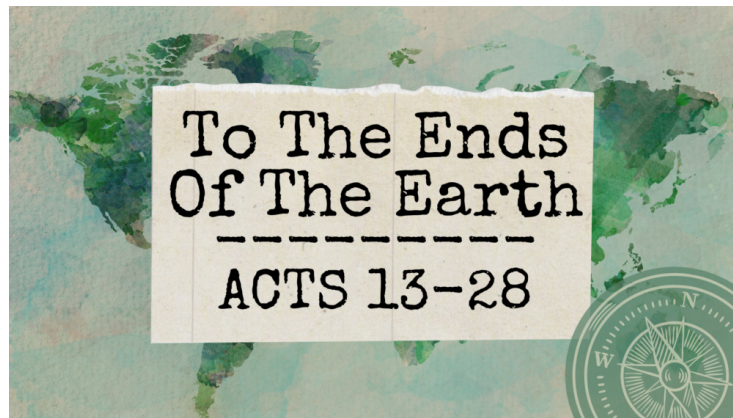


Learners & Teachers



Acts 18:22-19:1-10

Bro Kory Cunningham

I don't know if you have ever tried to Google your name before, but I have because I wanted to see what the internet thought of me. This morning, I Googled Kory Cunningham and the first entry was a guy who does not spell his name like me. I clearly put K-O-R-Y, and this guy was K-O-R-E-Y and he is a football player. I scrolled down, and every entry on Google is something about him and his football career. There was nothing about me. There was a lot about Korey the football player who spells his name wrong, nothing about Kory the preacher who spells his name right. That is what the world internet thinks about me. One of ways you know you have arrived is if you Google your name and land on a Wikipedia page about yourself.

Can you imagine landing on a Wikipedia page that people have built about you and it said true things about you? I want you to think about that for a moment, that your Google search landed on a Wikipedia page about you. What would that first paragraph say about you and your life? Some of you are having a hard time thinking about that first paragraph (That is probably why you don't have a Wikipedia page, right!). Mine might say that my name is Kory, I'm married, and I've got kids.

It is hard to think about what that first paragraph might say about me, but I want to read an entry of a guy who has quite an extensive Wikipedia page. His name is James Hudson Taylor. Here is part of what it says about him:

James Hudson Taylor (21 May 1832 – 3 June 1905) was a British Protestant Christian missionary to China and founder of the China Inland Mission (CIM, now OMF International). Taylor spent 51 years in China. The society that he began was responsible for bringing over 800 missionaries to the country who started 125 schools and directly resulted in 18,000 Christian conversions, as well as the establishment of more than 300 stations of work with more than 500 local helpers in all eighteen provinces.

Can you imagine if that was your Wikipedia entry? That is a pretty cool first paragraph. By the way, it goes on. There are pictures and stories. Hudson Taylor is a guy who did a lot of great things. Warren Wiersbe tells a story about when Taylor was invited to speak at a church. As you can imagine, this guy was a big deal. He went to China and had a huge impact. Now, a church is having him come and speak on missions. I can imagine a lot of people were there, the place filled with people. It says that guy who was introducing Hudson Taylor went on and on about him. He read his accolades and all that he had done. He bragged about all that God had done through him. I can just imagine Hudson Taylor sitting on the front row blushing as everyone is hearing about his accomplishments. The last thing the introducer said was "...two hour illustrious guest, welcome Hudson Taylor." I can imagine the applause rang out and everyone stood as Hudson Taylor, their illustrious guest, went up to the stage. Taylor takes the stage and he began his address, "Dear friends, I am the little servant of an illustrious master." See, Hudson Taylor was a humble man. This man has his own Wikipedia page. He has done a lot — 18,000 conversions contributed to his being in China, can you imagine if that were said about you? He got ready to speak and his only claim to fame was I am not a small servant of an illustrious master. That is Hudson Taylor, a very humble man, a man used of God, a very humble man of God. I would say those two things always go together. You never have a man or woman used of God who is not a humble person. It takes humility to be used of God.

