

Putting Feet to Your Faith

Acts 17:11-17

- Paul and Silas after just three weeks of teaching have been chased from Thessalonica under the cover of night, but not before a young thriving church has been established, now it's on to a place called "**Berea**" which was about a **45** mile journey. Again this doesn't sound like much to us as it's like going to Baltimore and coming back, but remember that's in our comfortable cars, Paul and his team are walking around the rocky dangerous unpaved roadsides.

V11-17

- **V10-11** after leaving Thessalonica they head straight to the Synagogue knowing they could get an audience and as was their strategy began to teach the Gospel of Grace. You have to love these guys because most people would have been weary not just from the travel but from the beatings, imprisonments, and harsh treatment, but not Paul and his team, this is why he wasn't keen on bringing John Mark or anyone that he thought wasn't prepared to endure the trials.
- What they find here is a little different than what they left in Thessalonica, for here they find a more captive and interested audience, remember in **V4** it's said that only **some believed** but most were jealous and stirred up trouble by any means possible. The Berean's on the other hand proved to be more open minded to what Paul and Silas was sharing with them, as they searched, checked and compared the **O.T.** verses to find out if these things were actually true.
- **V12** after faithfully studying the scriptures many of them believed, notice the difference not "**some**" like the Thessalonians but "**many**" this goes back to what Paul said in **V11** about them. **1. They were more noble**- integrity, most of the Thessalonians really didn't want the truth, so they predetermined that they wouldn't believe even if it is true, **2. Received the Word with readiness of mind**- they expected God to speak to them therefore their minds were fertile to the gospel, **3. Searched the scriptures daily**- they studied to make sure what was being taught is what has been written, this means no teacher is ever above what the Word of God says.
- Like in Thessalonica both Jew and Greek believe including prominent women, but unlike Thessalonica it also included the "**prominent men**" it's great when the ladies believe, in fact its more common, which is why you typically see more women in church than men. But when the Lord gets a hold of the men then communities, governments, civil authorities can really be impacted. **V13-14** after hearing what's happening in Berea the enemy immediately tries to put a stop to it, so those in Thessalonica travel the **45** miles (**no distance too far for the enemy to stir up trouble**) to rile up the people who don't believe, so the brethren once again send Paul away.
- Since Timothy wasn't there but in Philippi when all this happened and he's a gentile, he tells him to stay because that doesn't violate the peace order that the Thessalonians have against him, this shows how we need to have wisdom in dealing with the enemy as well as courage.

- **V15-17** once more because of persecution Paul has to break away from people he's come to love and leave somewhere that's rich in ministry opportunities and go to someplace he's unfamiliar with, but that's all part of the ministry God's called him to. The brethren take him to the sea this time and he sails away to his third city in the chapter "**Athens**" another major metropolis, and quite a distance from Berea. Athens was seen as the intellectual capital of the world, the home of "Socrates" "Plato" "Aristotle" its architecture alone was considered the most sophisticated in history, but Paul hasn't arrived as a "**sightseer**" he's come as a "**soul winner**".
- After getting there he knows he needs help so he sends for Silas and Timothy, and while he waits for them his soul is stirred up at all the idolatry. If you were into pleasure you had "the **temple of Aphrodite**" with **1000 prostitutes**, if you like entertainment you had a **60,000** seat stadium, what about drinking a temple called "**bacchus**" with every kind of libation there was. But this did not impress Paul it stirred him up and an intense anger began to grow inside, for the more he saw the more his heart broke for the need of people to hear the truth and be free.
- So he wages the battle on two fronts **1st** those who are religious- in the Synagogue, **2nd** those who are worldly- the philosophers-idolaters in the market place. This is what should be done today as well, we all expect to do battle outside the church with the unsaved who don't profess to follow Christ, but because of secularism being so prevalent inside the church we must do battle here as well, if we're going to maintain a biblical standard that's set forth from scripture.
- **Jude 3-4** we are warned that people who have a desire to change biblical truth from one of self sacrifice to one of self indulgence will "**creep in unawares**" meaning you won't notice them right away as they'll blend in but eventually they will start to express views that do not line up with dying daily to self but rising up and satisfying self, and we see this today. Look at the bestselling books, songs, sermons, their all about living your best, being your best, but its without Jesus, as scripture says apart from Him we can do nothing, in fact it's also says that in us dwells no good thing, we don't see too many books or sermons with that title anymore do we?
- I have a question" Does it bother you and break your heart that our cities, schools, governments, are wholly given over to idols and ungodliness? Does it bother you at all? Because if it doesn't then there's something wrong, and the primary reason why you're unwilling to do something about it. You want to know why evangelism or sharing your faith is an afterthought, if a thought at all, because you've gotten so apathetic and unfeeling by all the idols and falsehood that surrounds you that you've forgotten that it's our mission to tell the world the good news.