

**You Are Sent, Vol 3 | July 4<sup>th</sup>**  
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**INTRODUCTION – July 4<sup>th</sup>**

Get out your bible and flipped to Acts 17:1-15. In this text, we are going to see how Paul and Silas turned the world upside down. You think I am kidding; verse 17:6 literally says, "**These men who have turned the world upside down**". It sounds crazy, but changing the world is not too extreme as you think...

In 2014 Admiral McRaven presented a commencement speech at his alma mater, the University of Texas. The speech took off with having 13.7 Million views on YouTube. Within this speech, he challenged the graduating students that they could change the world. He said the average American will meet 10,000 people in their lifetime. And what if all of the UT Class of 2014 graduates, 8686, changed the lives of just 10 people and those 10 people change another 10 people's lives, then in five generations, they will have changed the lives of 800 million people. *Isn't that mind-blowing?* 10 People! He said, changing the world can happen anywhere, and anyone can do it, but the question is — *what will the world look like after we change it?*

**Now, what I told you the same thing, you can have an impact on the world?** What if, by your life and your community that you can turn the world upside down? Most of you are thinking I am crazy for asking that question. *We hear phrases like this all the time! We can change the world! We can take the world by storm! Be the difference maker!*

But according to Genesis 1:26-31, we were all created by God to impact creation! But as we know, sin ruin that, but the good

news of the Gospel is Jesus came to flipped things around. He came to turn the world that was upside down because of sin, right side up. And now for those in Christ, he redeemed us back to that purpose, to make an impact upon all creation!

So, as we look at today's passage, we will see there was nothing extraordinary about Paul or Silas or their ministry. The only remarkable thing about them was that they were changed by the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. You see, the Gospel turned their world upside down, so they could set the world right-side up. That is the idea for today that **Gospel people are created to turn the world right side up.**

To give us a roadmap, we are going to walk through this text examining Paul's and Silas's visit to Thessalonica and Berea. We are going to examine the **four disruptive practices they use to turn the world right side up.** After we walk through the text, we going to conclude with application from those four points. Cool, let's dive in. Verse 1

**BODY**

<sup>1</sup>**After they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.** Paul and the apostles are still in their second missionary journey. As we saw last week, they recently just received immense persecution in Philippi (Acts 16). Instead of licking their wounds, the Spirit of God moved in them to continue their journey to Thessalonica to continue ministry. As we look back at the text, it says they passed through two sizable cities to get to Thessalonica. *There are two primary reasons for that.* First, Thessalonica was an important port city, and second, it was a “free city,” meaning they had no roman

guard within its walls to interfere with ministry. Let's keep reading verse 2:

*As usual, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures,* as customary in his time, Paul and Silas went to the Jewish synagogues to preach the crucified and risen Jesus to the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. But the text says they were there for three weeks but according to other texts, they stayed in Thessalonica much longer. The reason why the writer would put the three weeks was they were trying to make us aware that Paul and Silas did not receive money from the Jews. Why? *They knew their message was going to be a stumbling block for the Jews, so they did not want money to get in the way.*

*So, what we can gather is strategy was involved here. Them passing through two cities was intentional. Them going to Jewish Synagogue was purposeful. Them taking no money from them was calculated. They knew that if he was going to plant some roots of the Gospel in this city, they needed to go to a place where people had some background knowledge of the Torah.*

*Essentially, Paul and Silas use prayerful and thoughtful strategies to advance the Gospel. This brings me to my first point if we are going to turn the world right side up for the Gospel, we are going to have to use the **disruptive practice of strategy.***

That why we planted Mercy Church in Charlotte. *This is a strategic city for ministry.* Did you know that Charlotte has 100,000 college students in the area? Do you know that the majority of our city is filled with people from the nations? In

fact, Charlotte is one of the few cities in the US that has over 51% of minority presence. Did you know that we have access to take the Gospel all over the planet because of the business center and airport which is one of the busiest in the world?

And if we, Mercy Church, will turn the world right side for the Gospel, if we are going to bring a gospel awakening in Charlotte that carried to the ends of the earth, we must be strategic in gospel advancement efforts. We are going to come back to this idea at the end but let that stick with you.

Let's keep reading. Verse 2 *As usual, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*<sup>3</sup> *explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead:*

Verse 2 says that Paul "*reasoned*" with them from the Scriptures. Here the Greek word for 'reasoned' is the root for our English word *dialogue*. Thus, there was an exchange of questions and answers from the scriptures. Paul and Silas **spoke** the word of God.

Verse 3 says that Paul did the work of explaining thoroughly and proving that it was necessary that why the Messiah, Jesus, had to suffer and rise from the dead to the Jews. Y'all, there is a load of importance here. The Jews were well educated on the scriptures but had a different theological interpretation about the Messiah. Therefore, Paul and Silas spoke from the scriptures the majesty of the Messiah.