In our passage of Scripture, we will meet a man named Apollos. I will argue he was a very humble man. He was a humble man because he was a teacher who had to learn. He will learn from some unusual people. It will take a great dose of humility for him to learn from these people. We will see a pattern throughout all the Scriptures that we read, this pattern of disciples being both learners and teachers. Hopefully, we will see as we walk through these patterns and people that as disciples of Jesus we long to be both learners and teachers. If we are going to be learners and teachers, we have to do so with humility. We have to learn humbly and teach humbly. That without humility no learning or teaching can happen. With great humility comes great learning and great teaching. We are going to read the section about Apollos and then walk through some other Scriptures as we see this pattern.

Scripture

"Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus."

Apollos of Alexandria

We are in Ephesus when we run into a guy named Apollos. He is a teacher who has to humbly learn, so we will learn how to be a humble learner from Apollos. Let's notice some things about him. First, he is a Jew. Then Luke gives us this information that would have been very important for any reader and for us — he is a native of Alexandria. Everyone reading this

letter, hearing this news, or encountering Apollos would have known what that meant. Alexandria was a city in the Roman Province. It was the second largest city. It was founded by a guy named Alexander the Great. They had probably heard of him. You have probably heard of him. This is a city founded by a guy who was a big deal. As far as intellectual impact, there were few cities that surpassed it. It was a place of culture, a place of intellect, and it had a lot of influence. In fact, that very famous library of Alexandria, some four hundred thousand volumes were probably in that library that got burned by the fire. It was one of the tragedies of human history. Not only did they have a great library, but they had a great museum. Very few places in the world had museums at this time. This museum had a lot of historical artifacts and people would have come and visited it. People from Alexandria were scholars, smart people. To be from Alexandria means you know your stuff. You are well cultured. Alexandria had a light tower that was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Not only that, but it had a huge Jewish population. One of the things that this Jewish population got together and produced — they had seventy scribes that got together in the city of Alexandria, two hundred years before the days of Christ, and translated the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek. This became known as the Septuagint, which is what all of the apostles, disciples, and even Jesus would have been acquainted with and probably read.

So, to be from Alexandria, you are a smart dude. So Apollos would have been a very intellectual guy. You can imagine him sitting and reading in the library of Alexandria with some four hundred thousand books. He was scholarly and he knew his stuff. Just in case you might think he was one of the guys from Alexandria who didn't go to the library, Luke makes sure we know he was not that guy. He was one of the guys who went to the library, because Luke tells us, "He was an eloquent man..." In other words, he was a library guy. He knew how to speak. Just listening to him, you wanted him to talk more. I had a pastor from Covenant KY call me about disaster relief and what their church could do and how they could help. I don't know how to explain it, but this pastor was just an eloquent man. Every question he asked, every statement he spoke, the word choice — just eloquent. I just wanted the guy to keep talking. Have you ever been in

the presence of somebody like that? Have you ever been on a plane with somebody who is from Australia, and you just want them to talk because they sound so much smarter than you are? Someone from England? Just talk! Apollos was just an eloquent man and everything he said had a way about it just captured the imagination.

Luke also says Apollos was competent in the Scriptures. He would have studied the Septuagint. He knew his Bible. He read it, he meditated on it, and he knew the big story of God. He knew how to handle the word of God. If you asked him a question about the Bible, he could go to the place and give you the answer. He was competent in the Scriptures. Verse 25 tells us "He had been instructed in the way of the Lord." He had been taught the Scriptures, instructed in them. He was like a seminary guy. He went to class, he had been through systematic theology, he has read the right books, heard the right people. He has been instructed in the way of the Lord; he knows the right things.

The next sentence says, "And being fervent in spirit..." I think Luke makes sure we know this because sometimes, as you can imagine, a scholarly guy who likes the library and likes to read is probably dull. He is probably not the guy you want to hang out with at the party. He is the guy you try to avoid because he is really dry and full. Not Apollos...he is fervent in spirit. He is enthusiastic. He is excited. He is a passionate guy to be around. You wanted to hang out with this dude!

Apollos Teaches With Limited Knowledge

Then it says, "...he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus." That is a really note that Luke gives us because he goes on to say, "...though he knew only the baptism of John." Luke is setting up the good of Apollos — what he knows, where he is from, but also what is lacking in him. Apollos only knows the baptism of John, which means he doesn't quite know the baptism in Jesus's name. He doesn't quite know the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't quite know the reality of Christ in us. He knows Christ, he knows the Messiah, but he doesn't know the reality in Christ within us. He hasn't understood Pentecost yet. He hasn't heard the Spirit has fallen and being baptized in the name of Christ.

