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- What's up
- It is a privilege
- and I'm not just saying that
- I believe that .. Open God word he meets us
- I believe that God is going to move toward us today in these next couple of minutes
- at mercy we have this saying
- we expect God to change a life today
- I am expectant
- I have 3 objectives today
 - 1 tell story
 - 2 show how that story reveals the beauty of Gods story
 - 3 highlight how God distinguishes those who trust his story
 - from those who need to

Read Entire Text

- 1815
- Napoleon the great ... comeback tour
- ...suffered a devastating loss in Russia the year before that led to his exile
- but ... return he galvanized the people of France...to launch a counterattack
- Surrounding the border of France was a coalition of countries... included
 - the British Netherlands Brunswick and Prussia
- their aim... end the 15-year advance that Napoleon had been making on the rest of Europe
- Their plan was simple
 - invade and take the throne
 - Victory... an end to the Napoleonic Wars
 - and defeat...continuation... conquering tyrant
- the stakes were high
- and in Napoleon's fashion he attacked first
- he pushed back the Prussian army causing them to retreat
- ... that stood in the way of another Napoleon victory was
 - General Wellington and his platoon
- the battle raged on for hours and When the Smoke finally cleared

- A correspondence was sent To Britain with two simple words
- Wellington defeated
- the entire country of Britain was sent into upheaval
 - there was a disastrous financial panic
 - looting rioting and hopelessness moved in on the country like a dark cloud
 - This loss meant
 - More suffering
 - More death
 - And insecurity about the future of their beloved country
- But ... after hours of agony
- a glimmer of hope pierced through their darkness
 - The transmission they received had been interrupted by the poor weather
 - And as the other half of the communication came in
 - Hope began to rise in the chest of the people
 - The **new message** was read aloud with joy
 - and they proclaimed it throughout the city
 - the transmission read
 - Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo
 - Sorrow turned to laughter
 - depression turned to Joy
 - defeat to Victory...
- With just a few words (**Slow**)
 - The end of the story made all the difference
- Point...
 - God has written us a story
 - And similar to The Correspondents... Britain after the Battle of Waterloo
 - This story came in two parts
- The Potential tragedy of today... most...world... has only accepted the first part
 - Many ...have received an incomplete message from God
- Today in Acts 18 and 19
 - we will read about 13 men who only received Part 1 of Gods story
 - They only got the first half of God's correspondence
- And what we will see is that God uses people
 - Just like you and me

- To proclaim **his finished story**
- I want to tag our message for today
 - **Keep reading there's more to the story**
 - Pray

STORY

- verse 24 starts in the middle of a story.
 - God is on the move ... using all types of people to accomplish his purpose
- At the beginning of this Chapter
- Paul the great missionary leaves Athens and arrives in Corinth
- And who does God have waiting there for him
 - none other than the couple ... learned last week leveraged everything for the gospel
 - Aquila and Priscilla
 - And ... see is the power of the mission of God to bond strangers into family
 - they are coworkers building tents
 - they are co-laborers building the church
 - And they are friends building a life together
 - This is a tightly knit group
 - So when it's time to leave the city they go together
- the trio leaves Corinth and lands in Ephesus ...
 - And here God calls them to share a gospel goodbye
 - Very similar to the one we are sharing today
- But here's our hope
 - God doesn't waste **the tears that fall** in our pursuit of his kingdom
- what... see in the text is that
 - God's plan to flood the earth with his **glory** through the advancement of the **gospel**

- Through the proclamation of his finished story
- sometimes requires us to say goodbye to those we love
- Here's what we believe at Mercy
 - as we send God's people to all people
 - We believe that the city of Charlotte will know more of Jesus because of the faithfulness of Joey and Charlie and all who will go with them
- planning to go and willing to stay...
 - For Aquila and Priscilla This is their third City in chapter 18 alone
 - they had a lifestyle that proved they were planning to go
 - but when God called them to stay
 - they stayed faithfully
- And this Leads to the salvation of individuals who would have exponential impact in the advancement of God's kingdom
 - They spread the **finished story of Gods gospel** all over the world
- Let's dive in to the story

Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. **25** He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit,²⁶ he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus,

- a Jew named Apollos
 - This is the first mention of the young theologian
 - the text says he was a... native of Alexandria
 - And Alexandria was the perfect mixture of culture and religion ^
- In other words Apollo's was from the right place
 - Alexandria, known for its
 - museums
 - Libraries
 - and schools
 - it boasted a large population of both
 - Jewish Scholars
 - Greek philosophers

- basically if you were a young up-and-coming preacher Alexandria was the place to be from
- And from the ranks of Alexandria had risen an
 - impressive
 - Scholarly
 - learned individual named Apollo's
- He was eloquent
 - competent in the scriptures
 - fervent in spirit
 - And taught accurately...
- And yet there was something missing
- Hmm?
- Let's go through our pastoral check list
 - Was he compelling... the man could preach
 - did he know the Bible... powerful in the scriptures
 - was he passionate...
 - passionate enough to travel 1700 miles from Alexandria to Ephesus
 - Was what he said true...
 - scripture says that he was precise
- But there's this little appendage tacked onto the end of all his accolades
 - he only knew the baptism of John
- Or in other words he only knew half the story
 - He needed more information
- If only there was someone there to tell him....
 - **There was more to know**
 - If only God had someone willing to stay

V 26

26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue,... but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him,

- Praise God

- this is why they stayed
 - God had them on mission right where they were
- Serving in the context of their local Church

- They worked a 9-5 like you
- But their normal Christian life had
 - enormous gospel impact

- our Christian paradigm says that it's all or nothing
 - Only the chosen do ministry
 - Going to the nations
 - Or stand on stages
 - Will have gospel impact

- But the text says otherwise
 - it is not **Paul** or nothing
 - you can be Aquila and Priscilla right here right now
 - Faithful members of a local body
 - taking the gospel to the ends of the Earth...

- Do you want to see a gospel awakening???

- I have a secret for you
 - the gospel awakening we've prayed for won't come because of Spence
 - it won't come because of me
 - or Pastor Scott
 - or anyone else on the staff
 - it will come because we have all seen the **value** in God's call for **us** to go with the gospel right here right now

- God had a **plan and a purpose** for keeping Pricilla and Aquila ...
 - And he has one for you in Charlotte
- Aquila and Pricilla are great ministry models for us
 - They're just so godly
 - Look how they handle Apollos

they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

- **Can't you see them**
- This older couple looking upon this young man with grace and compassion
- this young man who knew the scriptures
 - exegeted them clearly
 - with fervency
 - Eloquence
 - and courage

- They didn't see him as someone who needed to be shut down and shut up
 - They saw someone they wanted to help
- they did not denounce him publicly
 - They didn't drag his name through the mud
 - or put his business in the street

- Even though he only knew half the story!!!!
 - they brought him in
 - likely shared a meal
 - maybe they washed his feet

- not only did they inform him of a greater hope that came with the rest of the correspondence
 - they displayed it before his very eyes

- See the beauty of this picture
 - Humility meet with humility

- This educated and accomplished theologian and philosopher set at the feet of these tent makers
 - This is the upside down kingdom that God is looking to create amongst his people
 - and at their feet he gained something better than knowledge
 - ...there at the feet of the poor he found life

- the second half of the message changes everything
 - His life was never the same

- And ... no longer proclaim the **partial account** that was John's baptism
- Look at v 27

27 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, **28** for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

- Priscilla and Aquila's Impact on Apollos equips him with the whole story
 - It equips him with the gospel
 - And with the gospel in hand he is (the text says) Great help
- And here we see how Our obedience generates gospel impact
- A ministry would be so impactful that Paul himself would count them as a >>>
 - Partner in the ministry at Corinth
 - he says in 1 Cor 3
 - I planted Apollos watered but God gave the growth
- How is God calling you to be faithful
 - And how might he want to use it
- Y'all you are a part of a church with a God sized vision
 - A Gospel Awakening in this city
- And God can do it
 - But let's be real
 - big prayers with little action is evidence of little faith
- God was doing a great work in this region
 - and he was inviting everyone to get in on it
- And I do mean everyone
- We see Gods continued work In Ch 19
- V1

And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples.