According to the promise, as the seed of Abraham, the Messiah would come to earth to re-establish his royal kingdom over the world and all the nations. He would conquer all his enemies

(and ours), cause all war and conflict to cease, and would reign triumphantly over sin and death in his splendor and glory.

The Jews were expecting that type of Messiah, but they missed the parts where he had to *suffer, be crucified, and resurrected*. That is why Paul used the phrase, at the end of verse 3, “**This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah.**”

They spoke in an informed manner; they knew their audience. The Jewish rabbis actually had the idea there were two Messiah’s. One called ‘**Messhiach ben David** (*Meshia ch Bendai d*)’ or the Messiah the son of David—this glorious, triumphant king. The second was the ‘**Messhiach ben Joseph**’ – The OT Joseph who suffered in Genesis.

But Paul was demonstrating there was one Messiah who came in the likeness of men, to live the life we could not live, suffer for our sake, die, and resurrect in triumphant glory defeating all his enemies and ours.

What we can draw here, **if we are going to turn the world right side up for the Gospel, we are going to have the disruptive practice of speaking the Gospel.**

Speaking the Gospel to the lost world comes from a heart that knows that it was lost. That would be the only reason why Paul and Silas would continue to keep going into Jewish Synagogues, their own people, and keeping receiving persecution, beating after beating because of the Gospel message.

***Speaking the gospel message was uncomfortable for them and it will be uncomfortable for you.*** But when our hearts are

gripped by the reality of the Gospel, it changes us. We have to remind ourselves that Jesus identified with the misery and discomfort of humanity. He was born in danger and humility. He experienced temptation and voluntarily laid down his life at the cross. *His world was turned upside down by facing the death that was intended for all of humanity so that we can turn the world right side up in his name.*

Alexander Maclaren says it this way: **"He must die because He would save, and He would save because He did love."**

Family, when our hearts grip by this love in the Gospel, it causes share with others. But let’s see how the Jews responded to this message, Verse 4 **Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, including a large number of God-fearing Greeks, as well as a number of the leading women.**

Again, Luke, single out the ‘influential women’ here. As civic and social influencers, this became quite upsetting for the Jews, so they decided to form a mob. Verse 5 **But the Jews became jealous, and they brought together some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob, and started a riot in the city. Attacking Jason’s house, they searched for them to bring them out to the public assembly. When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city officials,**

Contrasted to the group before, the Jews, as God’s chosen people, who were supposed to be building the world for good, literally started tearing up stuff in the city. In their revolt, they began searching for Paul and Silas, but they could not find them. So, they went after those who supported them and helped them advance the gospel in the city, Jason, and his discipleship

community. So, they captured them and set before the city, and here is what they said, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too,<sup>7</sup> and Jason has welcomed them. They are all acting contrary to Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king—Jesus.”

The Jews heard about Paul who went from town to town talking about Jesus, and now he came to their town and started to mess up their way of life. ***That is what happens when the Gospel invades a community! It disrupts the social, political, and economic constructs.***

The Greek verb for “turned” is “anastatoó” which has a revolutionary tone to it. Basically, Paul and Silas were charged with being revolutionaries. These accusations are high treason and if found guilty, they would get killed, so they escaped.

But we have to take notice, those charges were *exaggerated and false*. It was actually Paul’s accusers, the Jews, that were upsetting the world by stirring up violence. However, ***although the accusations were false, they were true of them and should be true of us.***

As Christians, we should upset the world by living a challenging lifestyle that affects society on an individual and societal level. As he stood before the city officials, Jason was accused of housing of revolution. *You know it would have been easier if Jason submitted to Caesar as King, but because of the Gospel, he stood condemned for this life.*

Ya’ll what we can gather here Jason probably looked and smelled like Jesus. Jason’s crime before the officials was *biblical hospitality*. ***Because the Gospel turned his world***

***upside down, Jason was working to turn the world right side up.***

If we notice that Jason used his house, his money, and his life because Jesus was worth it, and the community notice. This idea brings me to my next point ***if we are going to turn the world right side up, use the disruptive practice of sacrifice.***

I think the scriptures are tee-balling one up for us showing us biblical hospitality at work. Family, *hospitality is an easy way where we can sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel*. In fact, Paul believed that hospitality was so crucial to advancing the Gospel, we wrote in 2 Thess. 2:8. ***We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.***

In this series, we are addressing *the idea of planning to go but willing to stay*. Not all of you are going to go but if you choose to stay, which will be most of us in the room, a way to make an impact for the gospel is biblical hospitality

Mercy Church, to turn the world upside down, we are going to need all of us to see hospitality as discipleship. We have to open our homes for the sake of the gospel. My former mentor, one time, send out a tweet that ***“Christians should see their homes as a place of ministry rather than a place of refuge.”*** Family, our homes should be a place where people feel and receive the love of God in tangible ways.

