

Caffeinated Christianity?

Acts 18:24–19:7

vv18-23

- Paul stayed in Corinth & made a ?Nazarite? vow (abstaining from cutting hair, dead bodies, and products of the vine).
- Sailed to Ephesus (commercial center of Asia) with Priscilla & Aquila, Paul left them there, reasoned w/ the Jews and promised to return.
- Left for Caesarea (chief port of Jerusalem), greeted church, went to Antioch
- Traveled throughout Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples
- Conclusion of second missionary journey and 2,800 miles.
- Acts 18:24–19:7 links Paul's second and third missionary journeys together.

Image

Do you like coffee? I love coffee. It wakes me up, invigorates me, and brings me back to life. Now, decaffeinated coffee may be good, but it's not the real thing. Decaffeinated coffee won't wake you up; it won't perk you up; it won't keep you up; it won't get you up; it's just there. It looks like coffee; it smells like coffee; it tastes like coffee; it just doesn't do for you inside what coffee ought to do. It is a coffee substitute. The fact is decaffeinated coffee just isn't real coffee.

Need

There is a form of decaffeinated Christianity in our culture and we buy into it more than we think. We go through the form of what it means to be a Christian but we're a little afraid to get out on the edge because we're afraid somebody might think we're religious fanatics. So we have decaffeinated our Christian faith, cut down the edges, smoothed off the places where it has touched our lives, then we wonder why there is no power in it. We smooth out doctrinal concerns, play down the Holy Spirit, and try to do things on our own.

While Paul was in Corinth, Apollos was too. He was eloquent and he turned heads, but he was preaching the baptism of John...not Jesus. Then he went to Ephesus and preached the same thing. There were disciples in Ephesus preaching the same thing. There was a missing ingredient that we often overlook in evangelism—the Holy Spirit. And there was a missing ingredient that many downplay—correct theology.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

- Regenerating - Jn 3:5-7; Baptizing - 1Co 12:13; Sealing - Eph 4:30; Indwelling - 1Cor 6:19; Filling - Eph 5:18; Comforts us - Ac 9:31; Intercedes for us - Ro 8:26; Will resurrect us - Ro 8:11
- **Strengthens** - *Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 1 Cor. 2:4 – No wonder Paul wrote about the HS's power to Ephesus, Corinth, and Luke wrote about it in Acts.*

What is theology?

The study of God. How could knowing more about God be a bad thing? People concentrate on how it divides instead of how it should unite and help us be more accurate.

Outline

- I. 18:24-39 – Problem before Paul left and how it was solved
- II. 19:1-7 – Problem when Paul arrived and how it was solved

vv24-28 (Ephesus after Paul left)

- Apollos – from Alexandria (Roman capital of Egypt), cultural center of Greek speaking world. Intellectual philosophy flourished there.
- Good communicator, Hellenistic Jew, enthusiastic/fervent (zeo=boil, Rev 3:15-16 Laodiceans), only knew of the baptism of John (forgiveness of sins rather than identification with Christ = not Christian baptism)
- **Problem:** Apollos most likely a Christian (taught about Jesus accurately/carefully [ἀκριβῶς]). He just didn't have all of the NT facts. Acts tells the story of the transition between Judaism and Christianity, so we should expect to see this.
- **Solution:** Priscilla and Aquilla explain “the way of God” (could be a synonym for the gospel [cf. Acts 9:2; 16:17; 19:9, 23] more accurately (ἀκριβέστερον) to Apollos in *private*.
- **Result:** Apollos becomes fully endorsed by church in Ephesus and has powerful ministry in Corinth. Parallels Paul's conversion and introduction to the other disciples in Damascus (cf. Acts 9:19-22).
- Priscilla and Aquila – good people, risked their own lives for Paul (Rom. 16:4), hosted church in their house (1 Cor 16:19).

Apollos was an eloquent and enthusiastic speaker that drew crowds. ***What did Priscilla and Aquila have to offer? Has there been a Priscilla and Aquila in your life?*** (Doug, lay person, I was in seminary.)

- Apollos immediately went to Corinth and began to water Paul's seeds (1 Cor 3:6) and God grew them.
- ***What is the moral of the story?*** (Don't write off those that don't have every i dotted and t crossed. Help them along and then encourage them.)

This is a story of discipleship that reaps great rewards. ***Have you had a time when someone discipled you and made a huge impact on your life and ministry?***

vv1-7 (First incident in Paul's ministry in Ephesus)

- Ephesus, like Athens, had seen better times. It was on the way down. Commerce began to dry up, but the Temple of Artemis still drew a crowd:
 - “It was 425 feet long by 220 feet wide by 60 feet high. There were 127 pillars, each of them the gift of a king. They were all of glittering Parian marble and 36 of them were marvelously gilt and inlaid. The great altar had been carved by Praxiteles, the greatest of all Greek sculptors. The image of Artemis was not beautiful. It was a black, squat, many-breasted figure, to signify fertility; it was so old that no one knew where it had come from or even of what material it was made. The story was that it had fallen from heaven. The greatest glory of Ephesus was that she was the guardian of the most famous pagan temple in the world” (Barclay, 153).
- **Problem:** They had not heard of the Holy Spirit.
- Their response that, literally, “we never even knew there is a Holy Spirit,” probably means not that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit (for John taught about the Holy Spirit and the OT testifies to Him), but that they had never heard that what John prophesied regarding the coming Messiah's baptizing his followers in the Holy Spirit had been fulfilled. That is, they have something like an

OT or anticipatory faith in Christ; they needed to be made to understand that those promises had been fulfilled in Jesus and his church.

- **Were these disciples Christians?** (v. 2 believed, Paul had to wait 3 days for HS, Acts 9)
- **Solution:** Paul explains more about the HS.
- **Result:** Receive HS and speak in tongues like the early church.
- **Why did they receive the Holy Spirit when Paul laid hands on them?** (as a sign that Paul was a valid representative of the Apostolic church and that what he said was true.)
- This is a unique time in the history of the Church. It is *not* normative.
- Last instance of speaking in tongues. ***This seems to be the purpose of tongues in Acts—to validate.***

SPEAKING IN TONGUES IN ACTS				
Reference	Speakers	Audience	Time	Purpose
2:1-4 (v. 6 known language)	The Twelve and possibly others	Unsaved Jews	After salvation	To validate for Jews the coming of the Spirit
10:44-47	Gentiles	Saved Jews	Same time as salvation	To validate for Jews God's acceptance of Gentiles
19:1-7	Disciples of John the Baptist	Jews and Gentiles	Same time as salvation	To validate for Jews Paul's message

- Known languages (Acts 2:6), sign for unbelievers (1 Cor 14:22) to overcome unbelief ...

Relevance for today:

FIRST, this passage helps us consider groups or individuals in our day who don't have all of their facts straight. On the one hand, we should consider anything short of the apostolic faith to be deficient. On the other hand, we should not immediately write them off because of their deficient faith.

Who are the disciples of John in our culture? Those that are wrong about God at some level but at the same time may be Christians or may be close to Christianity...

How will be prepared to help them when given the opportunity?

SECOND, this passage demonstrates the importance of the HS in ministry. He should not be discounted.

What would our Christian ministry be like without the HS? Decaffeinated coffee. I guess decaf is coffee... but it sure doesn't have the bite, the life, or bring joy in the morning.

This week, let's not forget the ingredients that give our ministry life—proper theology and the Holy Spirit.