So how do you accurately teach Jesus? We would have to assume he taught Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, and that He is not a political overthrowing figure, as most of them would have assumed, because that would have been teaching Jesus inaccurately. So, he would have taught Him correctly, meaning He is the Messiah who died for your sins and rose again on the third day. So, Apollos would have had to have known that information for Luke to say he is teaching Jesus correctly. He is teaching the gospel correctly. But, we are going to see that he doesn't have the whole story. He has part of it and the part he has is correctly, but Apollos has missed that ascension and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. That is what he hasn't understood, yet.

Priscilla and Aquila Teach Apollos Full Knowledge

Verse 26 says, "He began to speak boldly in the synagogue..." Remember, Apollos is in Ephesus but he is from Alexandria, meaning he is smarter than everybody there. He is in the synagogue, eloquently speaking, opening the scripture, and he is competent to tell them all of the things concerning Jesus. He is preaching Jesus from the Old Testament to these Jews, and he is probably doing a really good job. Then, we have the word, "but." "...but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately."

The first thing I want us to really pick up on from this example is that we see some humble teachers, Priscilla and Aquila. Who are Priscilla and Aquila? We saw at the beginning of chapter 18 that they are tentmakers, and Paul runs into them and disciples them. In other words, they are blue collar. Now, they are in this synagogue and this guy from Alexandria is there. I just want you to build up what could have been a motivation for them in that moment. All of a sudden, they are hearing this preacher from Alexandria who everyone has talked up. He is the guy from the right place, read the right books, and he has the right degrees. He came into the synagogue and he is proclaiming the Scriptures. I have a feeling Priscilla and Aquila are whispering...*I don't think he knows as much as he thinks he knows...*so, you have a moment where these tentmakers know more than the scholar. These tentmakers from a Podunk town know more than this guy from Alexandria, and they are in a synagogue. What could they do?

Well, they could have stood up and said, "Excuse me..." and they could have gotten into a public debate with him. They could have proven they knew more because they had new information. They had information from the Holy Spirit, things that this guy from Alexandria didn't know. They could have publicly rebuked him and that would have brought their ego, their reputation up. They would have been that married couple who rebuked the scholar. They would have become famous in Ephesus as the smart people who outdid the guy with the big library. But that is not what happened. In fact, the text says when they heard him they took him aside. That is very informative for what it means to be a humble teacher. They didn't publicly rebuke him. They didn't make a public spectacle. They didn't call attention to his lack of knowledge to show their own knowledge. Instead, when it was over they take him aside. They pull him aside in private to tell him what they know that he doesn't know. This is an act of humble teaching. Priscilla and Aquila want to teach Apollos for his good, not for their own. For their own, they could have done it publicly and they would have been seen as the smarter ones, but they pulled him aside because they don't care about their ego or their names. They honestly want this follower of Jesus to learn more. They know the only way for him to know more is to humbly teach him.

We have a hard time with this even today. When we get in arguments, when somebody doesn't know everything, sometimes our temptation is to make it very public so others will know that we know what they don't know. This is why you get vicious Facebook comments. The people commenting what everybody to know how much smarter they are than the other person — look how dumb they are and how smart I am. The point of commenting in a Facebook post in public is not to gently teach the other person. It is to rebuke them and say you aren't as smart as you think you are. But Priscilla and Aquila saw their newsfeed and saw someone post something that wasn't true, so they private messaged that person. They message him for a phone number because they knew he didn't have all the information and they wanted to talk to him in private. What is the problem with that? It is in private, and nobody will know more than you know. Nobody will see what you see. Nobody will know what you know. You will not be seen as the person with all the information. Instead, you will gently

love that person who might not know the truth, and you give them the truth in the way that is humble. It is caring more about them than about yourself.

