

Sermon Notes 10/3/21

“Sharing the Gospel in a Non-Christian World”

How can we share the Gospel in our world?

1. Live out our faith in _____ .
Acts 17:1
Acts 17:17
2. Invite people to a _____ .
Acts 17:2-3
Acts 17:11
3. Encourage _____ to accept the Gospel.
Acts 17:4
Acts 17:12
4. Don't give up when the _____ is _____ .
Acts 17:5-6
Acts 17:13



Paul's Second Missionary Journey AD 50-52

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 1: October 3-10

Acts 17:1-15

This is the first lesson in a series on the New Testament books of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians. Acts 17:1-15 provides us with important background information for our study in Thessalonians. This passage also gives us practical principles about sharing the gospel in a non-Christian culture.

Read Acts 17:1-9

1. What does verse 1 tell us about Thessalonica?

Thessalonica was an important city in the first century. Even today it is the second largest city in Greece. It was situated on the Egnatian Way, the main highway that passed through the major cities of Macedonia. It was also a major port in the Aegean Sea. Paul knew that a church in Thessalonica would be blessed with many opportunities to share the gospel with people traveling by land and by sea (1 Thess. 1:8).

Behind it are mountains, with Mt. Chalcidice to the east and Mt. Olympus to the southwest. This ideal location on the Egnatian Way and the possession of a fine harbor made Thessalonica a commercial and military center. It was, in fact, the chief seaport of Macedonia and is still one of the principal seaports of southeast Europe.¹

2. What does verse 2 describe as Paul's "custom"?

Paul went to the synagogue because he wanted to worship the one true God with his fellow Jews. However, it was also his strategy to look for opportunities to share the Gospel in every place. Paul was an educated rabbi trained in Jerusalem by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), so whenever he went to a synagogue, he would be given the opportunity to speak.

3. What was Paul teaching in the synagogue each week? What methods of teaching did Paul use in this passage? (17:2-3)

¹ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Vol. Four* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 836.

Paul “reasoned from the Scriptures.” He knew that the Jews already had faith in the Old Testament Scriptures, so that’s where he started. Paul proclaimed Jesus as the Christ and showed from the Scriptures that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. Gareth Reese notes,

We may learn from Paul’s methods some methods for evangelism in our own day. The evangelist, whether at home or abroad, will have or develop a prospect list, indicating what people are the nearest ready to accept the Gospel. He will approach these first, using their present level of understanding to build Christian teaching and commitment. He will seldom win all of them, and in the process, he will probably win some whom he did not expect to be receptive.²

4. Who was persuaded to join Paul and Silas in verse 4?
5. Why do you think some of the Jews were jealous? (17:5)
6. How did the Jews act against Paul and Silas? (17:5)
7. What did the crowd do to Jason and some other Christians? (17:6-7)
8. What were the accusations against the Christians? (17:6-7)
9. How did the crowd and city officials react to the accusations? (17:8)
10. Why was Jason required to “post bond”? What does that mean? (17:9)

Dennis Gaertner observes,

The turmoil caused by these charges forced Jason to be held responsible. The “politarchs” were more interested, however, in maintaining the peace than taking retribution. Therefore, they required Jason to “post bond,” paying a sum of money which would be forfeited if there was a recurrence of the trouble.³

² Gareth L. Reese, *New Testament History: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1988), 612.

³ Dennis Gaertner, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Acts* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 268.

Read Acts 17:10-15

11. When did the brothers send Paul and Silas to Berea? (17:10)
12. On arriving in Berea, where did Paul and Silas go? (17:10)
13. How were the Bereans different from the Thessalonians? (17:11)
14. Why were the Bereans searching the Scriptures every day? (17:11)

Mark Moore writes,

The Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians. The word Luke used literally means “well-born” (*eugenes*), and it speaks of the high caste of Roman society. In this context, of course, it is a metaphor for the children of God who demonstrate their nobility by their receptivity to the Scriptures. What made them noble was their eagerness for truth and their effort to judge the message against Scripture. There is hardly a more important personal characteristic than this for spiritual growth.⁴

15. What kind of people believed Paul’s message in verse 12?
16. What did the Jews from Thessalonica do in verse 13? Why?
17. Where did the brothers send Paul in verse 14?
18. Why do you think Silas and Timothy remain in Berea? (17:14)
19. What instructions did Paul leave for Silas and Timothy in verse 15?
20. In what settings are you most effective as a witness for Christ?
21. How should we cope with opposition to the message of Christ?
22. Why is it important for all Christians to read their Bibles daily?
23. Who could you invite to a Bible study?
24. In what setting will you be a witness for Christ this week?

⁴ Mark Moore, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Acts* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2011), 297.