

**Acts 17:1-15 (#27) 10.8.20 (20087)**  
**The Effective Gospel**

**I. Acts 26:15-18. Paul's call is the Church's call as well. (Matt.28:18-20)**

- A. Their world was adversarial, multi-cultural, multi-religious, and innately opposed to the gospel. An evil age (Gal.1:4)
- B. Yet the Lord was at work opening eyes, bring people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, receiving forgiveness and sanctification by believing in Jesus Christ.

**II. Paul's second journey is an illustration of this. Acts 17:1-15. (after the stress in Philippi)**

**A. Thessalonica. 1-9** (100 miles from Philippi, capitol of Macedonia, 45-65k population)

1. He starts with a knowledgeable audience. The Jews who already had God's Word. The Synagogue in Thessalonica. 2-4.
    - a) Israel was and is God's people in a unique way.
    - b) To the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Rom.1:16-17)
  2. He brings them Shocking Message. 3. The Gospel. Explaining about who Jesus is and what he did. **Lk.24:44-47**
    - a) Jesus is the Christ, the risen Lord.
      - (1) **Lordship.** Jesus was presented as Lord. King Jesus. v. 7
    - b) Who died for our sins. (suffered)
      - (1) **Atonement** (his death) and resurrection (which includes the ascension), which demonstrates his saving lordship.
    - c) So that by faith in him, we might be forgiven and brought into the Lord's own life.
    - d) Reasoning = argue, debate, reason together
      - (1) From the Scriptures
      - (2) Over time. 3 weeks
    - e) Explaining = Teaching, and answering questions and giving a meaningful
    - f) Proving = Giving evidence (NASB). (NIV, Prove)
      - (1) That Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead – according to the OT Scriptures.
      - (2) That this Jesus is the Messiah.
    - g) Persuading = bring to confidence in something. (4)
      - (1) Seeking to offer reasons, biblical and others. 1 Pet.3:15.
  3. Which results in many conversions. 4
    - a) The miraculous work of regeneration.
    - b) Many God-fearers and influential women.
  4. Which in turn produces religious and political opposition. 5-9
    - a) Jews gathered some disreputable (poneros) guys from the marketplace and started a riot.
    - b) Jealousy is not legitimate argument. It is emotion based in other things. In this case material opposition sponsored by spiritual warfare.
    - c) This is irrational and dishonest, mob rule based on false accusations and conspiracy theories.
- B. Berea. 10-15. Different situation, similar results.**
1. A thoughtful reception. 11
    - a) Noble-minded.
      - (1) eugenesteroi open-minded without prejudice, thoughtful.
      - (2) There is a biblical open-mindedness – but thinking is hard work.
      - (3) Open to hear. Eagerness in reception
    - b) Examined the Scriptures daily.
      - (1) Anakrino: examine to determine truth, judge, cross examine, investigate, interrogate.
      - (2) *To see if these things were so: Looking for biblical reality.*

2. Many conversions. 12
  - a) Examination of Scripture with an honest heart will give a person reasons for faith.
3. Imported opposition. 13
  - a) This time it was not from the local Jews, but from the Thessalonian Jews.
  - b) Once again, spiritual warfare
4. Continued mission. 14-15.
  - a) Athens.

### III. Note the pattern of fruitful ministry in this fallen world.

#### A. An Unalterable focus on Jesus Christ's risen lordship. 3

1. The message was simple and focused. Who Jesus is and what he did.
  - a) Life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and eventual return (1-2 Thessalonians)
2. Paul was so profoundly convinced of the resurrection and lordship of Jesus as the Christ that he didn't mind getting beat, thrown in jail.
3. The grace and the power in the gospel. Rom.1:16-17

#### B. Supported by an unshakable confidence in God's Word. 2, 11

1. The Scriptures are God's word, expressing the gospel. In both Thessalonica and Berea, the Scriptures were the starting point.
2. *If you disconnect the message of the gospel from the authority of the Scriptures, you will end in heresy.*

#### C. Producing an unstoppable persistence in mission. 10

1. Regeneration by faith in Christ, nourished by wisdom in the word of God, makes people realize that others must hear this—mission

#### D. Resulting in two things:

1. Undeniable progress for the kingdom. 4, 12
  - a) Conversions to Christ as the Lord designed. Against the odds.
2. Unavoidable opposition from religion and culture. 5-9, 13
  - a) Shamefully treated in Philippi (1 Thess.2:2), Barely escaping Thessalonica.
  - b) *But the gospel had been planted in people's souls and churches were borne. (1-2 Thessalonians)*

### IV. Four pieces of advice on how to keep your head straight in this world.

#### A. Listen to God's Word instead of Man's. Acts 17:13; 1 Thess.2:13

1. **Gospel** is God's word to the world. His last word.
  - a) The word of man focuses on man.
2. **Scripture** is God's word pointing to the gospel.
  - a) Jesus trusted the OT, authenticated the NT, and taught his disciples to trust God's word through real apostle and prophets. 2 Tim.3:16-17; 2 Pet.1:16-21.
3. *Less time on social media and more time in the Word.*
4. *Knowing God's word, being able to read and understand it on your own, is a lifeline to ultimate reality. God has spoken and his word reveals ultimate reality.*

#### B. Remember which kingdom you belong to. Col.1:13-14

1. An ex-pat mindset. **1 Pet.1:1-3**
2. A transcendent worldview. **Col.3:1-4**
3. Our culture is polarized, Left and Right. But the Gospel of the Kingdom is an entirely different perspective, not rooted in this age but the next,

#### C. Look past this age and into the next. 2 Cor.4:16-5:10.

1. This is the consistent view of the gospel.
2. A tangible hope centered on the coming judgment and the next age. This is clear in the Thessalonian letters.

#### D. Invest in the right kingdom. Matt.6:19-24. (v.21 our hearts tend to follow our treasure)

1. A radical commitment to Christian mission.
  - a) By focusing on bringing people to Christ, we let the Lord bring our fears and frustrations into a different perspective.