

Faithfully Follow the Suffering King. Acts 17:1-14.

Thessalonica is the capital of Macedonia, its most populated and most famous city:

- A prosperous, self-ruled, free city that is very loyal to Caesar.
- High unemployment is a significant issue
- Jewish Community. Paul spends three Sabbaths reasoning, explaining, proving, proclaiming that “Messiah had to suffer and be raised.”

The responses are varied:

- Some who were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas
- A group of Jews out of jealousy head to the marketplace and stir up a riot with the intentions of dragging Paul to trial.

They are accused of sedition (v6) and treason (v7). Both are valid concerns and both seem plausible.

Even what we know of Paul’s message from 1 and 2 Thessalonians provides enough substance to question guilt.

There is no attempt on Paul’s accusers to understand.

Question: Do you live your life in a manner that shows service, not power or control, is the way of Jesus’ kingdom?

When you faithfully follow Jesus, when you proclaim the good news, expect opposition as in Thessalonica.

Consider how Acts 4:29-30 is being answered: “And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” Acts 4:29-30

The vessel of the good news is a weak, but joy-filled people serving, proclaiming despite suffering and despite opposition.

Q: Does fear of potential loss or opposition keep you from talking about your life with Jesus?

Q: Are you praying for boldness?

Q: Are you too busy arranging your life to be free from pain that you are missing the mission of Jesus? What shift in priorities do you need to make?

Berea, in contrast, responds “more nobly (v11)”

They seek to verify. They withhold judgement until they’ve been able to reason for themselves.

Let us seek out truth and hold to truth like the Bereans.

Q: Are you a person who seeks to understand? Are you aware of your own motives and intentions in disagreements?

Q: How do you practice being quick to listen and slow to speak?

Q: Who or what informs you of truth?