

Acts 17.1-10

Jesus Meets the City

Summer Sermon Series > Focus on Church in Thessalonica, Macedonia

PEOPLE? YOU MAY get BEATEN, OSTRACIZED, PRISON?

PREACHING > STRUCK a FELT-CHORD, PERKY Reaction > RIOTS!

Book of ACTS: Important BACKGROUND of What God DID in that City

v. 6 These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here

All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing... Colossians 1.6

1. Strategic Ministry    2. Scriptural Message    3. Saved through the Message

## 1. Strategic Ministry

a. Key Cities > Story of Mission in NT is Story of CITIES

BEGINS – Most IMPORTANT City in Bible – Jerusalem

Lord Jesus – Dies for Sins, Rises from Death, Sends Spirit, Births Church

MOTHER Church of Miss Movement > ANTIOCH – Cosmopolitan City

CLIMAX of Bk of Acts: Paul in Rome > Capital of World > Church THERE

v. 1 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica

From PHILIPPI – Paul's TEAM Traveled Westwards across MACEDONIA

ROMAN HIGHWAYS – the AUTOBAHNS of the ANCIENT WORLD

53 km to AMPHIPOLIS / 43 km to APOLLONIA / 56 km to Thessalonica

Walking? Horses? Stop overs? > LUKE does NOT Mention DETAILS

they traveled from town to town...

Acts 16.4

Paul's LETTER to Church in Rome > NEVER BEEN THERE YET  
 ...from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, (*above Macedonia, along Adriatic Sea*) I have *fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ*. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation...now that there is *no more place for me to work in these regions*

Romans 15.19-25

COVERED Eastern Medit. > NOW Coming to CAPITAL > ROME

FULLY Proclaimed > Every PERSON?? Every TOWN?? No!

ESTABLISHED Church Key Cities > BASES to Reach into their REGIONS

Almost HALF of China's People in CITIES / ~ 200 Cities over 1 million

DIFF btwn PASTOR & MISSIONARY > Intensive and EXTENSIVE Work

21<sup>st</sup> C. MASSIVE Growth of CITIES > GO to Reach them with God's Love

b. Synagogue First

vs. 1,2 ...Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue...

....the gospel...the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes:  
*first for the Jew*, then for the Gentile.

Romans 1.16

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

Romans 10.1

GENTILES, God-Fearers, in BACK ROWS > Most RESPONSIVE

Many Gentiles Admired Israel's 1 God & Ethical Standards

Could NOT Bear FULL DEMANDS of Law, esp Circumcision

GOOD NEWS of Paul > Come to JESUS DIRECTLY > NOT thru MOSES

GLADLY Dropped the YOKE of the LAW for the REST Given by JESUS

Key > FIND Places PEOPLE are RESPONSIVE and READY to HEAR

### c. Socio-Political Impact

History reveals CITIZENS of Thess made Emperor PERSONAL Deity

I swear...that I will support Caesar Augustus, his children and descendents throughout my life in word, deed and thought...that in whatsoever concerns them I will spare neither body nor soul nor life nor children...that whenever I see or hear of anything being said, planned or done against them I will report it...and whomsoever they regard as enemies I will attack and pursue with arms and the sword by land and by sea... Oath administered in Paphlagonia

vs. 7,8 They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

HISTORICAL Fact: JEWS recently Expelled from Rome for SEDITION

Such a message – that the Lord alone is God and Savior, and that Jesus is Lord and Judge of all – could be seen as dangerous, insulting to Caesar’s dignity, and disruptive of the ‘Pax Romana.’ Dennis Johnson

Authorities Threatened > Citizen’s HIGHEST ALLEGIANCE NOT THEM  
PERHAPS Reason Paul RARELY USES Titles King/Kingdom in LETTERS  
Paul forced to FLEE all 3 Macedonian Cities > Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea  
PAUL becomes FOCAL POINT of ATTENTION and AFFLICTION

d. Suffering > Paul was BRAVE and DETERMINED > UNSTOPPABLE

KNEW Crazy People Trying to KILL BELIEVERS > ‘Hey, that **WAS ME!**’

vs. 1,2 Thessalonica...Jewish synagogue... on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them

3 Sabbaths in Synagogue > KICKED OUT > Several MONTHS @ Jason's  
 JASON (Gk. Form of 'Joshua') > God-Fearing GENTILE CONVERT

vs. 5-9 But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials...Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

MISSED Paul > SEIZED Key FOLLOWER > HOSTED Mtgs in HIS Home  
 TRADE for Jason > If PAUL LEAVES CITY > Jason RELEASED  
 PAINFUL – Paul NEVER ALLOWED to RETURN to THESSALONICA

Brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you - certainly I, Paul, did, again and again - but Satan stopped us.  
 1 Thessalonians 2.17-19

v. 13 When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

END of 1<sup>st</sup> Mission Journey > SUMMARY of Paul's Message...

Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith, they said, "**We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God**"  
 Acts 14.22

## 2. Scriptural Message

LOTS OF TROUBLE! > Why Not Stay Home & watch CCTV

BELIEVED Creator and Judge of Universe has SAVING MESSAGE  
 MESSAGE of ULTIMATE Truth – SAVING Power – LIFE Everlasting  
 Without that MESSAGE > World Remains GRIPPED in Sin, Misery, Death

a. Conversation from Scripture > Message of God is in a BOOK

v. 2 Paul...reasoned with them from the Scriptures

Gk. REASONED > Same root word for DIALOGUE > INTERACTION  
 NEW Teaching > QUESTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, UNDERSTANDING

MODEL of JESUS > With DISCIPLES on Road to EMMAUS

"How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24.25-27

Faith can be based on nothing but the Word of the Lord, we must take our stand on its evidence alone in all controversies. John Calvin

Paul believed in doctrine (his message had theological content), but not indoctrination (tyrannical instruction, demanding uncritical acceptance).

John Stott

SURELY Paul TRIED to PRACTICE what he PREACHED....

The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth

2 Timothy 2.24-26

STRONG, FIRM Convictions > No Excuse for RUDENESS, Know-it-ALL

MANY Times LOVE Shown by LISTENING > Not just Waiting to TALK!  
 Sometimes LISTENING is thru READING and WATCHING World's Ideas

Cannot BULLY Someone into the KINGDOM of God > GOD SAVES!

## b. Christ the Savior

v. 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ"

JESUS of NAZARETH in HISTORY = CHRIST Promised in SCRIPTURE

APOSTLES NOT have MINISTRY > In MODERN Church Use of WORD  
TODAY – ‘MINISTRY’ = BUSINESS Wrapped Around an INDIVIDUAL

TELEVISION Ministries – SPORTS Ministries – MUSIC Ministries

APOSTLES > FOCUSED on MESSAGE: Saving MINISTRY of Lord Jesus

PROCLAMATION of PETER on PENTECOST

"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs...God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."  
Acts 2.22,36

For what I received I passed on to you as of *first importance*: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures  
1 Corinthians 15.3-4

Scripture cites MORE than REALITY of the CROSS >> Gives REASON  
He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53.5-6

SICK Need a DOCTOR // SINNERS Need a SAVIOR > JESUS ALONE!

Son: ‘Dad, why are you still STUDYING for SERMONS?’

PREACHING for 25+ Years – Haven’t you FINISHED the BIBLE YET??

PREACHER > 52 Sundays a YEAR > Soon EXHAUST Subject of JESUS!

APOSTLES saw it DIFFERENTLY > ETERNITY too SHORT to Learn All

...so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, *Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Colossians 2.2-3

Spiritual MATURITY: NOT Go BEYOND X, but More DEEPLY Into X  
Thoughts – Attitudes – Values – Desires – Reactions – Words – Behavior  
MORE & More Like HIM who DIED and ROSE AGAIN on OUR BEHALF  
HE is

PREACH CHRIST & SCRIPTURE > NEVER RUN DRY > Inexhaustable!

### c. Contradiction of Slander

vs. 5-7 the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city... "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here..."

v. 13 When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

The very suggestion of treason against the Emperors often proved fatal to the accused.  
Sir William Ramsey

SIN Turned God's World UPSIDE-Down > SAVIOR will TURN IT RIGHT

Long Ago – King AHAB of ISRAEL > Prophet ELIJAH 'troubler of Israel'

"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands" 1 Kings 18.18

WORLD >> BLAMING JESUS for Disturbances CAUSED by SATAN

TRY to TEACH Word CLEARLY > Will be MISUNDERSTANDINGS,  
OBJECTIONS, ATTACKS >>> APOLOGETICS – Reasons for BELIEF

PAUL attempted to CONTRADICT Slander w/ TRUTH of GOSPEL  
v. 3 ...explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise...

PROVING = lit. PLACE BESIDE > i.e. COMPARING 2 Viewpoints

WHY do we BELIEVE THIS? And WHY do we NOT BELIEVE THAT?