It is not just in social media; it is in all aspects of life. When you are at work and an argument happens, do you engage in the argument knowing it is not about persuading this person but it's about proving you are right and showing everyone else at work that you are right. When we publicly debate each other, when we get in those heated conversations, how many times does the other person say they think you are right, that their position is all wrong and ask you to instruct them? Has that ever happened to you during a heated debate with somebody you disagree with vehemently? Very, very rarely. What happens when you say, "Can we get a cup of coffee and talk in private?" Now, it is not about publicly showing how much you know, it is about privately loving a person that you care about because you want them to understand something they don't know. When you do it in private, that person is able to become a humble learner rather than a public defender. When you come to someone in public, they have to become a defender. If this had happened in the synagogue and a married couple stood up and started rebuking Apollos, my guess is Apollos would have become a defender rather than a learner. That is our default mode. You come at me, I am going to prove that I am right and you are wrong. But because Priscilla and Aquila took him aside in private, Apollos was able to become a humble learner by humble teachers, and he was able to learn from them.

A Humble Teacher — A Humble Learner

So the first thing we have to be is humble teachers. What does it look like to be a humble teacher? You are not teaching people things so that you get glory or you look good. Instead, you try to tell somebody something just for their sake, to love them. Often, that is done in private, not in public. In private, you can actually have good conversations. In public, it is just debate for the sake of debate so that you can look smarter and they

can look dumber. Priscilla and Aquila did it right. They were humble teachers.

Now, I want to flip the coin and say this man from Alexandria named Apollos became a humble learner, and we must also do the same. The text says, "Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus." At the end of the story, the disciples get together and confirm Apollos desire to missions, and actually sent him out. The only way that happens is if Apollos accepted the teaching, accepted the ways more accurately, and accepted the knowledge of Christ in us. It is evidence that Apollos did submit to Priscilla and Aquila and learn from them. Just think for a moment how hard that must have been for Apollos. He was Apollos from Alexandria. We know all about Alexandria. It was the place to be. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He is learned, he has been to seminary, he has the degrees, he is able to teach accurately the things of Jesus. He is rebuking in the synagogue showing all these people who Christ is, and all of a sudden, a married couple who were blue collared workers, tentmakers from a hick town take this scholar aside and tell him his lecture is not quite correct. Can you imagine? This would be like a scholar from Cambridge or Oxford, who came to Hardin and some guy from Dexter comes up and tells him he needs to learn some things. This was Apollos!

But there was this married couple, tentmakers, who were discipled by Paul. In other words, these tentmakers were learners themselves. They have been learning the Scriptures from Paul. But now, Paul isn't there. He is gone. When Paul isn't there and no one can defend the synagogue, his disciples do. His disciples now become the teachers. These humble learners are now the teachers and they are teaching the teacher, who then becomes a humble learner. Apollos had to have great humility to listen to these two tentmakers who were probably uneducated. He had a great education, but they were teaching him more accurately the things of God.

He listens to them. He submits to them. He looks at his Bible and begins to agree that they know what they are talking about. He saw the bigger piece of the story.

From this scenario, we not only know that we need to be humble teachers, we also need to be humble learners. We learn from Apollos that we need to be humble learners. Here are a few tips if you are going to be a humble learner. It has to start with believing that you don't know everything. Let's be honest, that is really hard. In the day of the information age, Google, and social media so we can find out anything, we believe we are the expert about everything — I will give you my opinion because I'm the expert, no matter what anyone else says! See, we have the temptation in all ways to believe...*I know more than you. I always know what is right...*so I am always stuck in my opinion. If you are going to be a humble learner, you have to believe you don't know everything, and that is ok. Because you don't know everything, you can actually learn from people. It is not just that you don't know everything, but your tribe doesn't always know everything. Not only does your tribe not always know everything, but your side does not always know everything. Sometimes that other side you disagree with that you see as enemies, they know things that you don't know. Sometimes they are right and you are wrong. Shocking, right? We don't know everything and we have to become humble learners.

Apollos had to submit to these tentmakers and admit he didn't know it all and he was willing to hear them. That doesn't mean we don't have conviction. I promise if Priscilla and Aquila went up to Apollos and told him Jesus wasn't really the Messiah and was an alien from another planet, I am sure Apollos would have thanked them for their time and left. See, this doesn't mean we believe everything we hear, but Apollos would have listened and reasoned, and then been able to have seen they were right and accept what they were saying so he could further his understanding of God.