- ...as Apollos is traveling from Ephesus to Corinth
- Paul is passing from Corinth to Ephesus
- and in the passing of these two men
 - God is bringing the second half of the story to the world
- Paul returns to Ephesus
 - And he's going to meet some disciples
- And as he gets to know these guys he becomes slightly concerned
 - He feels that... there's something off about these dudes
 - There's something not quite right
 - So in v2 he asks them

2 "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

- Such an important question
- This was Paul's version of a G check ...
 - Wrong crowd
 - Have you ever been in a group and realized that you all had the same favorite artist
 - Like omg you love Justin Bieber too
 - Everyone starts singing
 - I'm like Baby Baby Baby ohh
 - And out of the corner of your eye you see someone mumbling
 - And you're offended because they said they were a fan
 - So you're like what year did beebz drop my world 2.0
 - And if they stutter their not who they say they are
- Something's off about these guys so Paul's like...
 - What year did Jesus drop the Holy Spirit...
 - And they froze

, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

- And in that moment Paul knew

- These guys were not who they said they were
- BECAUSEYou can't know Jesus
 - And not know the Holy spirit
- Ahh, I can't preach it yet
- Paul is genuinely perplexed
- He ask these disciples
 - How have you not heard of the Holy Spirit
- What were you even baptized into
 - and here it comes again...
 - into the baptism of John
- **So if we take a step back for a moment**
 - **we have two stories that hinge on one issue**
 - **Namely people professing Jesus**
 - **while only knowing the baptism of John**
 - **Professing Jesus but only knowing half the story**
- I have 1 desire for us today
- And... live in light of the **full reality** ... Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - John and his disciples Only had half the story
 - The story John and his disciples had was essentially... Wellington defeated
- Let me build a bridge for us
 - Because at this point you should be asking yourself
 - Who is John
 - And what is this incomplete story???
- John know as John the Baptist
- Is the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth
- the old barren couple should give us hero of the Faith by vibes
 - we should immediately think Sarah and Abraham were barren
 - Jacob and Rachel were barren
 - What is God doing

- And as we are introduced to the New Testament
 - as we begin to taste the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises
 - at the beginning of every gospel
 - we meet John the Baptist
 - Mark chapter 1 Luke chapter 1 John chapter 1 and Matthew chapter 3

- from this old couple's barrenness God brings to earth the greatest man born of woman
- and at his birth
 - Zechariah John's father it's filled with the Holy Spirit at John's birth
 - And he prophesied that John will be called a prophet of the most high for he will go before the Lord to prepare his way

- Who is John
 - John is the greatest Prophet who ever lived
 - He is the cliffhanger to the proverbial climax of scripture
 - he's the conclusion to of all the Old Testament prophets

- John Like Moses
 - Calls us to keep the law
- like Ezekiel he calls us to repent

- Like Isaiah he paints a beautiful portrait of the Messiah
 - He tells us that there is one who comes after him whose sandals he is not even worthy to untie

- What we see in John is a culmination of all the Old Testament prophets laser focused into one man's baptism

- John's Ministry was full of power and it was God ordained
- But John even John Did not have the full story
 - He died before its conclusion

- And so did every Prophet before him
 - They didn't live long enough to see the rest of God's message to humanity.
 - Even though they longed to

