

Series: The Relentless Gospel  
“Jesus Is the Messiah”  
Acts 18:18-19:7 / Ryan Patty / 09.05.21

Good morning Christ Community Church! Thankful to be gathered with you this morning. If you have a copy of God’s Word I invite you to turn to the book of Acts.

One of the greatest joys about being a pastor here is getting to be a part of membership and baptism interviews. And in these interviews, we ask to hear your testimony, we want to know how God has been at work throughout your life and your understanding of His grace to you in Jesus Christ. We ask questions of doctrine and practice and explain what we believe in this particular local church about those two things. Questions about involvement in the church and where you are serving or where you could be. And often when doing these, I will ask the simple question, can you tell me the Good News of Jesus Christ in your own words? Can you tell me the Gospel, is what it comes down to.

Now if you’ve been thinking about being baptized or becoming a member, I don’t want to scare you into thinking that we are looking for a perfect presentation of the Gospel. I promise we aren’t grading you and I promise you won’t hear, “hmp. well that was horrible” afterwards. That’s not it at all. But, friends, there has to be some understanding, some recognition, an ability to articulate what God has done for you in Jesus Christ *in order that* you might be able to explain it to others. Being a disciple of Christ requires no less of us than that. This means certain things should be evident in us telling the Gospel to others. Like why it’s called the good news (and what that tells us about the bad news). Or what Jesus did about that bad news in his life, death and resurrection and what does He call all people to do today. Certainly the Gospel is more than these things, but it is definitely not less.

And as we turn our attention to the end of Acts 18, and into 19, today, we find that there is certainly more that needs to be understood. There is an incomplete revelation which results in an insufficient discipleship. Significant pieces of the puzzle are missing, and therefore the picture **is not complete until someone gives them the full revelation.** So let’s jump into the end of chapter 18 and read these two accounts.

Beginning in Acts 18:24 (Acts 18:24-19:7)

**18:24** Now a Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, an eloquent man who was competent in the use of the Scriptures, arrived in Ephesus. **25** He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately about Jesus, although he knew only John's baptism. **26** He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. After Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately. **27** When he wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers and sisters wrote to the disciples to welcome him. After he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. **28** For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

**19:1** While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples **2** and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" "No," they told him, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." **3** "Into what then were you baptized?" he asked them. "Into John's baptism," they replied. **4** Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus." **5** When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy. **7** Now there were about twelve men in all.

Let's pray.

Last week, Jeff narrowed in on Apollos to show us what it looks like to submit to Godly leaders and how to be helpful to the church overall. This week we are looking at these two passages from a bird's eye view and kind of landing on different themes that pertain to discipleship. So we are going to look at these two sections as a whole and see how they address this problem of an incomplete revelation.

So the main point of our passage flows right into our outline, here it is:

Jesus has come has the prophesied Messiah, therefore:

1. Repent & Recognize Him
2. Know & Honor Him
3. Faithfully Follow Him

#### 1. Repent & Recognize Him

Fundamental to the message of Christianity is the need for change. As we read through God's Word, He reveals something to us about ourselves. That we have sinned and rebelled against Him. That is we have missed the mark completely in regard to His standard of conduct and holiness, and that in and of ourselves and left to our own devices we have gone astray. He created us to live a certain way and we ignore that for our own wants, our own desires, our own preferences. And because of this rebellion we are justly deserving of His wrath and punishment; a holy God cannot look upon sin, look upon rebellion, and not judge it, for that would be against His very character. And as we continue reading through the Scriptures we come to some startling news. There is nothing we can do about this dilemma. We can't live good enough lives to overcome it, we can't clothe enough poor to make up for it, we can't pray enough prayers, follow enough rules, or do any amount of things to change our guilty standing before God. In all respects our sinful condition isn't good news.

But then as you come to understand the storyline of Scripture you come to see this glimmer of hope. There are promises made in the OT about a specific Person who will redeem a people. Promises made..that end up being kept. Because as you continue to read you learn about this marvelous and gracious God who loves us so much in the midst of our sin to not leave us by ourselves, to not leave us to just trying to be better person or to just trying to be a more moral person but who loves us SO much that He decides to rescue and redeem a people unto Himself. And He does it through His Son, Jesus Christ. Who He sent to be the propitiation, that is the sacrifice who on the cross bore our sin and guilt and faced the wrath of God in our place, so that when God looks at us, He sees the sacrifice of His Son Jesus. That means that if you are in Christ he now looks at you favorably because of Him. He is our propitiation.

