

Series: Turning the World Upside Down # 6

The Commitment of the Church

Acts 17: 1-9

This morning I would like to conclude our series entitled: *Turning the World Upside Down*. We have spent several weeks considering the impact Paul and those who traveled with him made on the cities and towns they entered. Although all did not agree with the message, leading to their salvation, it is evident that the ministry of Paul was noticed. It was undeniable that he was reaching people and many were coming to the Lord by faith.

The setting for our text today is in Thessalonica. This was during Paul's second missionary journey. Although his work was recognized, it was not always well received. In fact, those who spoke the words: [These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also](#); spoke them in sarcasm and anger. The success of Paul's ministry was due to the Lord using him in spite of the efforts of sinful men to hinder.

As we have discovered over the past few weeks, our efforts will not be without opposition. It is possible for us to make a difference in the lives of others, but we too must seek the Lord's help to overcome the obstacles we will face. We must apply the biblical guidance we have received and serve the Lord according to His Word.

This is a powerful passage that reveals the commitment Paul and the others possessed even in the face of increasing opposition. As we conclude our study, I want to examine the [principles](#) given in the text as we consider: [The Commitment of the Church](#). If we are to be successful and turn the world upside down for Jesus, we too must be committed.

I. The Approach to Ministry (1-3) – As you study the life and ministry of Paul, you will discover his commitment to a particular approach to ministry. We must develop a genuine commitment to this approach as well. Notice, this approach involved:

A. A Surrendered Messenger (2) – [And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures](#). This is a familiar scene in Paul's ministry. Many times we have found him in the synagogue preaching the Word of God. This was his manner, his approach to ministry. He was surrendered to the Lord and committed to the work.

- This is very simple, and yet I want to emphasize its significance again. We will never make a difference in our communities or other areas of ministry without faithful servants. Churches that prosper and reach folks for Christ are surrendered to the Lord and committed to the work!

B. A Single Message (3a) – [Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead](#); Wherever Paul went, the message was the same. Many times he addressed the struggles we face, and the lives we live, but he always presented the Gospel: Jesus crucified, buried, and risen. The message Paul preached brought conviction and a realization of the need for Christ. He presented Jesus as the Savior and Redeemer of humanity. This message literally turned the world upside down. Responding to the message transformed lives.

- The church has many obligations and various facets of ministry. There is much we are responsible for according to the Scriptures, but there is a single message we must present. The world needs to hear the Gospel. That message alone has the ability to reach the lost and change the world. There is much in the Bible regarding our obligations and responsibilities in life, but the primary message and focus of the church is to share the Gospel with a world that needs to hear! All that we are or ever hope to be is founded upon the Gospel and the strength and wisdom we need for everyday life rests in the Gospel. The lost must look to Calvary and the empty tomb, while the saved must keep those in focus. [1 Cor.2:2 – For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.](#)

C. A Sufficient Messiah (3b) – [Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.](#) Paul dealt with Jews who rejected Jesus as the Christ. He dealt with Gentiles steeped in mythology and all manner of idolatry. Paul proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah; He is the Christ. The Jews had no need to wait or continue to look for another; Messiah had come. The Gentiles needed to realize that Jesus alone could provide salvation and reconciliation to God. He had offered Himself as the sacrificial atonement for sin, fully satisfying the righteous demands of God, securing our salvation! Jesus is the Gospel. He is the Savior and Redeemer; there is no other.

- I rejoice to know that Jesus is sufficient. He fully provided for my salvation. There is no need to look to another. He did for me what no other could. His finished work has secured my eternal salvation. There will never need to be another sacrifice. I am saved by His atoning work!

- Church we must never lose sight of that. Jesus must remain our focus and priority. We must present Him as the sufficient Savior. He is all one needs to receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life. May we never be guilty of portraying anything to the contrary! Salvation isn't obtained through works, programs or activities; it is in Jesus alone.

I. The Approach to Ministry (1-3)

II. The Appeal to Ministry (4-5) – These verses reveal how Paul’s ministry focused on the Gospel appealed to individuals. As we will see, the appeal was not the same for all, but Paul remained committed regardless of how people responded. Notice:

A. The Message was Received (4) – *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* Even though Paul and Silas had been opposed and persecuted, they remained faithful and God honored their faithfulness. Some of the Jews believed, a great multitude of the Greeks, and many of the chief women did as well. Paul’s efforts were not in vain. Had he abandoned his ministry, he would never have enjoyed the harvest in Thessalonica.

- That ought to encourage and challenge us today. We live in a sin cursed world where many are influenced by society and bound in sin. However, hope is not lost. Jesus remains on His throne. He still has the ability to save. The Spirit continues to work in the lives of people. We must remain committed to sharing the Gospel. Some will hear, believe, and be saved.

