

Building Your Faith: Exploring Scripture with the Pastors
September 26, 2021 - 9:45 and 11:15 A.M. - Acts 17:1-15
Dr. Clay Brown, MDPC Adult Discipleship Pastor

Outline

Discuss the outreach in Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-4.

- Moving on from the trouble in Philippi, through Amphipolis and Apollonia, to Thessalonica
- Enough Jews for a synagogue, so Paul follows standard procedure and goes there first
- Proclaims cross and resurrection of Jesus boldly for three Sabbaths
- Persuasive: Jews as well as leading Greeks in the city respond with faith in Jesus
- Paul focuses on the cross and resurrection during his time at the synagogue. Why do you think he considers them the essential components of the gospel?*
- What happens when Christianity becomes an ethical movement instead of a community built on the cross and resurrection? How do Christian ethics become, oddly enough, more difficult when this happens?*

Discuss the persecution of the church in Acts 17:5-9.

- Jewish resistance in the city increases: mob attacks Jason, local Christian leader
- Could not find Paul and Silas, so drag Jason and cohorts before the authorities
- Key verse on the impact of the gospel: “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also” (v. 7, ESV)
- Charge against Christians in Thessalonica that will become more and more prominent: “acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus” (v. 8, ESV)
- Christianity is turning the world upside down in the first century. How does the gospel continue to turn the world upside in our time? Please give concrete examples.*
- Christians are accused of being anti-government and pro-government on many occasions. How are Christians to regard the state? (This is a hot-button issue, so be kind to each other.)*

Discuss the ministry in Berea in Acts 17:10-15.

- Christians in Thessalonica send Paul and Silas away to Berea
- Go to synagogue again and receive a warm welcome; locals are “examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (v. 11, ESV)
- Many Jewish and Greek converts again, as in Thessalonica
- Thessalonian Jews hear Paul is preaching the gospel in Berea and pursue them there
- Escape plan: Paul conveyed to Athens, while Silas and Timothy remain
- The Bereans are lauded for what particular characteristic? Why is this characteristic so important even now?*
- How do you respond as a Christian when you face determined, even fanatical, opposition?*
- If most of us had been along with Paul and his team, we would be saying that the turmoil we are experiencing is a sign we should stop now. But this is not the case. Why and how do you think they continue to evangelize and to disciple in the course of people wanting to kill them?*

Close in prayer.

Scripture (NLT)

17 Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. **2** As was Paul’s custom, he went to the synagogue service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people. **3** He explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, “This Jesus I’m telling you about is the Messiah.” **4** Some of the Jews who listened

were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women.[a]



5 But some of the Jews were jealous, so they gathered some troublemakers from the marketplace to form a mob and start a riot. They attacked the home of Jason, searching for Paul and Silas so they could drag them out to the crowd.^[b] **6** Not finding them there, they dragged out Jason and some of the other believers^[c] instead and took them before the city council. “Paul and Silas have caused trouble all over the world,” they shouted, “and now they are here disturbing our city, too. **7** And Jason has welcomed them into his home. They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, named Jesus.”

8 The people of the city, as well as the city council, were thrown into turmoil by these reports. **9** So the officials forced Jason and the other believers to post bond, and then they released them.

10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. **11** And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. **12** As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.

13 But when some Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they went there and stirred up trouble. **14** The believers acted at once, sending Paul on to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained behind. **15** Those escorting Paul went with him all the way to Athens; then they returned to Berea with instructions for Silas and Timothy to hurry and join him.