So the million dollar question has to be, how do I respond to this amazing news? First, you need to repent and recognize him. It is as Jesus says at the beginning of His ministry in Mark 1:15 - "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

You see, here in our story in Acts 18 and 19, repentance, in a form, had taken place. If you're not familiar with John the Baptist, he was a prophet who came before Jesus announcing and heralding that the Messiah is coming. And both Apollos and these disciples heard this message and responded, they were awaiting the coming Messiah. And the thrust of John's message was the need for repentance evidenced through baptism. This is what characterized John's baptism, it was a baptism of repentance, or a baptism to *evidence* your repentance. Confess your sins now, for the king is coming.

And it's clear from this text that Apollos heard this and did it. And so did these disciples at the beginning of chapter 19. Apollos probably knew some of what Jesus had done, probably what he taught and some of the miracles, but he didn't have instant updates on his phone. The disciples of John knew of John's baptism but had no knowledge of what the true Messiah had done. They were awaiting the Messiah and seeking to live holy lives, but they had no knowledge of His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, great commission mandate, and the out-pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. They had an incomplete revelation which leads to an incomplete Christianity.

But don't miss this. They responded to the Messiah's herald. They responded to the message and were awaiting more. Friends, this message that John was proclaiming was really hard for the Jews to hear. **We had youth camp at the beginning of August up in Montana and it was truly a great time**. But while there, I gave each camper an itinerary and during one of the hour or so blocks before dinner I had this written, "free time / (in all caps) SHOWER." Why? Because teenagers often stink, and they need to be reminded of certain things. Now imagine this, I come up to you in the Grand Hall, talk with you for a minute, and afterwards I say, "I really think you need a bath." Now you begin to understand how the Jews felt at John's message. They *prided* themselves on being clean. Being clean in regards to diet, and hand washing, and how they dressed in their minds all directly affected their cleanliness before the Lord. And John comes saying to the Jews, "I am the one promised by the prophets who would announce the coming of the Messiah. And it is my job to get you ready. And to be ready, you need to repent and be baptized. You need to have a heart that is prepared to respond to Him."

Why is it rude to tell someone who is not your child that they need a bath? Because that means they are dirty and stinky. And so when John says be baptized He is telling the Jews, you're not ready for the Messiah, you are actually not clean, you in fact are dirty. That's a really hard message to hear and respond to, but like any message from the Lord, some did respond and others didn't.

And is it not the same today? There are those here right now hearing my words and Jesus' call to repent who will ignore it. Your heart reveals itself to be hardened. Like the Jews who were shocked at being called dirty, you feel shocked that someone would tell you that you need to change. That in and of yourself you aren't good enough. Everyone else would tell you that you are! That you need more self love, that you are fine just the way you are.

We believe that telling you that is the furthest thing from love. In fact, we love you so much that we want to tell you that the exhaustion you feel from trying to measure up, the anxiety you feel about never being good enough has some truth because your focus is on yourself rather than on Jesus Christ. When your focus is on Him, you don't have to measure up, He deemed you worthy enough to die for. When your focus is on Him, you can combat that anxiety with the truth, I'm not good enough, but praise God that Jesus is and that He calls me His own.

There is only one way for that to be true for you today. Repent and Recognize. Acknowledge your standing before God and cast yourself on His grace and mercy that He shows you in Jesus Christ. And then recognize Jesus. Another way to say recognize is to believe in or trust. To trust that what Jesus Christ did for you is more than good enough, and that you don't have to keep trying to measure up. Notice what Apollos and the disciples of John both did when instructed, they recognized Jesus. The baptism they had first done in response to John's message was in preparation to see the Messiah, not in light of His finished work. So when instructed further about Jesus and that the Messiah has actually come, they put their faith in Him. They stopped looking for something or someone else to come and recognized the One who did come. I pray that that would be true for the one here today who has yet to repent and recognize Him.

And for those who have, then we are called to Know and Honor him.

## 2. Know & Honor Him

26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. After Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately.

4 Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Earlier in the message I said, “fundamental to the message of Christianity is the need for change.” But here I also want to say, “fundamental to being a disciple of Jesus is knowing and honoring Him.” In light of an incomplete revelation in this passage, but in light of our full revelation today in Jesus Christ, fundamental to being a disciple is knowing and honoring Jesus.

