

Priscilla and Aquila-- GOD'S ROVING WORKERS

By Lorella Rouster

Teaching Objectives:

That the unsaved child might be led to trust the Lord Jesus as Saviour from sin; and that the saved child may desire to help other saved boys and girls become stronger Christians.

Lesson Scripture: Acts 18:2-4, 18, 19, 26-28; Romans 16:1-5, 19; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4-9

Memory Verse: Galatians 6:10—As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Our verse today was written by the Apostle Paul to Christians, also called believers, in the church at Galatia.

Who does he mean when he says “us?” -- (both Paul and the Christians there). Do you think you and I could be included in the word “us” too? (yes) What is an opportunity? (a fit time or an occasion) What two groups of people are we to do good to which are found in our verse? (a. all men, and b. the household of faith) What is meant by being a member of the household of faith? (Christians, those who have received the Lord Jesus as Saviour from sin) What is the most important thing you could do for someone who does not know the Lord Jesus? (tell him of Jesus) What good things could you do for someone who does know Him? (discuss briefly) Our Bible lesson will give us even more ideas of ways we can do good things to help our Christian friends be stronger Christians.

Suggested Songs-- Any songs the children know about serving Jesus.

Visual Aids: If pictures are not available, draw simple stick pictures or have the children act out key parts of the Bible story or have the children act out parts of the Bible story as a group.

Introduction to the Lesson (Story):

Janie said she wanted to work for God. Janie always told her mother, “Someday I’m going to do great things for God.”

“That’s wonderful,” Janie’s mother and father would always say, “We hope you do serve God.”

But when Janie’s teacher asked her to make friends with a neighbor girl who had become a Christian, Janie said, “Oh, I don’t want to do that.”

"Caroline needs a Christian friend to help her grow in the Lord," the teacher reminded Janie. "None of Caroline's family are believers in Jesus. It will be hard for her to live for Jesus alone. She'll have to get herself up for Sunday school alone. No one will remind her to read her Bible. Couldn't you be a friend who would help her?"

"But I don't want to do that," Janie said.

The next week Janie's Sunday school teacher approached Janie again and asked, "Could you help Caroline one evening a week – just for a few weeks – until she becomes more familiar with the Bible?" Caroline had been having trouble finding the Bible verses to prepare her Sunday school lesson.

"No, I don't want to do that," Janie said.

Later the pastor said, "Janie, Debby wants to sing in church. She has a good voice, but she's afraid. You're a good singer. How about singing a duet with Debby to help her get over her fear?"

"Oh no," Janie replied. "I don't want to do that."

Boys and girls, do you think Janie ever did serve God? No, of course not. She kept saying she would, someday. God gave her many opportunities. Many kinds of work needed to be done for God. Other believers needed to be done for God. Other believers needed help and encouragement. But Janie always said, "I don't want to do that."

Transition to the Bible Lesson:

The Bible tells about a woman and her husband who were not a bit like Janie. They were always finding ways to serve the Lord. This couple moved around a lot, and in each place they lived, they served the Lord. I like to call them God's roving workers. One of the meanings of the word *rove* is to go from place to place.

Development of the Bible Lesson:

The missionary, Paul, the Apostle, met this couple, Prisca and Aquila, on his second missionary journey. Paul calls Prisca by her real name in his letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:19). In other letters he wrote and in the Book of Acts, she is referred to by her nickname, Priscilla.

Prisca was probably a Roman citizen. Her husband, Aquila, was a Jew. They lived in Rome, the capital of the greatest Roman Empire. It seems to be in Rome where they heard that Jesus was the promised Saviour, the Son of God. Prisca and Aquila believed the good news. They believed that Jesus died for their sins, and rose again from the dead. They became Christians, believers in Jesus.

In 49 A.D., Claudius, the Roman Emperor, ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Whatever the reason for Claudius' order, Prisca and Aquila had to leave. They came to live in Corinth, in what is today the country of Greece.

It was at Corinth that the Apostle Paul met them. In fact, he stayed with them for awhile and they all worked together.

Prisca and Aquila were tentmakers. Tentmakers, in those days, made a very heavy cloth from goat's hair. The cloth was used for coats, curtains and tents. They also made many things of leather. Paul joined Prisca and Aquila in their work, for he himself had been a tentmaker.

Every Sabbath, Paul preached in the synagogue. He told the people that Jesus was the Son of God, the only Saviour. He told them that Jesus would forgive their sins and give them eternal life if they would only believe in Him – trust Him to save them from sin.

Prisca and Aquila were glad to share their home with God's missionary. They were glad to work with him, and to help him in any way they could.