- 1 Peter 1
 - Says that the angels in the profits long to look into the mystery of God's salvation
 - The salvation that has been revealed to us
- God has written a story to you
 - Its right here
 - And its conclusion is not with John
- Everything that John asserted is necessary and true
 - God has placed inside us a moral compass that determines right from wrong
 - and when we break it we should repent
 - but that is not the end of the story
 - God wasn't finished
- **Do not put a Period Where God intended a comma**
 - Keep reading there's more to the story
- Part one sounded like
 - Keep the law
 - Don't steal
 - Don't cuss
 - Have no other Gods
 - Love Me .. God says
 - And if you do that
 - I will be your God
 - And you will be my people
- And that sound like a really good message
- It's simple and straight forward
 - But for some reason that was really hard for us
 - We struggle with this simple proposition from God
 - Because deep, deep down in our hearts the truth about us is
 - We love other things more than God
- And this reality leaves us with a law that condemns

- Keep the law begins to sound like
 - try harder
 - do better
 - stop falling
 - And failing
 - Why are you still here

- Is this the track record that plays repeatedly in your head
 - If it is
 - may I suggest that you're reading and clinging to half the message

- And it's not just you
- all of humanity has heard and is clinging to the same incomplete message
 - It is proclaimed from pulpits
 - And heralded on the graham
 - Keep the law
 - Keep the law
 - Keep the law
 - Keep the law
 - Be a good person

- But were not good people
- All have fallen short ...
 - Like if God is perfect
 - And God is Holy
 - and God is just
 - who here among us could stand before him
 - proud of our thoughts
 - actions
 - and motives

- If we get down to it
 - The message of keep the law is really bad news
 - **Because it can't save us**

- And if we're honest ...
 - If I'm honest
 - my sin
 - My brokenness
 - And my failure

- Turn half communication of keep the law
 - Into the incomplete message the British received in 1815
 - But this bad news is not in regard to Wellington
 - The message I have heard over over and over again in my head this week
 - is Joseph defeated

- I desperately need the conclusion of the story
- And so do you

- What is our saving grace in moments of condemnation
 - It's part 2
 - for even though we couldn't keep the law
 - About 2000 years ago
 - There was a man
 - Born of a virgin
 - He was the very image of the invisible God
 - He was fully God and fully man
 - He was the climax and conclusion of Gods correspondence to us
 - And He had a baptism that was different than John's

- In v 4 Paul says
 - John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."

- So hear the good news

- There's something that comes after the comma
 - And his name is Jesus

- And why is that good news
 - Because Jesus has offered a baptism that saves

- They asked John
 - Are you the Messiah
 - And his response every time was
- Look I just baptize with water
 - But the one who comes after ...
 - He has real power
 - And he...
 - He will baptize with the Spirit and with fire
- Why does Paul ask these men about the Spirit
 - Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed ?
 - He asked because water has no power to save
- but Jesus
- The coming of Jesus changes everything
- We see it in the Text
 - Look at V 5 with me

5 On hearing this,

- That the messiah is Jesus

they were baptized in^b

the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** (Slow)

- **And watch what happens**

And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. **7** There were about twelve men in all.

- the distinction between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus may be the single most important issue the Church faces today
- Here we tackle objective #2... what makes a Christian a Christian

- What is the greatest evidence that someone has heard and believed the whole story of God
- It's not their attempts to be good
 - It's not their bible knowledge
 - It's not even whether they believe that the death and resurrection is a historical fact
 - Those things are important
 - but they are not the primary distinguisher
- Consider with me the origins of Christianity
 - All the way back in volume one of our you are sent series
 - In Acts 1 Jesus reiterates the promise of John saying
 - John baptized with water but I will baptize you with the spirit a few days from now
 - and in Acts 2 the promise is realized
- God pours out his Spirit on the 120
 - And their behavior is so out of the ordinary that people assume they're drunk
 - Peter stands up and proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ to a group of people who previously only heard part 1
 - This is the same Peter who had just weeks prior denied Jesus
 - And gone into hiding
 - What was the distinction between him now and him then
 - water versus the spirit
 - Peter proclaims the gospel
 - And they ask Peter a very similar question to the one they asked John in Luke chapter 3
 - what must we do to be saved
 - Y'all know they didn't give the same answer right
 - 1 question, two answers
 - Because something had changed
 - In the time between John's Baptism
 - And Peter's Proclamation
 - God had finished the story