We learn from this first snapshot that we must be humble teachers, not rebuking people in public for the sake of your glory, but having real genuine, loving gospel conversations with people in private where nobody is going to know that you know more than them. They are going to be able

to humbly accept what you are saying because it's not for show; it's for love. That is what Priscilla and Aquila shows us. Also, we have to be able to wear the other shoe. Sometimes people will tell us things that we don't know and our first response won't be defense, it will be to listen, examine, weigh, and understand if we might be wrong in some things, because we want to be right. There is truth, and other people can teach you truth that you don't know. From Apollos, and Priscilla and Aquila, we learn to be humble learners and humble teachers.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

So, where exactly is Paul? We have been learning a lot about Paul. Where is he at? Let's look back in verses 22–23 to see where Paul is. We will see that he runs into some other guys. "When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples." Paul has just ended his second missionary journey and landed in Caesarea. He goes to Antioch and he strengthens the believers and tells them all the stories. Now, he is going to go back on missionary journey number three, and in chapter 19, we will see all these regions he went to. In his second missionary journey, the Spirit forbade him to go to Asia, but now he is welcome to go to Asia. The Lord has been working and He is now ready for Paul to enter into Asia.

Paul Questions Disciples in Ephesus

So, Paul is going to go into Ephesus, that first main stop as we see in verse 1, "And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus." Does anyone have chills here? We have read the letter from Paul to the people in Ephesus – Ephesians! Paul has just made it to that place. We already know so much of the story that is about to happen, so it is exciting because we have a letter in our Bibles about Ephesus. This third missionary journey is where we are going to see the places that so many letters in our bibles were written to.

But Paul is now in Ephesus, and it says, "There he found some disciples." So, who are these disciples and what does that term disciple mean? It

means a follower, a student, a learner, someone who has come alongside someone else and learned from their way of life. These are disciples, but I think Luke is vague at the beginning because he is going to build a little suspense to ask whose disciples are these guys. Now just a little spoiler — I don't think they are disciples of Jesus. I'll just throw that out there. Let's walk through what happens with Paul. He found these disciples and verse 2 says, "And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" That was a rather odd question to ask. When you meet a Christian, have you ever asked, "Did you receive the Spirit when you believed?" That is a weird question to ask someone right off the bat. I am going to argue that the reason he asked this question was because he suspected they were not believers in Jesus. He suspected they were disciples of someone else, not of Jesus, so he asked a probing evangelical question.

This is about evangelism. It is like when you are hanging out with somebody and you get this sense that you don't think this person is a Christian, so you ask them, "If you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity?" You usually don't ask that question to your mentor or someone you know loves Jesus. You ask that question to someone you suspect is a non-believer. You are trying to ask the question so they will answer, and by their answer, you can proceed with your gospel proclamation. It is a probing question to get to showing them they are not right with God.

I think Paul asked that question to get to the reality that those disciples were not right with God, they were not followers of Jesus. So, how did they respond? Verse 2 says, "And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." This answer can mean two different things. First, it could mean they have no idea about the Holy Spirit, like they haven't even heard that term before. I will argue that is not what they mean. We will see as the questions progress that they have been baptized by John, and what was John's ministry? He baptized for repentance, but he spoke of one coming who was greater than he...And He would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's whole message was that there is one coming who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. So when Paul asked if they received the Spirit when

they believed and they said they hadn't even heard of the Spirit, I think they are saying they have not heard that the Spirit has come. They would have known from John that the Spirit was coming. Their answer is they haven't even heard of the Holy Spirit. In other words, they hadn't heard of Pentecost or that the Spirit has come. They were just following John and John told them to follow some guy, and they were looking for this one guy who would pour the Spirit out on them. I think this is where these guys are.

Notice Paul's follow-up question in verse 3, "And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" Now, that is a strange question if they were not disciples of anybody. Paul would have known they had been baptized because he asked the question. His line of questioning that Paul actually knew these were disciples of John, not Jesus, and their answer actually reveals what Paul has been getting at. Their response is, "Into John's baptism." This is what Paul had been fishing for. He didn't want to come out and say they weren't disciples of Jesus, but disciples of John. He wanted to go through these questions to have them reveal that to him so that he could present the gospel to them.