When Paul was ready to take the Gospel – the good news of the Lord Jesus – to another city, he invited Prisca and Aquila to go with him. Perhaps he thought, Prisca and Aquila are such good helpers. They are always ready to help other believers. I will ask them to go with me to a place where the Gospel has not been preached.

After awhile, Paul traveled to other cities. He left Prisca and Aquila as the leaders in the church at Ephesus. Paul was trusting them to carry on the work. He knew they would tell others in Ephesus about the Lord Jesus Christ. And they would teach the new believers. Yes, Prisca and Aquila would help and encourage the believers, Paul felt sure. What do you think Paul said when he left them at Ephesus? Perhaps he said something like, I'm counting on you two. I know you'll be faithful to the Lord's work."

While Prisca and Aquila were the leaders of the church at Ephesus, a Jewish man named Apollo came to visit the synagogue. Apollo knew the Old Testament Scriptures that promised a Saviour. He had heard John the Baptist preach that the Saviour was coming soon. Apollos had been baptised by John.

"The promised Saviour is coming. Get ready for the Saviour," Apollos proclaimed in the synagogue.

Prisca and Aquila heard Apollos speak. They knew something that Apollos did NOT know. They knew that Jesus was the promised Saviour, the Son of God.

Prisca and Aquila did not want to embarrass Apollos by correcting him in public, so they invited him to their home. How excited Apollos must have been when they told him that Jesus Christ was the Saviour and that He had already died for sin and risen again!" Can't you imagine the conversation? Perhaps Prisca began, "Apollos, the Saviour you have been talking about has already come."

“Already come?” Apollos might have asked. “Who? When? Where?”

“Jesus Christ, from the village of Nazareth is the Saviour,” Aquila might have continued. “He was crucified on a Roman cross a few years ago. The people crucified Him because they did not believe Him when He said He was the Son of God. But He died to take the punishment for our sins.”

“Aquila,” Prisca may have interrupted, “You haven’t told the best part. Jesus didn’t stay dead. After three days and nights in the grave, the perfect Son of God rose again from the dead. He was seen by hundreds of people before He left the earth and went back to Heaven to be with His Father.”

Apollos believed what Prisca and Aquila told him about Jesus. How their words had helped him!

Now Apollos could preach, “Jesus is the promised Saviour. The Saviour has come!” How thankful Apollos must have been to his teachers, Prisca and Aquila! Apollos became a great preacher and a missionary, sharing the good news throughout the land.

About four years later, Paul came back to Ephesus. How many things Prisca and Aquila must have talked about with their old friend!

While Paul was at Ephesus, he wrote a letter to the church at Corinth where he had first met Prisca and Aquila. This letter is the book of 1 Corinthians in your Bible. Paul sent greetings from his helper-friends to their former church (1 Corinthians 16:9). Problems had arisen at Corinth. Paul talked with Prisca and Aquila about the problems. Then he wrote a letter to help the believers at the church in Corinth. How happy the believers must have been to hear from their old friends! Prisca and Aquila were such faithful helpers. The mention of their names must have brought encouragement.

The next year, Prisca and Aquila moved back to Rome. Claudius, the Emperor, who had made the Jews leave Rome, had been dead six years. Surely it would be safe now to return. In Rome, they gathered other believers and had a church in their home each week. Paul, wanting to help them, wrote a letter to the church at Rome. You can find what he wrote in that letter in the Book of Romans in your Bible. There were no mail carriers in those days, not even a pony express!

Paul sent the important letter to Rome with Phoebe, a woman who was a leader in the church at Corinth (Romans 16:1).

In the letter, Paul again greeted his helper-friends, Prisca and Aquila (Romans 16). He called them co-laborers in Christ. That means that they worked right alongside Paul in helping the believers and in preaching the Gospel. Wasn’t calling them co-laborers a wonderful thing for Paul to be able to say about them?

Paul said Prisca and Aquila had risked their lives to keep him safe. Probably this was at Ephesus, because there was a lot of trouble in that city the second time Paul went there. A man who did not believe in Jesus had stirred up the people, causing a riot. Paul said that all the churches were thankful for what Prisca and Aquila had done. The Christians all around knew about and respected this couple, God's roving workers.

Six years later, Paul was in a Roman prison. He knew he would soon die. But shortly before he died, Paul wrote a letter to a young Christian leader named Timothy. Timothy was the leader of the church in Ephesus, as Prisca and Aquila once had been (2 Timothy 1:3). Apparently Prisca and Aquila were back in Ephesus, for Paul asks Timothy to greet them (2 Timothy 4:19). As usual they were first in Paul's list of greetings.

Do you think they helped Timothy and the other believers in Ephesus? Knowing Prisca and Aquila, I'm sure they did.