- The partial message we had received from God
 - Was not good news
 - Keep the law
 - You are broken
 - You are sinful
 - You are weak

- But ohh when the fog cleared ... and the rest of the message came through
 - Everything changed

- It was keep the law Comma
 - by the power of my Spirit
- It was you are broken COMMA
 - But I love broken things
- It was we were sinful COMMA
 - But blessed is the one whose sins are forgiven
- And it was we are weak COMMA
 - But grace is sufficient and my power is made perfect in weakness

- John says repent and Peter said repent
 - But Peter had more to say

- when asked What shall we do
 - he said repent
 - be baptized in the name of Jesus
 - receive forgiveness for your sins
 - and receive the Holy Spirit

- That Brothers and sisters is the distinction
 - What are you trusting in for your salvation
 - The water of John or the Spirit of Jesus

- God promises his Spirit when we believe

- He promises a helper Who will teach you and remind you of the words of Jesus
- He gives strength in your weakness and help for communing and communicating with your creator
- He endowed you with love, joy, peace, patience,
 - He creates in you kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;
- He provides for you freedom & hope
- And he says that all this is just a down payment for the Eternal treasure that is coming to those who believe
 - These are the promises of our God
- Let Hope well up in your soul as you read the rest of the story.
- that law you couldn't keep God says
 - I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
- To the condemnation you feel... God replies
 - There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.^[a]
 - **Why 2** For the law of the Spirit of life has set you^[b] free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
- So because of this distinction I have one simple question for you
 - did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed
 - Has God caused you to love him
- is there evidence that God has unzipped you and climbed in
 - Does your soul cry out to your creator of Abba Father
- what we see in the text is that all who believe In The Name of Jesus receive the spirit.

- There's an important lesson to be learned from these 13 men who had heard a partial story
 - you can creep right up on salvation
 - you can know all about God
 - you can be personally baptized by the greatest Prophet to ever live
 - your mama and them could have dragged you to church every Sunday
 - You can be as religious as you want to be

- but if there is no evidence of the spirits work in your life
 - I need you to listen closer to me than you have ever listened to anything in your life

- The Messiah has come
 - and his name is Jesus
 - we were dead in our sin
 - rebels of God by Nature children of Wrath
 - Our law keeping amounted to a hill of dung
 - we were hopeless and we were condemned

- what on Earth could we do Other than spiral downward toward an encounter with our God who is an all-consuming fire

- mankind has thought up many ways to solve the problem of our guilt
 - keep the law
 - reject the law
 - Oppose moral absolutes
 - deny the existence of God
- But none of these efforts nullify the fact that we will all stand before a holy God guilty
- every man-made plan
 - no matter how intentionally
 - Or thoughtful
 - or well-crafted has failed
- praise God that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man
 - be overwhelmed that God will intervene in our hopeless is state
 - Worship God For he had more to say to us

- hear part 2 with fresh ears
- God's solution to our problem
 - Was his coming to a world that he knew would reject and hate him
 - It was for him to take on flesh
 - Knowing that we would just rip it off his back
- God in his Justice punished sin by
 - Taking Jesus the only one to keep the law
 - And driving nails through his wrist
 - And spikes through his feet
- All so that we might know the depths of God's love for us
 - And the lengths he would go to have us be with him
 - Jesus took the punishment for our sin on himself and he died a horrific death
 - Jesus Defeated
- But how many of y'all know that wasn't the end of the story
 - early Sunday morning
 - God sent his spirit to Get Jesus up out of that tomb
 - And the text says of those who believe
 - the same power that rose Jesus from the grave lives in you
 - we have victory
 - Because on the cross Jesus defeated, **comma**, sin and the devil and the grave
- Did you receive the spirit when you believed
 - or better yet have you believed ?
- if not let me extend this invitation on the behalf of God
 - "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in me, as^[j] the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"
 - And that water is the spirit of God
 - Are you thirsty
 - are you tired
 - Are you needy
 - Jesus says come drink freely now
 - Let us pray to that end