Let me discuss knowing Him first (just a sub point in our outline)

### A. Knowing Him

In our passage this morning, that is what Apollos demonstrates so well. This is an “eloquent” man the Scriptures tell us. He has been hard at working searching, reading, learning the OT so that he might have a knowledge of God. That was the revelation he had up until this point. He had some knowledge of a coming Messiah, even taught some things accurately about Jesus, but was only calling people to John’s baptism, not a Christian baptism. But he is skilled. In many regards, Apollos was **probably the celebrity Christian preacher of this early church**. He was skilled in rhetoric and knew how to debate the Jews concerning the Messiah.

But not only does Luke tell us that he was competent in the Scriptures, he tells us that he was fervent in Spirit. That word fervent actually means boiling. In other words, He is spilling over in his Spirit. This message cannot be contained. His love and devotion to God, and the extent to which He knows God, requires that He speaks of God. He was a student of Scripture, but wasn’t characterized by being a boring debater, no he was passionate about God and that came out through His speech and conduct. And the way that knowledge of the Scriptures and zeal in spirit go together is important as well. Knowledge of the Scriptures is put first here by Luke, for that should always moderate our zeal. We are governed by God’s Words to us. But within that governance, I would argue, you cannot have enough zeal. All of us can grow in our zeal, can we not?

But more often than not, the problem with us growing in our knowledge of the Scriptures is that it has somehow divorced many of us from our zeal, which should never be the case.

Calvin wrote that “Doctrine without zeal” is one of 3 things: 1) A sword in the hand of a madman 2) A dead thing; like a sword laying on the ground, cold and without use, or 3) Something to be used for vain or wicked boasting.

Applying this to our hearts, does that characterize you? Do you bully others with knowledge of the Scriptures? Or do you boast about your knowledge, subtly trying to correct everyone. Or more likely, friends, do you just feel a dryness as you have gained in knowledge of the Scriptures? You have lost your first love. Life gets busy, too many things creep into the schedule, over the years you have grown in knowledge but there is a lack in zeal. You’re tired. So may this text be a balm to the weary soul here this morning. This side of eternity there will be seasons of dryness, seasons of fighting for joy, seasons of depression and despair. **But in the midst of all of those, cling to what is true.** That in Christ you are a new creation, the old has passed away. And that His love for you does not ebb and flow like your zeal for Him. It is constant, ever present, always flowing forth from the seat of mercy. Rest in that. And pray that God would renew your zeal. Lean into the spiritual disciplines, plant yourself in community, sit under and glean from faithful preaching and teaching, and watch how over the months and years God does a work in your life.

True, heart and head knowledge of God directly affects how you live this life. Right thinking leads to right living. There is a problem if knowledge and zeal aren’t tethered together, like they are here for Apollos. If you have knowledge without zeal, you end up getting an unproductive Christian who leans towards pharisaism. Zeal without knowledge and you run the risk of fashioning God into your own image and being zealous for what you care about instead of what He cares about. Let us simply be reminded from this text that the beautiful thing about knowing God is that those who know Him have a zeal for Him. Knowledge of God and fervency for God go hand in hand.

I’ll close this section with a longer quote from Chapter 3 of Knowing God by J.I. Packer:

*What were we made for? To Know God.*

*What aim should we set for ourselves in life? To know God.*

*What is the “eternal life” that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God. “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (Jn 17:3).*

*What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight and contentment than anything else? Knowledge of God. “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me’” (Jer. 9:23-24).*

*What, of all the states God ever sees man in, gives God most pleasure? Knowledge of himself. I desired . . . the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings,” says God (Hos. 6:6).*

My friends, we were created to know God, to know Him joyfully and with a zealous passion, so I pray that this would be true of us as a church.

And how do we ultimately know God? Through His Word. This happens both in His community (the church) and individually in our own lives. ***Practically speaking, you cannot claim to know God and be ignorant of His Word.*** For sure there is always need for growth, as is evidenced by even the scholar Apollos here, but our view of God’s Word has to be high for us to actually know God. You ignore this book, these words, you’re ignoring God. We all know this to be true just in our day to day relationships. **If I tell my wife or my kids that I love them but ignore them** every time they’re speaking to me, am I really evidencing any love? If we say we love God but ignore His revelation to us, are we really evidencing any love? No condemnation here friends, but disciples must know their master and we are called to know God through His Word.

This is in part why we structure our services the way we do. From the call to Worship to what we sing as a congregation to what you hear proclaimed from the pulpit to what we sing as a response to the preaching, we want everything we do to be Word centered. Why? *Because the Scriptures are profitable not only to teach, but to quicken and bring alive the most obstinate and hardened heart. To pry open the eyes clamped shut by willful disobedience. There is true, life giving power in the words God has given to us, so may we never underestimate them. As disciples of Jesus Christ we must know him.* But secondly, we must honor Him.



