



Sermon Text: Acts 17:1-9

Sermon Date: July 8, 2018

This week and next week, we will investigate Paul's ministry in Thessalonica and Berea. The theme Luke weaves through these two accounts is a proper attitude toward the Scriptures. In Thessalonica, the focus is on speaking the Word. In Berea, the focus is on receiving the Word.

THESSALONICA—AN ENDURING COMMITMENT TO SPEAK

The charges that are shouted against Paul in Thessalonica is that he and his companions are “turning the world upside down.” On Sunday we focused on how they were changing the world. Justin argued that they were changing the world because they had an enduring commitment to speak about Christ. Justin highlighted 4 aspects of Paul's world-changing evangelism that we must also adopt in our daily lives.

1. **BOLD.** Paul and Silas were bold in evangelism. Before arriving in Thessalonica, they had been mercilessly flogged and brutally imprisoned in Philippi. Their battered backs hadn't had time to heal and their ankles were still chaffed and swollen from the prison's stocks. And yet when arriving in Thessalonica, they still go straight to the synagogue to preach the gospel. They had boldness in God to declare the gospel in the midst of much conflict, and we must also.
2. **MISSIONAL.** Paul goes to where the people were instead of expecting them to come to him. He saw all of his life, including his day job, as a means to introduce others to Jesus. We must do the same if God is to change the world through us. As Tony Merida says, we must “work, play, and enjoy life with gospel intentionality.”
3. **SCRIPTURAL.** Paul's evangelism was saturated with the Scriptures. He reasoned, explained, proved, and proclaimed the Scriptures, giving clear compelling evidence in dialogue that Jesus is the Christ. Like Paul we must not only understand the Bible's stories, but understand the overarching story of the Bible and show how all of Scripture points to Jesus.
4. **RELATIONAL.** Lastly, Paul's evangelism was relational. He wasn't rushed. He didn't blast people with the gospel and then move on if they didn't immediately respond. He showed great patience and care, unpacking the message over a series of weeks. Plus, he was gentle and affectionate, sharing his life with those he was trying to reach.

THE RESULTS—CONVERSIONS & CONFLICT

There are two responses that always accompany the Spirit-empowered speaking of God's Word—conversions and conflict. Both Jews and Gentiles, men and women, rich and poor responded to the gospel. In Thessalonica, God saved all types of people. That is a great encouragement for enduring evangelism: when we share the gospel, God will save His people in His time. Conversions will happen. Lives will be changed. Families will be transformed. Churches are started. Communities altered. The world will be changed!

And where God begins to change the world, conflict always ensues; the world fights back. The unbelieving Jews incite a riot, seize some Christians and force Paul to live the city. An upside-down world doesn't like it when the gospel begins to turn it right side up. But even the most painful opposition cannot stop the saving work of our sovereign God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. What keeps you from living with an enduring commitment to speak about Christ? Of the four qualities of Paul's evangelism, which ones do you need to grow in as an ambassador of Christ?
3. How does it encourage you to know that God WILL save His people through our evangelistic efforts?
4. Take time to think about how God saved you. Share about who He used in the process. Share about how your life has been changed and the ripple effect your salvation has had on the lives of those around you.