

The Way of the Bereans - Acts 17:1-15 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

There are a lot of interesting church names out there. But drive through the country enough and you will eventually pass a church that has named itself the Berean Bible Church, or Berean Baptist Church, or some other nomenclature with Berean in its name. Never mind that none of these churches are in a town called Berea. So why would churches identify themselves in this way?

Our story this week follows Paul to two more major Macedonian cities as he and his band of brothers continue their mission of taking the Gospel to the cities of ancient Greece. Actually, the number of cities Paul visits is actually four, as the story hastily pictures the team running through Amphipolis and Apollonia before arriving in Thessalonica. I believe we should assume that Paul preached Jesus in these cities, but did not stay long, most likely because there was not a population of Jews or a synagogue in these cities. Paul ends up in Thessalonica, a port city at the northern end of the Aegean Sea. The city was situated on a bay and also sat on the crossroads of an important east-west trade route road, so Thessalonica served (actually still serves) as an important trade city. This city was also the capital of Macedonia. Paul enters the city, and he does what he always does. Paul begins by preaching Jesus in the Synagogue. We are told he proclaimed Jesus from the Scriptures on three different Sabbaths. As a result, many Jews believed, as did a good number of Greek God-fearers and even some of the leading women of the city. Yet, the Gospel did not hit the leaders of the Jews in the same way, and out of jealousy they seek to get rid of the preacher and kill the message. They partner with the low lifes of the city to form a mob and go to the home of a guy named Jason, presumably serving as the host for Paul and his crew as they stay for their Greek vacay. When they can't find Paul they figure the guy who opened his home to them will do, so they drag Jason in front of the authorities of the city and accuse him of supporting "These men who have turned the world upside down." To be honest, this is not a false claim, the preaching of the Gospel is shaking the very foundations of the Greco-Roman world and will continue to do so for centuries. In fact, anywhere the Gospel is a threat to the status quo anywhere it goes, because it will turn the world upside down.

Jason pays his bail, but to keep the church from suffering too much persecution, Paul leaves and heads to Berea. There, he follows the same rhythm, preaching Jesus in the Synagogue and also reaching out to Greeks. But something is different in the reception of Paul and the Gospel. Rather than an outright rejection of the Gospel, the Bereans were Bible people. As Paul reasoned that the Christ had to suffer, and that Jesus is the Christ, these people opened their Bibles daily, and in their rhythmic reading and study of Scripture they were able to test the teaching of Paul to make sure what he was saying was in line with what God had already said in His Word. When they saw that the Gospel being preached by Paul was rooted in Scripture they were ready to accept it eagerly. Luke, the author of Acts is pointing something out about the Bereans that he hopes will rub off on all of us. He tells us that they were more noble than the Thessalonians because they listened to Paul's preaching and then with eagerness tested it against the Scriptures. In doing this we have a model for how we should interact with the preaching of the Gospel.

The Thessalonians just flat out rejected the message of the Gospel out of jealousy, resorting to mob violence and persecution of believers to stamp it out. They did not check the Scriptures to see if Paul's message was Biblical, they just didn't like it and had no interest in Jewish Messiah who did not fit their pre-conceived ideas. There are many who

take the same posture today, having no interest in the Gospel, rejecting the preaching of Jesus outright. But there is another response, one that is equally dangerous. This happens when people follow gifted teachers with messages that are compelling, yet they follow without ever opening their own Bibles and checking to see if these people's teaching is actually in line with the revealed Scriptures. The Bereans teach us how to listen to teaching and preaching, by coming with willing hearts, listening with a view to believe and obey, yet testing everything that is said against the Bible as the final authority for our faith and practice. This approach keeps preachers faithful to the text of Scripture and protects the hearers from hardened hearts or being drawn away by teachers who tickle their ears. So, in the end, every faithful church should be a Berean church.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Galatians 2	Galatians 3	Galatians 4	Galatians 5	Galatians 6	Leviticus 1	Leviticus 2

Reading from this past week: Acts 17:1-15

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 17:16-34

Family Worship

Song - *Let the Nations Be Glad*

<https://youtu.be/T7zYARKdO0U>

Gospel Project

Unit: The People Disobey

Story: Elisha performed miracles

Big Picture Question: What is idolatry?

Answer: Idolatry is a sin of the heart in which we love and value something else above God.

Scripture: 2 Kings 4-6

New City Catechism

Question #39: With what attitude should we pray?

Answer: Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God.

Verse: Philippians 4:6

Scripture

Acts 17:1-15

- Why is the Gospel upsetting to so many people? Why do you think people would react like the Jews in Thessalonika?
- What does the text tell us that Paul did as he preached? How should this text help pastors as they shape the content and delivery of their sermons?
- What made the Bereans more noble than the Thessalonians?
- What can this text teach us about our approach to the sermons we hear?

Prayer

*Pray for your Elders and other leaders who have the God given honor to preach the Gospel from the Word of God to you each week.

*Pray that you would have a deep desire to hear and apply the Scripture proclaimed in the sermon this and every week.