To convince you more, people have become less and less accustomed to going to church, but last time I checked, *God has blessed many of us with homes/apartments to be used for*

*his glory*. As a church, we have been praying that many of you will go, but if the Lord is going to call us to stay, we need to *embody and practice biblical hospitality*. But we have to keep moving, verse 10

But the Lord made a way, and he was able to pay of the city officials, verse 8 **The crowd and city officials who heard these things were upset. 9 After taking a security bond from Jason and the others, they released them<sup>10</sup>As soon as it was night, the brothers and sisters sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. Upon arrival, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.**

So again, in Paul and Silas' ministry practice, they went to teach in the Jewish synagogue in Berea. This town was about 50 miles from Thessalonica. Let's see how they responded to the teaching of the Gospel. Verse 11 **<sup>11</sup> The people here were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica since they received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. <sup>12</sup> Consequently, many of them believed, including a number of the prominent Greek women as well as men.**

Again, contrasted to the Jews in Thessalonica, after the Gospel message was preached, the Jews in Berea with "noble character" received the word with "eagerness" and "examined" the word of God carefully. They had a mixture of *humility*, *receptivity*, and *learning*. The Bereans had a posture of teachability but also the *wisdom* to study the scriptures for themselves. **This brings me to the last point, if we are going to turn the world right side for the Gospel, we have to use the disruptive practice of study.**

So, take the study of the word of lightly; it impacts the world around us. *A positive way to say it, a serious study of scripture should lead to a serious impact on the community*. You see, studying the word of God reminds us that we outsiders are deeply loved by God who lavishes his love on us; we then share that love with outsiders.

We can pull from this because if Mercy Church is going to turn the world upside down, we must take studying the word seriously. But we need to be careful; a serious study of the word does not mean to content junky. Instead, it calls us to take what we learned to share it with others. *How do I know?* Let look at verse 12 says, **Consequently, many of them believed, including a number of the prominent Greek women as well as men.**

If you notice, the text says the "a number of prominent Greek women and men were saved." Again, they impacted the influencers in the city. **So, my question for many of us, is our study of the word impacting us in a way that our community notices?**

The Bible is calling us to the type of study of the word that leads to action. The kind of study they did lead to a revolution, that turns the world right side up, let's look at verse 13. **<sup>13</sup> But when the Jews from Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul at Berea, they came there too, agitating and upsetting the crowds.**

Like the other missionary journeys, the Jews were not happy about what was going on. So, some Jews from Thessalonica travel to agitate the crowds and cause problems. They were upset because the Gospel change people and people change the

community. But like the church in Thessalonica, the Christians in Berea were committed using strategy, so they sent Paul away Athens to further the Gospel, verse 14<sup>14</sup> **Then the brothers and sisters immediately sent Paul away to go to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed on there.** <sup>15</sup> **Those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving instructions for Silas and Timothy to come to him as quickly as possible, they departed.**

Ya'll their strategy here was so successful in Thessalonica, they did the same in Berea. But because of the opposition of the gospel, the followers of Jesus got Paul out of town quickly to Athens. But we need to take notice, Silas and a new character, Timothy, stayed back for a season.

The work of Christ, it is going cause some to go and some to stay. Here Silas and Timothy stayed to continue the work for a little while longer while they sent Paul ahead. They sold out for the gospel. The believe in planning to go but willing to say and for us that are willing to say, **how do we respond?**

I want to challenge you with these points mention above and apply them to your life. ***The Four Disruptive Practices of Turning the World Right Side Up***

- **Strategizing for the Mission of God**– What needs to change your life or daily rhythm that makes you more strategic in advancing the Gospel? For some of us, it might be an address change but for some of us, it might be more intentional about the places we go and the people we spend time with. How you partnering with IM?
- **Speaking the Gospel** – Who is in your life that needs to hear the truth of the Gospel? Where have you not

obeyed the Lord in sharing with people? Who is that person who is far from God but close to you?

- **Sacrificing for the Gospel** – How are you using your home, apartment, car, finances for advancing the Gospel. Are you inviting people into your home? Consider tithing one night a week to the lost in your community. Perhaps God might be calling some of us to bring in foster kids in our homes. Furlough for IM
- **Studying the Word** – What component in your time with the Lord needs to change? Do you need to start studying the word again? Do you need someone to hold you accountable? We have a bible reading plan, take that and start reading.

## CONCLUSION

But as we know, we can turn the world upside down for Jesus if our world has not been turned upside by him. You see God saw fit to use you as his main strategy to reach the world. He does not have a plan B. It his church. *Paul and Silas got accused of changing the world upside down, but as it turns out, the Gospel turns the world upside up.* Let's pray.