

Acts 17: 1-9

A Gospel Lived and Shared

6/26/16

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. ⁵ But the Jews^[a] were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶ And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, ⁷ and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." ⁸ And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. ⁹ And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

(Pastor Prays)

Our cousins across the ocean are mired in turmoil. Great Brittan has voted to leave the European union. This move is popularly known as "Brexit," and in the wake of that upheaval, their Prime Minister David Cameron, has resigned. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are all in confusion. Meanwhile, in California, our religious liberties are being further eroded.

While Hillary Clinton checks her emails and Donald Trump checks his bank account, with all that is going on, honestly, the last thing the world needs is another preacher spewing politics. That's not my job.

My job is to point you to another sovereign – King Jesus — a more complicated and dangerous task than grinding a political axe. I want to be accused of the thing Paul and Silas were accused of at the end of this passage. They were accused of turning the world upside down because they were saying there is another King – Jesus. And to His rule there is no end and to His law every man must answer, and before His throne every person must stand.

So we join the ranks of Paul and Silas, Jason and the brothers, pointing people past politics and on to eternity. And we learn something from Paul and Silas as they witness and live in the coastal town of Thessalonica. We watch them invest themselves and invite their friends and influence a culture with real and intense Gospel living.

Because here is the truth...

A Gospel Believed is a Gospel Lived and a Gospel Shared

So how do we do it? Learn from the brothers in the text.

We Are Consistent in Our Witness

Look at Paul's consistency in the text, the setup in v. 1 and the consistency in v. 2: *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures...*

Luke seems to indicate that Paul had a pattern when he went to large towns. It was his custom, and then it's reiterated by the fact that he did it 3 weeks in a row. He wasn't using gimmicks, egg drops on Easter morning, iPad giveaways or false promises. He lived his life for Christ. He understood His Gospel and Christian mission and did remarkably unspectacular things.

And through his unspectacular consistency, he planted a church there. Years later, he even writes to this church in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, telling them in 1 Thessalonians 2:2, *But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.* And the way they did this is the way we do it - with consistent, everyday living. We believe the claims of Christ and we live them at home, at work, at our kids' athletic practice and ballgames. And we share Christ, giving reason for the hope that is within us. And that's not typically done by shouting or picketing or even boycotting. It's usually done in conversation. In fact, that leads to my next point. We are consistent in our witness, and...

We Are Genuine in Our Approach

Look at the text, especially v. 2 and the words used by Luke to describe Paul's witness. He reasoned with them from the scripture. Reasoned – it's the Greek word from which we get "dialogue." It means Paul went and had a conversation, a give-and-take, asking questions and giving answers.

Here is the classic picture of one person with a Bible sitting down with someone who is not a Christian and talking through what the Bible says. Look, this takes patience and affection and humility and a burden, a burden to carve out time, make an investment and share Christ in a conversation.

We have several students in Pittsburgh right now trying to build real relationships with lost people so they can share Christ through studying the Bible. This is not preaching. Preaching has its place and is a necessary part of worship. This is you talking to your friend who's not a Christian. This is you not being shocked at her life or past. This is the church being the church and it's how the Gospel spreads; not through political action, but through a real burden for a friend who's living under the wrath of a Holy God.

And when you get a genuine concern, you forget about being scared or prideful or not knowing what to say. You do what Paul did. You have a conversation with the Bible as your guide. I know one young lady who just invited a co-worker to read a chapter a week from the Gospel of John with her and they talk about it at lunch. And the Word will do its work. But it starts with you as a believer in Christ having a genuine concern. We are consistent in our witness. We are genuine in our approach.

We Are Informed in Our Message

What I mean is, we know what we are talking about. What a travesty for you to love Jesus and not really know anything about Him. And sadly, that's where so many Bible-loving people are – more Bible-loving than Bible-*reading*.

Watch what Paul does in v. 2 & 3: *And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."*

He reasons from the scripture and then Luke introduces two new words. Paul was "explaining" and "proving." Explaining – opening the scripture. It's a strong word. It's what the resurrected Jesus did for the two disciples on the Emmaus Road. It's the same word. He opened the scriptures to show the disciples that the Bible is not a book of rules. It's a book about Christ. The Old Testament is Christ concealed. The New Testament is Christ revealed. The Old Testament is a promise made. The New Testament is a promise kept. I don't want to stop here. Let me impress a fourth point on you. If we are informed in our message...

We Are Theological in Our Issues

Look at the rich theology packed into v. 3. *explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."*

It was necessary for the Christ (Messiah) to suffer and to rise from the dead. Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer? Maybe Paul them to Isaiah 53:5-6 that says,

*But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

The sinfulness of man up against the holiness of God made it necessary for the Christ to suffer. Paul will go on to say in v. 3 *“This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”*

This Jesus: Born of a virgin. He lived a perfect life and earthly ministry. He suffered an atoning death on the cross. He was buried and on the third day He rose again from the dead. He appeared to hundreds and ascended into Heaven. He gave the gift of the Holy Spirit. At present, Jesus Christ is Lord and reigning in Heaven, and in the future He will return to consummate the Age. The offer of salvation is made freely to sinners who will believe in the need for Christ *and* that this Jesus is the Christ.

But be aware there is a promise and warning of judgment. For as Jesus himself said in John 3:16-18, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

And that’s what I am asking you to do today.

I’ve reasoned from scripture. I’ve explained and hopefully proved that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and rise from the dead. This Jesus, I proclaim to you, *is* the Christ. Turn from your sin and believe.

(Pastor prays)