Then, Paul gives us information about John's baptism in verse 4, "And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.'" Paul takes this line of only being baptized in John's baptism and he says here is the truth — John baptized for repentance. John baptized to get you ready for the one who was to come. And by the way, that one who was to come, we know His name now. His name is Jesus Christ. You have to be wondering how they could not have known about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Well, they were in Ephesus. That is a long way from Jerusalem! Those guys had been in Jerusalem and they ran into a guy named John. John told them about the Messiah to come and they believed. They got baptized and now they are waiting for the Messiah to come, but they obviously went back home to Ephesus. There is not Facebook or social media, so they aren't watching TikTok videos of what is happening in real time. These guys haven't got the news that Christ has come, what He has done, or that there is a Holy Spirit. In other words, they are not believers. They don't know Jesus.

Paul Proclaims the Gospel

So, what does Paul do? He tells them about Jesus. Verses 5–7 say, “On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. There were about twelve men in all.” What do we learn from this? For one, there were twelve guys who didn’t have all the information. They became humble learners from Paul as Paul proclaimed the gospel.

Now, this is a text that we can easily misunderstand. In fact, maybe you have Pentecostal friends who believe there is a second baptism called the baptism of the Holy Spirit — where you have a first baptism, and then later on after belief, maybe days, weeks, or years later as you arrive spiritually, you get a second dose, a dose of the Holy Spirit, a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Clearly, we see it with these guys. Here are disciples who don’t have the Spirit. Now, by Paul laying on hands they get the Spirit and they speak in tongues and prophesy. Clearly, this is a second baptism of the Holy Spirit. They believed but didn’t get the Spirit, now they are getting the Spirit. So, the Spirit happens after belief some time later. — That is what some will teach from this text. Hopefully, as we walk through this text, you will see that is a misunderstanding of what is happening here. These aren’t disciples who believed in Jesus. These are disciples of John who don’t know who Jesus is. They haven’t heard of Jesus. They don’t know about His work. They don’t know about the cross. They don’t know about the resurrection. When Paul asked if they received the Spirit when they believed, they answered no. Why would he ask that question? It was because the normal response is you get the Spirit when you believe. If you don’t have the Spirit, you haven’t believed. Then begins a chain of questions to get to what was wrong with their belief. What was wrong was they didn’t know Jesus yet. So Paul introduces them to Jesus, and then they believe in Him and they get baptized. Paul then lays his hands on them, they receive the Spirit, and they speak in tongues.

Again, some crazy things happen. They believe, they get baptized, but the Holy Spirit doesn’t come to them until after baptism with hands laid on them. That seems strange to us as Baptists. So what is happening? You

have to remember that Acts is a transitional book. We are going from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the old covenant to the new covenant. A lot of things that happen in Acts are not the normal for all time. They are abnormal events where God is showing specific things. When the Jews believed, they had to be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans had to get baptized and have the apostles lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit. The Gentiles believed and received the Spirit, so they baptized them too. So, we already saw three different aspects of baptism just in Acts, and then you have this encounter with John's disciples becoming Jesus's disciples. They have to have Paul lay their hands on them in order to get the Holy Spirit after baptism. So what do we do with a text like this? We say this is not normal; this is an abnormal event where God is showing, specifically, that they couldn't be a disciple of John. They had to be a disciple of Jesus to be in the Kingdom, and it was proved by having Paul lay his hands on them to confirm they had just crossed over from death to life. They went from John to Jesus, and then they were in the Kingdom of God. It is a transition. In the first service, some came to me and said, "This seems the Spirit is after belief and after baptism." In this moment, it is, but this is not normative. Again, we are going from old covenant to new covenant. What we see here are not believers who later on received the Spirit. This is not a second baptism of the Spirit. We see disciples of John who do not know Jesus, who then get told the gospel of Jesus and they become believers, and then they get the Holy Spirit. By the way, we are in Ephesus. If you read Ephesians 1, that letter Paul writes to the Ephesians — he says clearly that when you believe, you receive the Holy Spirit. It is not baptism or laying on of hands; it is belief that seals you with the Holy Spirit. He is writing back to the Ephesus church just so they clearly understand that truth.