## B. Honor him

I don't want to spend long on this because Jeff was able to hit on it last week, but briefly notice this about Apollos. For all his skill, for all his gifting, for all the probable fame, He was still humble enough to be pulled aside by a couple and further instructed. How do we bring honor to God? Do you ever think about that? How can I honor God in my life? There are many answers to give, but I feel that one of the preeminent ones has to be when we listen to the last command He gave His followers.

- Matthew 28:19-20 "19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

A disciple brings honor to the master when they seek to disciple others. Aquila and Priscila modeled this so well, but so does Apollos. He listens humbly, receives instruction, and then goes and proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah. Only God knows how many others he was able to disciple through his preaching and teaching. But the point is simple here: **be disciplined and then go disciple**. From the business owner to the office worker to the stay at home mom to the college student here, you have opportunities to disciple others in your life. Don't miss out on them. Pray that God would open your eyes to see these opportunities more and more and then be willing to be used. Do you have to know everything and all the answers? Of course not, you aren't God. But be willing to honor God by seeking to disciple others as your Lord has commanded. Christ Community Church it is imperative that we work hard at creating a culture of mutual discipleship here. It can't always be a pastor or an elder doing it. We have to be intentional as Jeff was talking about last week in seeking out a mentor, in seeking out an accountability relationship, someone to invest in or be invested by for our church to truly deepen in its knowledge of God and seek to honor Him by making disciples.

**Practically, let me tell you one easy way to do this.** I was really blessed last year by reading this short devotional book called Gentle and Lowly. Long story short, a lot of people loved it and Crossway the publisher, because of a generous donor, gave a bunch for free to churches that wanted them. Right now, there are about 200 sitting in my office. You are welcome to take a few if you promise to read it with someone else. Someone in this church or outside the church. Short 5 or 6 page chapters that will remind you of Christ's heart for you and allow you to discuss that with someone else. This is such a simple way to start one of these mutual discipling relationships.

And when God-directed correction comes into your life, view it as part of being a disciple. Let us be a church that is actively seeking to disciple one another and disciple those in this community. That is how we bring honor to God.

And lastly, point number three, faithfully follow Him.

### 3. Faithfully Follow Him

Jesus has come as the prophesied Messiah, therefore, Repent and recognize Him, know and honor Him, and faithfully follow Him.

27b After he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. 28 For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

3 “Into what then were you baptized?” he asked them. “Into John’s baptism,” they replied. 4 Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy.

What does it mean to faithfully follow Jesus Christ? What does that look like in your life? Again, many answers from Scripture. Love of God and love of neighbor come to mind. Growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ from 2 Peter 3. Discipling as we looked at from Matthew 28. But what I want to briefly talk about from this text are the two parts of faithfully following Jesus: beginning to follow him and continuing to follow him.

#### A. The Beginning of Following Jesus

For those new to the faith, there is something that might be peculiar to you that Jesus commands His followers to do: that is to be baptized. I assume it happened to Apollos since he only knew of John’s baptism, and it clearly happened to the disciples of John in the beginning of 19. Now we have clearly taught in this series on the Holy Spirit being given at salvation and that it was evidenced during this particular time of church history with particular signs and wonders. So my focus this morning is not on the tongues and prophecy of v. 6, I recommend going back and listening to our Pentecost sermon from Acts 2, or the Samaritan sermon from Acts 8 which talks about the Holy Spirit’s role in salvation. But the command of Jesus still stands, his followers need to be baptized. The word itself literally means to be immersed and so here at CCC we practice baptism by immersion, we put you under the water and bring you up. We understand the practice of baptism to be in obedience to Jesus and fundamental to discipleship. Why is that? Well, two reasons among many stand out:

**First**, by becoming a Christian, you belong to a new people. Those who have believed in Christ, have trusted in Him for salvation and repented of their sins as we talked about earlier, now no longer identify with the world and its loves, and desires, and values, but now submit their lives to Christ and what He says to love, and desire and value. So there is a new identity at stake here. And part of why it is important to be baptized in a local church is that you proclaiming to your brothers and sisters here in this church that you belong to Christ, and that your life is going to be spent in service to Him. They see it, they rejoice with you, and they also come alongside you to hold you accountable to that confession. We have said it many times before, the Christian life is personal but it is definitely not private, and that involves baptism too. You have a community here with you that is also a part of that new people group and so they will encourage, strengthen, and persevere in the walk with you.

