

Episode 107

“Apollos had been thinking about going to Achaia, and the brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote to the believers in Achaia, asking them to welcome him. When he arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by God’s grace, had believed.”

- Acts 18.27

Scripture never ceases to amaze me. Reading through this entire chapter of Acts with all the remarkable things going on in the life of the disciples, one tiny phrase stood out: “He proved to be of great benefit to them.” It’s funny how scripture can get under one’s skin as the Holy Spirit puts his finger on one little thought - can this be said of me?

When I was working on radio, the financial reporter once used an illustration to explain inflation that I have never forgotten. He was responding to a caller who was seething over the fact that inflation had gotten out of hand in our country, laying the blame squarely at the feet of our Finance Minister. It was at this point that our finance guy interrupted the caller and asked a few questions about his work environment. Having gleaned some insightful information from the caller he said bluntly “you sir, are the cause of this country’s increasing inflation rate, not our Finance Minister.”

He went on to explain how he came to this conclusion. The caller had divulged his working conditions in much detail, including the number of years he had worked at the company, the projects he was busy with, and the key information that at present he only really worked half of his day as he felt he had the right, after all these years, to take long lunches and regular trips to the gym. The point the financial reporter then made was that over the years, although the caller’s boss had originally gotten a full workday out of his employee for what he was being paid, effectively he was now paying double for what he was getting out, a measure of inflation not even government could keep up with. He concluded that this work-pay gap is the very principle that drives inflation.

I was reminded of this when I saw the biblical example laid out in this chapter, which is that scripture celebrates it when we are of great benefit to those around us. We shouldn’t be surprised that so many in church only pitch up to consume, never adding to the moment or serving those around them, because we do the same at work, and most likely at home too. But Apollos proved to be of great benefit - a colloquialism that referred to one whose work led to an abundant harvest, a disproportionate overflow in their lives and the lives of those around them.

What a picture, and what a challenge.

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