SLANDER Against the GOSPEL in OUR MODERN WORLD >>>>

BIBLE is CORRUPT

CHRISTIANS are BRAINWASHED

JESUS had a WIFE and KIDS

JESUS did NOT DIE on the CROSS

We FOUND JESUS COFFIN – and Wife Mary – and their KIDS!

*Hello! BEING Married and Having Kids NOT SIN! Nothing to Hide IF WAS*

MUCH EASIER to PARROT Mindless SLOGAN than THINK CLEARLY

CHRISTIANS Can Be GUILTY HERE TOO –

Ex. ALL MUSLIMS are TERRORISTS

SOME ONE is TOO BAD for the LOVE and GRACE of GOD

Although there is an important place for ‘dialogue’ with men of other  
faiths... there is also need for ‘encounter’ and even ‘confrontation,’ in which  
we seek both to disclose the inadequacies and falsities of non-Christian  
religion and to demonstrate the adequacy, truth, absoluteness and finality of  
the Lord Jesus Christ. John Stott

d. Conviction from the Spirit PAUL’S WORDS > POWERFUL WORDS

POWER of HOLY SPIRIT > APOSTLE of Jesus > GOD Spoke THRU him

...our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction 1 Thessalonians 1.5

Paul PRAYED as he PREACHED > Relied on SPIRIT and SCRIPTURES

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. 2 Corinthians 5.11

True PERSUASION > Shows DIGNITY and RESPECT for Person >>

NEED for God - RIGHT to Decide – RESPONSIBILITY for ACTIONS

### 3. Saved through the Message

Paul DRIVEN Out 3 Macedonian Cities > STILL BUZZING from WORDS

v. 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

MANY – Probably INDIFFERENT ‘*what was that all about??*’

SOME – JEALOUS, Implic. of Message, ROBED their Position & Prestige

FEW – EMBRACED Paul’s Message > SUBMITTED to Sovereign Savior

a. Character / JOY NOT Jealousy > SET FREE in JESUS

v. 11 Now the Bereans were of more *noble* character than the Thessalonians, they received the message with *great eagerness*

*NOBLE* – OPEN MINDED > *TEACHABLE* > *CRITICAL THINKING*

Jesus: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18.3

Christian Comes to God and His Word // Hungry Child seek Mother's Milk

Do YOU have that JOY in GOD'S WORD?? Hearing THIS SERMON??

Do WE Come with the EAGERNESS of the BEREANS? Anticipatory JOY?

Community of JOY, Church in Maced. > Crossed Social & Cultural Barriers

v. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

JEWISH Women found in HIGH CLASSES of ROMAN SOCIETY

Even EMPEROR NERO'S wife POPPAEA was JEWISH Sympathizer

v. 12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

### **Jews and Greeks – the Prominent and the Poor – Men and Women**

In a world that is being torn asunder by ethnic strife, the Church which unites people from different social and cultural backgrounds may be the most powerful contemporary demonstration of the glory of the gospel we have to offer the world.

Ajith Fernando

#### **b. Conservative**

CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN >> NOT Politics, Hairstyles, Music Tastes

CONSERVE = HOLD ON TO, CAREFUL, NOT to LOOSE VALUABLES

"The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and *sold everything he had* and bought it."

Matthew 13.46

What you heard from me, *keep* as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. *Guard* the good deposit that was entrusted to you

2 Timothy 1.13-14



DARE to DEFY the ULTIMACY of CAESAR > ANOTHER KING – Jesus

FOCUS of MINISTRY --- SCRIPTURES > Textbook and Court of Appeal

Thess. – Paul ‘reasoned’ ‘explained’ ‘proved’ ‘proclaimed’ ‘persuaded’

Bereans – ‘received’ ‘examined’ ‘great eagerness’

First Christians WOULD BE SHOCKED at our Resources TODAY

WHOLE BIBLE – Dozens of TRANSLATIONS into ENGLISH

Big PRINT – Pocket SIZED – MP 3 – VIDEO – DVD – COMPUTERIZED

ALL THAT – READING It – STUDYING It – MEMORIZE It! Right!??

GREAT ZEAL – CONVICTION – ONE Hour, 30 Minutes!!! FAIL / Try 5

CRACK Into your BUSYNESS – Sit for 5 MINUTES – Early, Late, Mid

Before you put your head on the pillow, make sure you have put your nose in  
the book. Stuart Briscoe

I want to know one thing: the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy  
shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he  
came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book!  
At any price, give me that book of God. John Wesley

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Acts 17:1-15

17:1 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they  
came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As his  
custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath  
days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and  
proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This  
Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. 4 Some of the

Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

5 But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

10 As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

13 When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14 The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.