**Duration:** 38:26

**Scripture:** Acts 18:24

**Topics:** "Apollos", "Ministry Potential", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

Carl Armerding preaches on the life of Apollos, emphasizing his eloquence, knowledge of the Scriptures, and fervent spirit. He draws parallels between Apollos and other biblical figures like Joseph and Esther, highlighting how God can use individuals in challenging circumstances to fulfill His purpose. Armerding encourages younger believers to recognize their potential for ministry, regardless of their public speaking abilities, and to be diligent in studying the Scriptures. He illustrates how Apollos, despite his limited knowledge, was willing to learn and grow, ultimately contributing significantly to the early church. The sermon concludes with a call to embrace one's unique gifts and to trust in God's ability to use them for His glory.

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## Transcript

I invite your attention to the book of the Acts chapter 18. Acts chapter 18 and commencing at verse 24. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And they began to speak boldly in the synagogue, whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly or more accurately. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him.

For when he must come, help them much which had believed through grace. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. Last night we were considering the case of a teenager, a girl who was taken captive in war, born from her home, made a servant in the home of her captors, and yet in spite of all these things, never entertained a bitter spirit, but gave expression to the longing of her heart one day when she said to her mistress, Would God my Lord or my Master were with the prophet.

It is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy. And that wish, as we know this, bore fruit. For the wife told her husband, the husband told the king, and it set things in motion, and finally Naaman stood before the prophet, which is in Samaria.

The result was a wonderful conversion. If that had been our subject last night, we'd try to read it even further, because in the verse following the one with which we stopped, we find him saying, There's no God but in Israel. This man had really turned from idolatry to the living God.

Think of what a wonderful thing it was for a girl to be used in this way. And of course, this is a sample of what we find in the Word of God. Take for example, Joseph, when he was in prison in Egypt, and how God used that very circumstance to put him into contact with Pharaoh, so that the time came when he could say to his brothers, It was not you that sent me here, but God, and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh.

Now, stands to reason he wasn't Pharaoh's natural father. Therefore, he must have been Pharaoh's spiritual father. Imagine, a young lad, only 17 years old when he was taken, but he was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, but he was a father to Pharaoh.

And I take it that he had the joy of leading Pharaoh into the knowledge of the true God. Take for instance, a person like Esther in that book of Esther. What a wonderful influence she wielded, and how God used her for the deliverance of her people.

Take Paul and Silas in the jail of Philippi. How easily they might have just pitied themselves for being where they were, but instead of that, they sang praises, and the prisoners heard them, and the result is a tremendous conversion, and the beginning of an assembly in Philippi. We mention these things because occasionally we hear people speaking about the uncomfortable circumstances in which they find themselves.

Perhaps a home from which they can hardly escape, because they were born in it, but they're the only ones, or if not the only ones, they're in a minority, and they have a longing to escape from it all, get away from it. Little realizes maybe God wanted to use those very circumstances to make you a channel of blessing to them. And now for our meditation this morning, I've chosen the case of another young man.

I'm not told how old he might have been. I suspect that this man Apollos, of whom we've been reading here in Acts 18, was probably in his early 20s. He may have been older than that, but he's one of those who was associated with the Apostle Paul in his labors, and he chose young men to work with him.

A man like Timothy, a man like Titus. I don't know how old Silas may have been. Barnabas, of course, was an older man, but Apollos was a man with whom he associated himself in his labors in the city of Corinth.

Remember, he speaks there, he says, tall plants and Apollos waters, but God gives the increase. And this morning it's my hope that some here will, some brethren, especially younger brethren, will find their picture right here in this 18th chapter of the book of the Acts. You may say to me, brother, I don't have much public gift.

That's so true of many of us, and whether you believe it or not, the one who speaks to you this morning, as a young lad, was actually punished because I would not stand up to recite a piece of poetry in school. I just couldn't bring myself to face an audience. It just didn't seem to be my line.

But God uses even those who are not so gifted, perhaps to do a job that others can't do. And so I want to draw a parallel this morning between this man, Apollos, and what I think may be true of a good many of our younger people in this generation. The first thing we notice about this man, it is that he was a Jew.

Now, of course, you may not think that that was very much of an advantage, that there was a spiritual advantage to being a Jew, because this man, being a Jew, would know from his family, from his parents, his ancestors, he would know something about the true God. He would know something about the scriptures. He was a man who would be acquainted with the things of God, so it was a distinct advantage for him to be a Jew, a spiritual advantage.

However little it may have meant in the world, in fact, it might have been a calamity to be a Jew, just as in certain places it might be a calamity to be born in a Christian home and to be labeled as a Christian. But it is a decided advantage when you look at it from the spiritual viewpoint. That's the way I'm looking at this this morning.

And you'll notice that he was born at Alexandria. And Alexandria in those days was a great center of learning. It was what we might call today a university town.