Humble Learners to Humble Teachers

Here are twelve guys who are living their lives as disciples of John. We have to understand they don't have the whole message. Paul gives them the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey would say. They see Christ, they repent and believe, and they are baptized. Now we are going to see that they, who were humble learners from Paul, become humble teachers for

Paul. Verses 8–10 say, “And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the Kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.” Paul sets up shop and starts teaching in the synagogues. The normal thing happens — the Jews aren’t humble learners, they are stubborn resisters. They kick Paul out of the synagogue, so Paul just rents out the university. He starts hosting classes and he brought the disciples with him. That would have been those twelve and probably others. They go to this classroom, and for two years, Paul teaches the disciples the Word of God. Then, this statement says at the end of the two years the whole region of Asia knew the Word of God. Asia is a pretty big place. How did this happen? How did Paul set up a classroom at a university for two years, and within that time, all of the area of Asia learned about the Word of God from this classroom? Do you think that — Option A: In two years’ time, every single person in Asia came to this classroom to learn from Paul? I am going to say probably not. More than likely, what happened is — Option B: The disciples who were in that classroom became humble learners and then became humble teachers. As they went out, they taught the things they learned from Paul, just like Priscilla and Aquila did. They were teaching the things they learned and those they taught became humble learners, and those humble learners became humble teachers. So after two years, that classroom, through multiplication and discipleship, led to the whole area of Asia knowing the Word of God. It is those who are humbly learning becoming humble teachers. That is what it means to be a follower of Jesus. You are a humble learner who then becomes a humble teacher because people need to know the truth about the Lord.

I remember David Platt said about the first time he taught overseas that for six hours he was lecturing in this little room filled with people. He said they hardly every raised their heads up. They just wrote the entire time, for six hours! He said at the end of it he was a little taken back because he preaches in America and no one hardly every writes when he speaks. He

wondered why they were writing so much, so he asked one of them and the guy showed him his notes. David realized was they had written word for word everything he said, for six hours...David's response was "Why did you write everything I said?" The guy responded, "This wasn't for me. This is for those who aren't here. This is for those who don't know. I am going to take what you taught me and I am going to go teach everyone I know." This guy made sure he had it all down so that he could be a, not just a humble learner, but a humble teacher.

Our Sunday night sermon driven small groups have been amazing. We get together on Wednesday nights to discuss the sermon. Almost everyone in the small groups has said they now take a lot of sermon notes because we circle up and teach each other about the sermon, so it's awkward if I forget it. Now they are listening to a sermon, not just to hear but to digest and to work through it to try to figure out what they are going to do with it. See, part of being a disciple is being a humble learner who then humbly teaches. When I preach, Bro Ricky is on the front row taking notes because he is humbly learning so he can continue to be a humble teacher. That is what we all should long to be, a humble learner who becomes a humble teacher, just as Apollos did, as Priscilla and Aquila, and as those disciples did. That is what the gospel story is about.

You never know quite know where you are going to learn from. When 8 Days of Hope were here, Alan and Tina asked me to do one of their devotions. We scheduled it and I later realized it was my daughter's birthday. So I thought I had probably better skip that and go to my daughter's birthday, so I reached out to Tina to reschedule. I waited for her to reach back out but she never did. Three weeks went by and she never reached back out and rescheduled. I have to be honest, I was a little hurt because I wanted to do a devotion but I was never asked to teach. As I reflect on those three weeks, I realize is that I was not supposed to be a teacher that week. I was supposed to be a learner. There was a guy named Randy who was the cook for 8 Days of Hope. Every time I ran into Randy, he said come over here, and he would put his hands on me and pray for me. Every single time I saw him. As I watched him go about his day, he did the same thing for everybody he encountered. When I was

around 8 Days of Hope, I learned they were the most praying people I have ever seen in my life! They came here and my assumption was they are disaster relief people; they need to learn from a pastor. Instead, the pastor needed to learn from them. I need to learn what prayer is in real life. I need to learn the power of prayer among a people. I didn't need to be the teacher that week; I needed to be a humble learner. Let me tell you, God taught me much. Apollos would never have expected a blue collared married couple to teach him, the scholar from Alexandria, but he humbled himself and he learned so that he could then be a humble teacher. This week, let us both be humble learners and humble teachers for the sake of Christ.