Conclusion to the Lesson:

This couple surely were roving workers – they moved from Rome to Corinth to Ephesus to Rome and back to Ephesus again. But wherever they went, Prisca and Aquila were willing to work together to help other believers. What did they do? Why, whatever needed doing, of course! Opening their home to Paul when he was a missionary, working at tentmaking with him, serving as church leaders in the new church at Ephesus, telling Apollos about the Lord Jesus, teaching new believers, holding a church in their home, helping Timothy, wherever they moved they served the Lord Jesus. They were a great help to the other believers in every place.

How different Prisca and Aquila were from “I don't-want-to-do-that-Janie!”

Invitation to the Unsaved Child:

Maybe you're more like Apollos was, before Prisca and Aquila talked to him about Jesus. You know something about God, like Apollos did, but you have not trusted Jesus as your Saviour. God's Word promises, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). If you would like to be saved from your sin today, I would like to show you how from the Bible. (Teacher: the preceding paragraph is a suggested way of wording the invitation. You may be led to conclude by asking for a visible response; raising of hand, standing, staying in seat, opening eyes, or a method you have found most effective. Indicate place for child to meet you for further counsel. Consult helps under How to Lead a Child to Christ).

Life Application for the Saved Child:

If you already know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, would you like to quietly tell Him in your heart, “I will serve You. I will help other Christians become stronger Christians. I will help wherever I am needed. Please help me to become more like Prisca and Aquila. Help me to serve because love You. In Jesus name. Amen.” (If Christian children need further help in giving themselves to God, provide counseling in consecration.)

HOW TO LEAD A CHILD TO CHRIST:

- Show him his NEED of salvation; that all persons are not going to Heaven, that no one in himself is good enough to go (Romans 3:23; Revelation 21:27; John 8:21, 24).
- Show him the WAY of salvation. It is by grace a free gift because the Lord Jesus took our place on the cross rising from the dead (Ephesians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4).
- Lead him to RECEIVE the gift of salvation, even Jesus Christ as his substitute (John 1:12).
- Show him that he now has salvation (John 3:36; Acts 13:38).
- Lead him to CONFESS Christ (Matthew 10:32). This confession should be made to you, other workers, later to his friends, and as circumstances permit, in a public church service.

HOW TO LEAD A CHILD IN CONSECRATION:

- Question the child relative to his salvation, giving him opportunity to confess Christ to you. If he does not show clarity on this point, he is not ready for consecration. Go over with him the steps given in leading a child to Christ.
- If he is clear on the reality of his salvation, lead him to give himself to God today by fully obeying what he knows God wants him to do (Romans 12:1 or 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).
- Show him that the Holy Spirit who lives in him will make known to him through the Word of God what He wants him to do each day (John 14:26); e.g. obey parents (Colossians 3:20). Witness for Christ where he is (Acts 1:8, set aside a time for reading the Bible and prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-5; 4:15; 2 Timothy 25), live every part of his life to please God (1 Timothy 4:12).
- Now that you have talked these things over with the child lead him in a prayer of dedication: "Dear Lord Jesus, today I give myself to You. I want You to take control of my life. Help me to live each day to please You. Help me to be faithful in reading Your Word that I may know Your plan for me." Lead the child in a prayer of thanks.
- Help the child to see that it is a sin for him to take control again of his own life, and that when he sins, he should confess it to God, trusting Him to forgive. He then should allow God to once more take control of his life (1 John 1:9; Proverbs 3:5, 6).

Extended Hour Projects:

Ask each child to think of a specific Christian friend. It might help him to be specific to write the child's name on a piece of paper. Let the children suggest something they could do to help this Christian friend to be a stronger Christian. You should be prepared with suggestions for those who find it difficult to think of anything they could do. You might ask them to think of something they would like another Christian friend to do with them – this may be an approach which will be enlightening for you as the teacher and by having another name on the piece of paper it will prove less threatening to the children.

Play games with a friend.

Read the Bible together, memorizing Scripture verses together.

Work on a craft project or a model together.

Visit the public library together.

Write a letter if a friend moves away, or is on vacation or in the hospital.

Pray together about problems.

Listen to your friend when he has something to tell.

Remind him of a promise of God when he is discouraged.

Share good things you have learned from the Bible, happy experiences or how the Lord has helped you in a time of trouble.

Plan together ways you can help others at home, church or for elderly folks in the community.

Encourage him in attendance at Sunday school, church and other Christian activities.

Include him in social events, invite for dinner, etc.

Plan service projects which the children may do together this week.

Make banners for them to wear as they help in tasks at home, church or neighborhood.

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