

When the Gospel Upends the Status Quo

Acts 17:1–15

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND: Paul and his fellow believers in the Book of Acts were so empowered by God's presence that silence was not an option for them! They proclaimed the gospel wherever they found themselves - in jail, in the presence of authorities, or within the Jewish temple, sharing about God's redemptive power. Their message agitated those outside the Christian faith. Preaching God's Word invariably leads to persecution. However, such opposition never deterred these early Christians.

WHAT IS TRUE? The Apostle Paul's missionary work in Thessalonica and Berea underscores the central role of Scripture's authority, the unchanging message of the Gospel about Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Messiah, the ongoing resistance to the Gospel, and the genuine unity among Jesus' disciples. While not everyone embraced the message, leading to their salvation, Paul's ministry left a profound impact. He made significant progress, and many found faith in the Lord.

1.) The **Gospel** mission in **Thessalonica** (17:1–9)

A. The Proclamation of the Gospel and Conversions (17:1–4)

1. Scripture is **authoritative** and their **source** of truth

B. Opposition and eviction of the missionaries (17:5–9)

1. Paul represents **another** king and **another** kingdom
2. The **Gospel of Jesus Christ** provokes various reactions, from eagerness to hostility; it can be polarizing and challenging to existing beliefs and societal norms.

2.) The **Gospel** mission in **Berea** (v.10–15)

A. The Proclamation of the Gospel and Conversions (17:10–12)

1. Again, Scripture is **authoritative** and their **source** of truth. Paul's method involved reasoning from the Scriptures to demonstrate that **Jesus is the Messiah**. This emphasizes the **centrality** of the Bible in understanding and communicating the Gospel
2. Paul and his companions did not abandon their mission but adapted their strategies, showing **resilience** and **commitment** to spreading the Gospel.

B. Opposition and eviction of the missionaries (17:13–15)

1. **Christian** Community (aka "Brothers and Sisters") not only proclaims and disseminates the Gospel, but they can provide crucial support in the face of opposition

WHAT TO DO (APPLICATION)?

- 1.) **Be Prepared for Mixed Reactions:** Understand that sharing the Gospel may lead to various responses. Be ready to face acceptance as well as rejection, knowing that the power of the message lies not in our persuasion but in the truth of Christ.
- 2.) **Root Your Faith and Evangelism in Scripture:** Emphasize personal and communal engagement with the Bible. Let the Scriptures inform your understanding of God and guide your conversations about faith.
- 3.) **Persist in the Face of Challenges:** When faced with opposition or hardship, don't be discouraged from living out and sharing your faith. Find strength in God's promise and the examples of early Christians who persevered.
- 4.) **Value Christian Community:** Engage actively with your church and community. Support and learn from one another and work together in spreading the Gospel. Recognize the impact of collective action and shared faith in overcoming obstacles.
- 5.) **Reflect Christ's Love in All Interactions:** Whether people respond positively or negatively to Jesus' message, our call is to love and serve others as Christ did. Show kindness, patience, and compassion to everyone, regardless of their reaction.

IN SUM: This passage encourages us to be steadfast and loving in our witness, using Scripture as our foundation, prepared for varied reactions, and relying on God for resilience in the face of opposition.



After being asked to leave Philippi after their run-in with the authorities there, Paul and Silas set out to follow the *Via Egnatia* (Roman Road) further west and deeper into Macedonia.

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