**Secondly**, baptism by immersion reminds us of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is as it says in **Romans 6:1-5** - “What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? **2 Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection.**

In light of v. 5, baptism then is both a looking back and a looking forward. Looking back to what Christ did on the Cross and what that means for us today, and looking forward to when we experience resurrected bodies that are sinless and are enjoying full fellowship with our risen Savior.

Christian baptism is distinct from the baptism of John in that it's not a baptism to prepare for the coming of the Messiah, it's a baptism in response to the coming of the Messiah. Jesus Christ has come as the prophesied messiah, therefore if you have placed your faith in him, trusted in him alone for your salvation, and not been baptized, you need to be. This is not a salvation issue, this is an obedience issue. It is a part of your discipleship and it is a part of faithfully following Him. We have a baptism class starting next month and we would love for you to join if you haven't been baptized as a Christian.

## B. Continuing to Follow Jesus

Well, again, Jeff focused on being helpful to the church last week and I want to say clearly, that is for sure what it means to continue to follow Jesus. To be involved in the local church and to understand its importance in the Kingdom of God is foundational to being a Christian. But from this text, I want to draw out something else for us to be thinking of on what it means to continue to follow Jesus day by day. It's really rooted in Paul's main question to the disciples of John, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

What the NT teaches clearly is that the sign that you are a part of this new covenant with God is that you have the Holy Spirit. In previous covenants, only certain people gained access to God. In this covenant, through the blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, those who are now found in Christ have access to God, and He gives us His Holy Spirit to do quite a few things for us. **The Spirit, according to the Scriptures, regenerates us, convicts us, empowers us with gifts, leads us, makes us fruitful, enables us to fight and kill sin, intercedes for us when we don't know what to pray, guides us into all truth, and is transforming us into the image of Christ.** Day by day, faithfully following Jesus, means that the Holy Spirit is at work in your life accomplishing these things.

Friends, more often than not, faithfulness is tied to your day to day, ordinary living. The regular conversations you have with your spouse or kids pointing them to God and His Word, the faithfulness in sharing the Gospel with a coworker who doesn't know Jesus, serving at the local rescue mission and seeking to care for orphans and widows. Faithfulness means doing what you can in obedience to Jesus in this particular time and place that God has sovereignly directed you to live in.

It can be so easy to look back on life and remember these pinnacle moments of your faith, and praise God for those moments, but always looking back to what was, or always looking forward to what one day may or may not happen, is stagnating your growth as a disciple. *Trust me, I know. God has disciplined me in this the past year and a half. Grow where God has you here and now.* Pursue daily faithfulness. **Be astounded at the ordinary means of grace that God uses by His Spirit to grow you and grow His church. Singing the Word, preaching the Word, proclaiming the Word to others. Faithfulness is a day by day decision aided by the Holy Spirit to grow you into the image of Christ.** Tying this back to Acts 19, these disciples of John had a pinnacle moment, they spoke in tongues and prophesied (that's probably the pinnacle for some Christians today), but that was simply the starting point of their discipleship not the ending point. Hopefully in God's plan they continued to grow in the grace and

knowledge of Christ as new disciples of Christ. And friends the same should be said of us, that we are marked by a day to day faithfulness, not always looking back to once was, and not always looking forward to what may be. Being faithful in the here and now where God has us.

In applying this to our hearts, I trust the Spirit to point out where we are not obeying Christ or where we aren't faithfully following Him. But let me simply say Jesus has come as the prophesied messiah, therefore:

1. Repent and Recognize Him. Repent of your sins, place your faith in Him, recognize that He is your savior and that in and of yourself you can't change at all your standing before God. But He can. Trust in Him.
2. Know and honor Him. Pursue God passionately, know him through His word and pray that as you do you would seek to honor Him by making disciples and being disciplined. Remember, knowledge of God and zeal for God should always go hand in hand, and if one is inflated over the other then there is a problem. And lastly,
3. Faithfully follow Him. Pray that God would show you by His Spirit how you can be used each day to further His Kingdom. We are all called to be a help to the church, like Apollos, but for Apollos as well, this looked demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. What does faithfully following Christ look like for you, for your family, while at your job, in the here and now, where God has providentially placed you? Seek to live day by day by the power of the Spirit as you faithful follow Him.

Let's pray.