



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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October 2, 2011

Different Gifts, Same Grace Week 2

Sermon Text: [Acts 18:24-26](#)

Mr. Richard Muchka (7th-8th Grade Teacher)

First Lesson: [Deuteronomy 6:1-9](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 71](#)

Second Lesson: [Ephesians 3:1-9](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 24:13-27](#)

### How to Avoid Becoming a Teacher

This is a little different. I kind of always knew that I was going to be a teacher. I can remember when I was 7 or 8 years old playing school with my little brother and my cousins. Of course, I was always the teacher; call it a control thing, I don't know. It was natural. I always liked school. I got good grades. I liked my teacher, so it seemed only normal that I would go on to be a teacher, but not every teacher's story is the same.

Our fictitious example today is a gentleman by the name of Gene. When Gene was a child, he promised himself that he would never become a teacher. It was simple enough to understand the reason why. As a fifth grade boy, he hated school about as much as any person could hate anything. He hated getting up early. He hated sitting at the desk. He hated writing reports. In fact, to this very day, Gene's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher is still waiting for a report on dolphins. So at the tender age of 11, Gene made a promise to himself that absolutely, categorically, and under no circumstances would he ever become a teacher. So of course, that's exactly what he became...a teacher of God's Word. This morning, he would like to offer you advice on how to avoid becoming a teacher.

The first step on the road to avoiding teacherhood is to stop learning things. Ideally you would have to stop immediately, but that would mean walking out of this sermon...and I don't want you to do that, so you'll have to start when you get home. You may not realize how difficult it is going to be. You'll have to cut back on watching TV. Sitcoms, late night shows, that might be okay, but no documentaries and especially no more news programs. For that matter, you'll have to cut out the newspaper entirely, as well as the internet, all books and magazines, and the Bible. The reason for this is that you never know when you might learn something, and it's best not to take chances, right? You could end up like this man, Apollos.

The Bible tells us that Apollos was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of Scriptures. His thorough knowledge became the first step towards becoming a teacher. No doubt Apollos started down the road before he had a choice. His parents taught him Bible verses. They made sure that he had the right teachers and the best schools. Somewhere along the way Apollos realized that he liked studying the Bible. Apollos was Jewish so his Bible contained only the Old Testament, but that was enough to set the hook in his young mind. So he began to pour himself into the study of Scriptures. He learned all the history of the patriarchs, and he memorized the kings of Judah and

Israel. He dove deep into the prophetic books to catalogue every word concerning the Messiah. By that time, Apollos didn't just like studying the Bible, he loved it with all of his heart.

Then, at some point, someone came along and taught Apollos about a man named Jesus. They taught him how Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, how Jesus had been born of a virgin, how he had preached and taught with authority, how he had suffered and died and rose from the grave. This information became the match that set Apollos' whole life on fire. All the things he had studied and learned, it all came together in Jesus. It all made sense in Jesus. Apollos couldn't do anything else. He simply had to tell other people.

So that's exactly what he did. In Acts 18, the Apostle Paul had only recently left Ephesus. He had gone back to his home church in Antioch and then went around visiting other churches, but Paul had some friends who lived in Ephesus named Aquila and Priscilla, a husband and wife. These two believers in Jesus were at the synagogue one day when they heard Apollos speak. What they heard took their breath away. Here was this man who spoke with great fervor and taught accurately about the Lord Jesus. Apollos was not the kind of teacher who would just phone in a lecture while his mind was busy with other things. Apollos had a fire within his belly. His heart and mind boiled with love for Jesus and for the teachings of God's Word. Priscilla and Aquila just had to meet this man and have him over to their house, and when they did, they found out that Apollos was a Jew who had been born and raised in Alexandria Egypt. He was a long way from home. Apparently Apollos had been traveling around to synagogues in order to teach and preach about Jesus. Because of his love for God's Word and his love for Jesus, Apollos had become a bonafide teacher.

Even with all his learning, Apollos still lacked something. Priscilla and Aquila had noticed it in his preaching. Now that they got to know him, it became even clearer. Apollos knew only the baptism of John. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. In that respect, it was just like the baptism that Jesus commanded later, but John's baptism was one that looked forward to Jesus. That made it temporary and preparatory. Now that Jesus had come and finished his work of salvation, wouldn't it be better to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit as Jesus commanded?

So now Priscilla and Aquila faced a problem. They had just made friends with a great teacher, a man who proclaimed Christ with power and eloquence. At the same time, he was lacking this knowledge about baptism. For certain Apollos wasn't preaching anything false. He just didn't have the whole story. So what should they do? Should they tell him or keep quiet?

It would not hurt anything to keep quiet. Apollos knew the basics about salvation and the life of Jesus. Keeping quiet would avoid that difficult moment of telling this great teacher that he was missing something. But keeping quiet was not an option for Aquila

and Priscilla. They took Apollos aside privately and explained to him the way of God more adequately. Because of their love for Jesus and their love for Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila became teachers.

So you can see the danger of how difficult it can be to avoid becoming a teacher. Not only would you have to avoid learning something that you might love, you would also have to avoid loving people. And you would almost certainly run across somebody who needs to know what you know.

What can you do when the apostle Paul isn't around? He is without a doubt the better teacher. Surely someone else could speak with words more beautiful than yours, but you are the one in the right place at the right time. You don't need to have a classroom or a dry erase board. You don't need any advanced degree or a desk with an apple on it. You need a love for God's Word that leads to an accurate understanding of the way of Jesus. You need a love for people that leads to putting their needs first.

If you could talk with that great teacher Apollos, or that great teacher Paul, or any great teacher who has influenced your life, they would all say the same things. They would say "It's not about me." Paul said it in our lesson from Ephesians 3. "Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." It's not about me. Apollos would have said that when Priscilla and Aquila told him he didn't have the full story about baptism. "It's not about me." Only Jesus could say to those disciples in our Gospel today, as they were walking on the road to Emmaus, "It's all about me." Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in the Scriptures concerning himself. Here we find the motivation, the strength and the desire to teach about Jesus.

The entire Bible is about God's promise to send a Savior from sin. The whole Gospel message is about Jesus' good deeds and obedience to God, about his death on the cross to bear the punishment we deserve, and about his glorious victory over the cold hand of death. Any desire we have to avoid becoming teachers comes from a focus on ourselves. "I don't have time." "I would be afraid." Or worst of all, "I just don't care." We overcome these problems by taking the focus off ourselves and looking to Jesus. It was his perfect sacrifice that made me holy in the sight of God. It was his Holy Spirit who filled our hearts with faith. It was his Father who adopted us into the family of grace.

Since Jesus has become our Savior from sin, our guide and teacher in life, our everything, for this reason we teach one another with patience and love to know the way of the Lord in all its fullness and truth. God provides the abilities. God provides the opportunities. And we, as his people, rejoice in the gift of teaching.