No doubt he had access to the schools of learning there. It may interest you to know that there was a translation made of the old Hebrew scriptures. We still refer to it as a Septuagint or the 70s, a Greek translation of the old Hebrew scriptures, because many of the people had long ceased to speak Hebrew.

Many of them had forgotten it. It's only in your day and mine that they're reviving this, so that in the land of Israel today we find them making a great effort to speak to it that their children are learning Hebrew. But these people in this day, because of their being scattered, they had neglected to speak the sacred language.

I might as I say the sacred language because sometimes we think our own language is that. My dear wife came of Scottish ancestry, and because of this I learned a few Scottish phrases, and one day gave expression to one of these at a table at a conference. And there was a Scottish lady sitting opposite me.

She says, Armady, you're speaking the sacred language now. This was a sacred language to her. So there is such a thing as the sacred language, but they had neglected to use it.

But nevertheless, this man had access to these schools of learning, the school of learning in Alexandria. And this again was an advantage in a way, because God could use what he would get in the schools. God could use it in molding him for the work that he was to do for him.

Then thirdly, we read of this man that he was an eloquent man. This may have been one of those natural gifts. Again, he may have had some speech courses at the University of Alexandria, and been trained how to use that voice of his so that he would be pleasant to listen to.

And we have known some preachers who could stand a few courses along that line. You know, they have good voices, but somehow they've never been trained how to use them. But now whether this man had a training or just naturally came by this, in any case, he had this natural gift that he was an eloquent man.

But now we come to one of those distinct spiritual advantages that required work on his part. You notice it says here he was mighty in the scriptures. Now you don't become mighty in the scriptures by neglecting the Bible.

And I think we have a parallel expression to this in the epistles of the Colossians. Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16, where the apostle Paul says, And let the word of Christ dwelling richly in all wisdom. That's what it means to be mighty in the scriptures.

I'm so glad that I was brought up in a home where we were taught to memorize the scriptures. And then when it came time for me to set up my own home, to have my own children around me, one of the exercises which we had in our family devotion was to recite a portion of scripture together around the table. Put back upon that as one of the most sacred experiences.

Just a couple of weeks ago, when I celebrated my 80th birthday, my son, who works up at Wheaton College, and on the program, he said, Now, dad, he said, we would like to have on this program so and so and so and so. With his beloved mother, which we did have in the morning, family worship services, letters in prayer. We'd just like to go with that again.

A century mark himself and a father of five children appreciated this business of being taught the scriptures, that he might be mighty in them. Oh, I would urge upon you to store up these words in your mind. They stand in good stead.

Very often they're just these words that you need to express your spiritual feelings. Fancy writing a letter to someone who's been recently bereaved and to be able to do that in the terms of scripture itself. This is most effective in the scriptures, but his knowledge was limited, as we shall see later on.

But first of all, let us notice also that he was not only mighty in the scriptures, but the next verse says, verse 25, that he was instructed in the way of the Lord. Now, this word instruction means that he had it communicated to him orally. No doubt his parents had instructed him in the way of the Lord.

And sometimes this is even more wonderful than the commandments of the Lord. We were thought there were certain things we could do and certain things we couldn't do and certain things we had to do. And then again, there were some things which were left unsaid, but which we did nevertheless.

Why? Because we knew this was the way. Things suggested to me, which I shall not describe, you can't do that. Canyon said to me, why did your dad say you can't do it? I said, no, he didn't.

No, she didn't. I said, because that just isn't his way. I did that.

You see, beloved, there's something even, shall I say, more potent than a commandment sometimes. Perhaps would be legitimate enough or at least permissible if I wanted to do that. So you don't do this and you don't do that.

Years ago, yes, it's 40. You sit and use my facilities. They're all there.

Help herself to the facilities to get herself some lunch. Very gracious, late conversation. And I was listening to it as I was directing the moving men to put the furniture in this place and that place.

And this lady said to my wife, she said, you all play golf, sinful in themselves, ship of God's people, of his holy word. She found it in her private devotions for our. And I overheard the whisper.

She said, I just love to pray together for that building as a detail of the work. Is this his way of doing it? And this man of Paulus had that. He was fervent in his spirit, a great deal in dealing with people about the things of the Lord Jesus Christ, who really enthusiastic about in the multi-church public.

Grace came down to save a poor sinner like me. And to give me a hope for each is something to get really excitedly. The things of the Lord, conversational ministry in between meetings and so on.

But in any case, he was diligent. He was accurate in the way he taught the things of the Lord. John, when I call one, I say to him, why don't you take a little more? Sounds very humble.

Is the Bible look up the various references to a quill and Priscilla because Paul says in one place that they actually laid down their necks for him, that they will be headed for his sake. But this is the way we use expressions. So, so, and so stuck out his neck.

