

## **8-8-21 Wanted: People to Turn the World Upside Down**

### **Acts 17:1-9.**

Before we read **Acts 17**, we must read finish **Acts 16:35-40**.

#### **Read Acts 16:35-36.**

Something happened within 12-16 hours. The magistrates had a total mind change. From beating Paul and Silas and throwing them in jail to **verse 35, "Let those men go."** I don't know if the jailer advocated for them. Or if the beating and one night in jail was their punishment.

I am not sure, but we can know for sure that Paul wasn't having it, **verse 37, "...They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."**

**Read verses 38-40.** They pleaded with Paul and Silas. Just because we are followers of Christ does not mean that we are door mats. Its ok to stand up for what's right when we have been wronged. But we must never allow sin to be part of the pay back. And things may never be made right in our lifetime.

I believe part of the reason Paul did this was to protect the church in Philippi. If Paul and Silas had just left the church legitimacy might have come under attack.

After spending some time with Lydia, and other believers they begin the 105-mile trip to Thessalonica.

#### **Read Acts 17:1-9.**

We (@Bethel) need people who will bring life and light into a world of death and darkness.

We need community changers who bring love instead of anger and hatred.

We need people who will rescue those in bondage to sin.

The believers at Thessalonica took a world that was twisted & broken by sin, and moved that world, from the path of self-destruction to the glory road.

Are you ready and willing to turn your world upside down for Jesus Christ?

#### **I. They accepted THE truth, God's Truth.**

- **Read verses 2-4.**
- Paul presented the gospel of Jesus Christ, explaining and demonstrating the death, burial, and resurrection. Paul connected the dots of the Messiah, the Christ, was in fact, Jesus!
- In both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians Paul puts a strong emphasis on the kingship of Jesus and the promise of His return.
- God's word says that some were persuaded; devout Greeks; which means religious Gentiles that followed the Jewish God. Plus, "not a few" meaning a crowd of woman in leadership.
- I can only imagine how refreshing it was to hear Paul strike down over 600 rules, with the gospel of Jesus. For over 3 weeks Paul taught THE truth.

- God can turn lives upside down when individuals accept His truths. This past week was like a little slice of heaven. I can tell you with certainty that God is still in the soul saving business. Every night we witnessed as the Holy Spirit worked in the lives of God's people and the kids that were here. Every night boys and girls accepted the truth that God was who the scriptures said He was. The sensitivity of the hearts of the kids was truly amazing. On Thursday night I asked, why did Jesus come to earth? Hands went up and I called on one girl and she said, "to die for the sins of the world." Ladies and gentlemen, that is THE truth of God, out of the mouth of a child.
- Every night God was turning this community upside down through 45-55 kids and the adult leaders. I read on Facebook a teacher commenting that she was hearing all about our VBS from excited kids.

## II. They applied THE truth, God's Ways.

- **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14.**
- Paul says they received the word of God, they welcomed it as the truth of God, and they became imitators of the churches of God.
- They applied God's truths in their personal life so much so that their reputation did the talking. Their example of God fearing, faithful saints was like a magnet, that vibrated through two continents. (Macedonia and Achaia)
- **Read 1 Thessalonians 1:6-9.**
- The faith found in the saints in Thessalonica was so legit that all Paul had to do is point to them and people would listen. **"Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything." (Verse 8) WOW!!**
- **Look again at verse 9. "For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."**
- The saints in Thessalonica were facts! They didn't just do the bare minimum; they took their imitation of Christ literal.
- When God's truths are applied, the result is a faith that can turn the world upside down.
- Who was it or is it in your life that was or is an example of someone that turned the world upside down with God's truth? What was it or is it that grabbed your attention? What will it take for you to be that someone for someone else? Not the same, but someone God can mold.

**Turn back to Acts 17.**

## III. When God's truth is accepted and applied, attacks will come.

- **Read verses 5-9.**
- Lives were being changed and what was the response from the enemy? Jealous Jews gathered a group of evil men to instigate a riot against Paul and Silas.
- When they couldn't find Paul and Silas, the mob attacked a friend of theirs, Jason.

- The believers found in Thessalonica were intense with passion. “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.”
- Christians from Thessalonica had a faith that was so intense, so passionate that their reputation was made known everywhere. They were sharing Christ crucified, risen, and available to all who would come.
- We need a renewing of the spirit of intense passion here at Bethel and the church universal, today. We need it because too many Christians are kicked back in their spiritual recliners with their feet in the air. WE NEED BOOTS ON THE GROUND.
- We have too many people who have lost their intensity, their passion. We need to take a stand for God in our homes first and allow it to permeate our communities.
- Look at the involvement/participation of these early Christians. Jason, who was willing to get involved by welcoming these Christian leaders into his home even though he knew it could mean trouble for him. And it did, he had to pay a bond to be released and usher Paul and Silas out of town.
- I know that we are all Covid, politics, and media weary. But we CANNOT allow ourselves to become numb or shift into neutral when it comes to the things of God.
- Satan is turning the temperature up on the burner and if we are not careful before we know it, we will be in a pot of boiling water of complacency. Ineffective for the gospel of Christ.
- I was so blessed, encouraged and it fueled the Holy Spirit fire inside of me seeing all the people getting involved in VBS. There wasn’t much planning, we weren’t sure through most of this year if we would be able to do VBS, or what it would look like. But the people of this church rallied, did whatever they could do to make it happen. Look around, God used you to do it! Before you say, all I did was...fill in the blank. No! The Holy Spirit of God used you for the thing only you could do! I can testify of the intense passion I saw, seeing leaders smile and some even crying, their hearts bursting at the power of the Gospel. The Spirit was at work this last week in full force. Many people came up to me and said it was amazing to watch. I even heard a few say this was one of the best VBS they had taken part of (these testimonies came from well-seasoned VBS veterans).
- Attacks came, glitches happened, but you never stopped, every night for 5 nights you gave of yourself to be used of God. Don’t take it lightly or think it was just VBS. I pray God will reveal to you in your lifetime what this last week did in the lives of individuals.

## Conclusion

God’s truth accepted and applied will result in attacks, and ridicule. But the blessing and powerful results can and will change our homes and community.

Our aim can be like the church in Thessalonica, to turn the world upside down. A fire starts with a spark. A little flick of a lighter or strike of a match can lead to a wildfire. The gospel applied in any person’s life can work the same.

Have you surrendered to THE truth of the Gospel?

Have you been baptized, after trusting in the gospel?

Are you being led by the power of the Holy Spirit to make a difference in you home and or community?

Who will join me in continuing what Jesus started, turning the world upside down?