B. The Message was Rejected (5a) – *But the Jews which believed not...* These heard the same message as the others, but the appeal was not the same. Some who were present rejected the Gospel and Christ as Lord and Savior. Even Paul had those who rejected his message, and in reality, Christ Himself.

- We must understand that all will not respond favorably to the Gospel. You will not see folks saved every time you witness of Christ. There are services where some are saved and others are not. Some believe and others reject the offer of salvation. This saddens our hearts, but we cannot allow it to hinder our commitment to Christ and others. We cannot develop an attitude which says there is no need to try again because folks will not believe. We must continue to share the Gospel and trust the Lord to provide the results.

C. The Ministry was Resisted (5) – *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.* Those who did not believe resisted the ministry of Paul, inciting a riot in hopes of silencing his voice and defeating his work. These were not content just to reject the message; they opposed the entire ministry.

- Some will respectfully reject your witness, but there will likely come a time where others seek to silence your voice. Some are not content with unbelief, they want to hinder the church and those who seek to share their faith. Even then, we must remain committed to the cause!

I. The Approach to Ministry (1-3)

II. The Appeal to Ministry (4-5)

III. The Acknowledgment of the Ministry (6-7) – And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; ^[7] Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. Keep in mind, these have rejected the message and resisted the ministry of Paul, and yet they acknowledged the work that was accomplished. Let's consider the aspects of ministry they acknowledged. First they acknowledged:

A. The Potential (6) – *These that have turned the world upside down...* They did not believe, nor agree with Paul, but they had to acknowledge that something miraculous had happened. This was not business as usual. There was clearly something different about these men and they had the potential to reach others. That is why they were so determined to defeat them.

- I pray that we too acknowledge the potential we have in Christ. Our church is not a mega church. We don't have the numbers or resources a lot of others do, but we have Jesus and that is enough! He is more than able to use those who are committed to Him and do great things through them. There is no reason we can't turn the world upside down for Jesus!

B. The Progression (6) – *These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* Did you notice their acknowledgment? They have come to where we are. We heard about things that happened in other cities and now it is happening among us. They weren't happy, but they had to admit that the Gospel was spreading, not confined to one particular area.

- We cannot begin to imagine the power of our Lord. He will work where He chooses and none can hinder Him. Wouldn't it be great for the Gospel to spread among us today? Wouldn't it be great for revival to break out in our church and spread throughout Surry County? Wouldn't you like to see a national move of God in our day? Imagine the newspapers and newscasters having to give press time to a move of God because it was making such an impact, spreading like wildfire in our land. It can happen. God is able and willing. Are we?

C. The Participants (6) – *These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* Paul and Silas aren't mentioned by name here, but they were known in Thessalonica for the message they shared and the God they served. They were charged with turning the world upside down!

- I am not interested in recognition for our glory, but I would love for people to recognize the members of Fellowship as being committed to Christ. I would love for us to be known as a people committed to making a difference in our community and even around the world for Jesus. Wouldn't it be great if we were known for our love of Christ? "I don't know much about her, but I know she loves the Lord." "I don't know where he lives, but he is committed to Christ and the church." May we be known as a people that love the Lord and others, seeking to turn the world upside down for Jesus!

D. The Priority (7) – *Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.* Here we discover the main accusation against them: they held Jesus as King. They were surrendered to Him and served Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus was their priority, their focus. They were acknowledged for their obedience and allegiance to Christ.

- This accusation reveals the key to turning the world upside for the glory of God. We must make Jesus the priority in all we do. He must be the focus of our services, our witness, and our lives. If we will make much of Him everywhere and at all times, we will make a difference. This will require complete obedience and allegiance, but I am certain He will honor those efforts. Many are not making a difference today because Jesus is not being exalted. We will never experience a move of God or see much in the way of conversions if Jesus is not the priority.

Conclusion: I think it is evident to see that Paul was committed to the cause of Christ. He was surrendered to the Lord and devoted to serving Him. All didn't agree with him or receive the Gospel, but all agreed that he was a servant of the Lord. Even though he was hated by many, they too had to acknowledge his relationship with Christ.

Could the same be said of you? Are you known for your relationship with Christ? Is it evident in the life you live? Would those who know you be surprised that you attend church regularly? We all need to live committed lives to Christ if we are to impact our world for Him. Maybe you need to come and make a commitment or renew a prior commitment. If so, why not come as the Lord leads?

Paul was willing to face death for his faith. He knew that Christ was Lord and he was certain of eternal life in Him. What are you living for today? Where is your hope? Do you possess the peace Paul had? Do you know for certain you will go to heaven when you die? Jesus is the only way of salvation. Apart from Him there is no hope. If He has dealt with your heart regarding salvation, don't put it off. Come to Him today!