You know what we mean about is using that expression along those same lines. He said, they laid down their necks for me. We appreciated this couple of quill and Priscilla nudging a quill and says, say, pop, let's take that young fellow home for dinner.

And when a quill and Priscilla had heard, they took him to learn to read the scriptures in the original, because sometimes you'll find a word that is very picturesque with the full force of the wonderful welcome that this young fellow got in that home. And what some of us has experienced, you know, this morning and you've not scripted exactly scriptural in their home perfectly or more accurately. It's the same word that's translated diligently up there in the previous verse, except that it has the qualification and the comparative degree more accurately, simply leading him on to a greater knowledge of the things of God.

For an older couple, my dear friends, you and I, who are contemporaries and maybe a little younger than I began to show some promise, gracious ways who would not gift it to do much in public have been used tremendously in private. I couldn't begin to tell you how many people have been used in this way for my blessing. Right in Pennsylvania, both of them gone.

I mean, they took me to one side and in fact, asked me to be their guest in their home for a while. No, what a blessing to have this old brother open up things to me in the scriptures, give me illustrations of how to stand up in public and what to do. It's a blessing to me.

I still make them, but not quite so frequently as I did then. You said this evening, I would suggest that the next time you take up this subject, that you put it this way. Friends that I'll never get caught up down here.

Not for me. Forget your labor of love and that you have ministered unto the saints and do minister. God's going to see to it that this couple, Aquila and Priscilla get their proper reward further in his field.

27, he was disposed to pass into Achaia. Achaia was the Southern part into major portions. The Northern part was called Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonians, the Thessalonica.

These were up in the Northern part, then down in the Achaia. And here he had decided to go into Achaia and doubtless his objective was to use some of this new material that he'd been given. Take it.

These were the brethren right here where he was ministering at Ephesus, exhorting the disciples to receive him. And again, the very picturesque word to receive him, to give him a great welcome. In any postscript now, this is postscript, private, private.

Don't let him see this. Darby points out in a footnote to this, this particular word. And Mr. Darby in a footnote gives all the places where the word is found in Luke's writings.

He did not write Hebrews, I believe he did, but if he didn't, Luke wrote a bigger part of the New Testament than even the Apostle Paul. It means to give him a great welcome. A real encouragement that would come to this young brother as he came into the assembly there in Corinth.

He was read, sends him with a welcome and giving him the freedom of the platform and so on. 27, and again I come to a very picturesque word to forgive an old school teacher for calling attention to these words, but I'm doing this with design this morning because I'm hoping to encourage some of my younger friends to really make a study of the original languages, because you'll get many a wonderful idea from these words. So when it says he helped them much, translates he contributed much.

In other words, he put together what he had was done in what we generally refer to now as a conversational Bible reading, to see the conversational Bible reading coming back. This is one of the great things about this four o'clock meeting that I'd like to get in at if it wasn't 50 steps down and 50 steps back. A beautiful place, Greenwood Hills Bible Conference where Brother George Landis used to be the moving stirrer.

Dear brother laid aside now. One of those things which is one of our distinctives as the assemblies of God's people, the conversational Bible reading, these readings and making his contribution. And St. Paul refers to this, you remember, in his epistle to the Corinthians, he says, Paul my plan.

Evidently, Apollos wasn't a pioneer, but he was a tremendous follow-up man. A pioneer goes into a new district and God uses him for the conversion of souls and for the establishing of an assembly. But somebody is going to have to be there to follow this thing up, which had believed through grace.

Yes, this is a tremendous ministry. And I would commend it to you as a ministry, which is on to a Bible reading code that we're going to consider in the Bible study contribution in what you've got ministry, or else you'll suffer the exhortation of an old man as they pass it on to you. As something that's a wonderful ministry, especially for those who may not be gifted to stand on the public platform to minister.

But think of the contribution that you could make, brother, in a Bible study, have you digested it yourself to make a contribution. Ministry, as we read in the last verse of our lesson this morning, verse 28, for he mightily convinced the Jews and that public probably had to forget by philosophical arguments in exactly the way that you have it stated here. When it says showing by the scripture, the person who thought they'd vested me in an argument and they had, and this is what the word of God said, because you believe the scripture, you the peace of mind can equip you for the work of God.

Like this written by my dear friend, Frank gave a reprint of many editorials that he wrote for Christianity Today. He said, had you noticed how Dr. Gable line in this book takes up the word of God these days, that leaflet, which was passed out by our brother McNeil this morning at breakfast, then to the use of God publicly, it may even be to convince the Jews of one thing. And what is it? Ministry with this, that Jesus was the Christ, that Jesus was a Messiah.

You've got nothing else to predict that they may find fault with many of his followers, but thanks be to God, he himself is impeccable. On that note, this morning, our lesson ends on this note this morning. I'd like to turn to him.

Title of this hymn is printed back that the title says, take Haverhill wrote it.

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