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Acts 17:1-12

Turning the World Upside Down

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age. Amen. (6-7a).

God's Word is Truth.

The book of Acts answers the question about what happened after Jesus ascended into heaven? It will show you how the message of the gospel turned the world upside down. Which is a great thing – because the world is in chaos – it always is, it is what the world produces because of sin and its crippling effects.

In the previous chapter, Paul and Silas are at a standstill in ministry. There was no wind in their sails so-to speak. It says that the Holy Spirit kept them from proclaiming the gospel in this area. Then in that area. They end up at Troas wondering what in the world to do. Because at times, ministry and missions can be just like that. Finally, Paul has a vision of a man saying, “Come over to Macedonia

and help us!” So they go with haste. They caught the vision. The wind filled their sails. To Europe with the gospel. To Philippi. Converts to the gospel come, but soon so do the beatings and imprisonment. Are Paul and Silas downtrodden? Nope. It is midnight and they are praying and singing praises to the Lord with bloody backs, probably a black eye and some broken ribs to boot. It doesn’t look like victory. But it is. God can use you even in your ugly moments. God moved Philippi with an earthquake. Paul and Silas, all haggardly looking, use such a time as this to share the gospel with the jailer and his family. They come to faith in Jesus as the risen Lord.

Now to the next place. Thessalonica. Unless the Lord miraculously healed them, they are still looking rough. Bloody back and black-eyed gospel preaching in the synagogue proving that Jesus is the Christ. Explaining from the Old Testament that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead for our salvation. Also that Jesus is the Messiah.

Some don’t like the change the gospel brings. Some want to live according to the law and not live in the freedom of the gospel. Some people think that they can earn heaven themselves without Jesus. This

gospel message turns the world of the Old Testament believers upside down. It turns the world – that wants neither the law nor the gospel – upside down too.

Reality check time: Without Christ - the world is going to hell. That staunch, brute reality needs to soak in. That knowledge equips you to be like Paul – to be willing the turn the world upside down because you want to be a tool in the hand of God – to put the message of the gospel into this world that perishes without him. The necessity of Christ for salvation cannot be lost.

Be Paul. Be prepared to speak about Jesus. Paul didn't use his abilities as some hotshot salesman or his personality to win people. He used the truth of gospel and he allowed that truth to stand on its own. The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

You may not have an opportunity to preach Jesus as the Messiah in a synagogue. But the questions people have will come and answers should be sought. The questions may center around the depravity of mankind: when it comes to abortion, the glorification of suicide, civil war in Syria, and ISIS. Questions drive people: what is the purpose of life,

why is there death, why can't I trust anyone, why can't pills fix everything, why does it seem that somethings can't be fixed at all?

People today want to know if they can trust God and his word. Should they trust him even above trusting themselves! Will God betray them like so many others? They want to know about heaven and hell. They want to know what God says about family and life.

You may have strong feelings about these things, but are they nothing more than feelings or are they Biblically backed up beliefs? Be in the Word. Grab your catechism book out of the basement somewhere and go through it. Study the Word. So many people have questions and God has the answers. Learn them from the Word – if they are there. Share them. That isn't just my ministry, that is the ministry of every person in this room.

“I just don't have time!” is unacceptable. You have time for everything else you do! Nothing is more important. If you turned off the tv/internet/whatever and turned to your Bible and became a student of the Word – just wait and see how it speaks to you and the lives of everyone around you. There are 1,440 minutes in a day. Can

you give God 10 minutes? Just .7% of the time God gives you each day to hear what he has to say?

God forgive us for when we have the time for everything else except for you. May the message of salvation – be the priority it needs to be. For the sin of becoming paralyzed by this busy life – forgive us. For the sin of becoming paralyzed by fear – shutting up the gospel to a dying world – shutting up the gospel to our very own hearts – forgive us Lord. For refusing to turn the world upside down – forgive us Lord.

Jesus Christ is the cure for our rebellion. Cherish the gospel forgiveness won for you by Jesus. He won the victory over even the stubbornness of our own hearts. You are forgiven of paralyzation to the gospel. I am forgiven of paralyzation to the gospel.

Now our kids will have questions, our classmates, our relatives, our co-workers, and friends...You have the answers in his book. But it is more than just about answers. It is about salvation.

There are plenty of books out there that will show you a path of improvement in this life. But Jesus didn't suffer and die on a cross so that you know the power of compound interest, the good of exercise, how to win friends and influence people. Jesus

didn't rise from the grave to tell you how to approach each day with the power of positive thinking. He rose from the grave to give you life that is true life. To give you salvation and a relationship with God that you would not have without him. Finally, it is that that turns your world upside down.

Yes, people will be disturbed by the gospel message. Some Christians even get dragged to the courtroom for following their faith like Jason in the text. It is the cost of turning the world upside down. It is the cost of being counter-culture, of being a Christian. But if the world is going to hell in a handbasket – well, I'm okay being counter-culture. I hope you are too.

Next time someone comes to you with “the sky is falling, the sky is falling” news, just look at them. Tell them, “Sounds like it is time to turn your world upside down, then doesn't it?” Share Jesus.

We'll close with some words of Jesus, “For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). You know that narrow road. Believe Him. You know that

narrow road. Share Him. You know that narrow road – walk with Him. Amen.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus.
Amen.