**Unstoppable - wk 29 – A Tale of Two cities**

**Back to Acts – excited!**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**Roughly 20yrs since Jesus. Paul & the A team (Luke, Timothy, Silas) are led to Europe by the HS to preach the gospel.**

**After planting a church in Philippi, they head to the next place. Phi 4 tells us Phil. Church starts supporting Paul’s missions.**

**V16:40 - switches from “us” to “they” suggest Luke stayed back.**

**Thessalonica**

**A 3 day walk from Phillip – an important large port city. Named after Alexander the greats sister – it was the capital of Macedonia.**

**(map) Acts 17:1** **Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, (Jesus said offer to the jew first then gentile) and on three Sabbath days he reasoned (dialoged, answered questions) with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”**

**Notice - They taught about Jesus using the scriptures**

**For 3 wks they gave biblical evidence of Jesus deity, death, resurrection. This Jesus I proclaim - is the promised Messiah!**

**4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.**

**Starts off great – some Jews, Greeks, and influential women believed in the gospel. God was moving – but…**

**5 But the Jews were jealous, (motivated by envy of the attention) and taking some wicked men of the rabble, (the market area) they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, (where they were staying) seeking to bring them out to the crowd.**

**This was a methodical plan (how to riot in 4 easy steps)**

* **Solicit some thugs “Rounded up some bad characters” (NIV)**
* **Organized into a group - form a mob**
* **Unleash a public frenzy - set the city in an uproar**
* **Attack the location - and attacked the house of Jason**

**This took some time – that is some real organized hate.**

**6 And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, (Paul, Silas, & Timothy not there, they attack Jason and others) shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”**

**\*\* We are called to turn the world upside down!**

**Jesus came to turn the world upside down. Our thinking, our actions, our attitudes, our lives – he loves to flip that old house.**

**Just think of everyone who came in contact with Jesus and followed him, their life was never the same.**

**What a reputation “these men who have turned the world upside down!”**

**I pray people say that about me one day. Filled with the HS – turning your families, workplaces, neighborhood, community, school’s upside down - With our love and with the gospel!!**

**BUT keep in mind will not be without opposition. Those who will oppose and try to stop it and stir up people against you.**

**\*\* We are to bow to no one but Christ as supreme authority**

**They didn’t want to be known as the city that opposes Rome**

**A requirement in the Roman empire among religions - bow to Caesar as divine king – A unifying factor of Rome and the reason Christians were despised and considered a cult.**

**Their fears are unfounded. To follow Jesus should make us better citizens not worse. As we seek to pray, encourage, and obey our leaders and help society.**

**Interestingly – those who attacked them knew that Christians taught Jesus is King.**

**Acts 17:8 And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. (A bond - even though they did not start the riot) 10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night…**

**A church was planted in Thessalonica but - almost ambushed by a mob riled up by Jewish leaders - they leave in the dead of night.**

**Not to protect self but not wanting to bring more persecution on Christians there or jeopardize Jason’s security bond**

**Paul later wrote back to Thessalonians twice.**

**1 Thessalonians 2:1 For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.**

**Berea**

**Acts 17:10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica;** **they received the word with all eagerness, (because they…) examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. (Men & women – the gospel is not about male control)**

**The Noble Bereans (noble minded / good character)**

**1. They listened to the word (intently) (more noble)**

**It was not just checking in – but ready to learn and hear. Carefully seeking to understand what was being said.**

**We would do good to do the same – explain.**

**2. They searched the word (daily)**

**The scriptures are not a good book – it is the final authority.**

**They did not accept the words of Paul without first seeing if it aligns with scripture. (Law and prophets)**

**BTW - Paul was not afraid of them searching the scriptures – if they were really seeking God and His word – they would see that it was true.**

**3. They received the word (eagerly)**

**It was not just a good sermon – but ready and whole heartedly**

**The Thessalonians has to be reasoned with for 3 weeks the Noble Bereans listened intently and found thru the scriptures that is was true.**

**V12** **Therefore many of them believed…**

**When reading the bible ask yourself:**

* **How might they have read this? (I must get their perspective first)**
* **What does this mean for me right now?**
* **How am I to respond to this?**
* **What does this cost?**
* **Will I yield to the Spirit?**

**Acts 17:13 But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. (much like Antioch and Iconium hunting them down) 14 Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there.**

**To help establish this new Christian community – reminder of their commitment to church health and discipleship.**

**Two cities – two responses**

* **One drove out the word – the other received the word**

**Offended and raised up a mob and drove out… other eagerly received**

* **One enviously pursued people – the other eagerly pursued Christ**

**They followed and attacked them - the other eagerly searched the Word**

**Which attitude will you take?**

**Will you listen intently, search it daily, receive it eagerly?**

**SO - The cycle of Paul’s mission trip continues: The Gospel is preached. The Church is established. Persecution begins. (REPEAT)**

**Some Walk Aways – from this Tale of Two Cities**

**\*\* Attacks on the truth are often personally motivated.**

**v5,7 But the Jews were jealous (for them it was status, envy, reputation)**

**Most people who reject the word of God are usually motivated by deep resentment, pride, or sin.**

**Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.**

**God has not hidden himself as many would assume.**

**He has clearly made himself know throughout creation and time.**

**A miracle would not change the mind of one who desires to suppress the truth to keep their rule over their own life.**

**\*\* The truth of the scriptures alone transforms a life**

**17:2 - he reasoned with them from the Scriptures – and some believed!**

**17:11 - examining the Scriptures daily - Therefore many of them believed!**

**Not a book, podcast, biography, self help guru, health plan, preacher, pastor, or teacher. They can be great tools to get people thinking or asking questions.**

**But only the bible can transform a life through the HS.**

**Jesus says in John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**

**1 Thes 2:13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.**

**Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, (the spoken Word of truth) because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.**

**Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

**I can stand here and tell you what I think – but my word won’t turn your world upside down – they can’t change your life – transform your soul – set you free. Only the Word of God can do that.**

**So, my goal is to help you hear it, see it, know and understand it – and with the HS it is power!**

**\*\* Be teachable, but no gullible**

**To follow Jesus well, search the Scriptures; check it out yourself!**

**Satan loves to use the Bible, miracles, and morality. We must be op - but not naïve.**

**Proverbs 1:32 For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. / Proverbs 14:15 The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps. / Proverbs 14:18 The naive inherit foolishness, But the sensible are crowned with knowledge.**

**2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.**

**Hebrews 13:9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.**

**Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.**

**1 Thess 5:21 - …but test all things. Hold fast to what is good.**

**1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

**Realize this – not every Christian teacher can be trusted.**

**The Bereans put the words of even Paul to the test of scripture.**

**Don't Believe Everything You Hear - Even in Church!**

**Test it all: books, TV, speakers, me - to the Bible.**

**So here is the challenge today – A tale of Two Cities**

**Which attitude will you take?**

**When it come to the Word of God this year…**

**\*\* Will you listen intently, search it daily, receive it eagerly?**

**\*\* Or will you be led by envy, reputation, or lack of discernment?**

**Prayer – Father, give us by the HS**

**A discipline to the Word of God**

**A commitment to sharing the gospel and caring for our neighbors**

**A teaching and discerning heart and mind**

**God, I want to turn the world upside down!**

**I want your glory to be made know and exalted in my neighborhood and among the nations!**

**God start by turning my life upside down…**

**Next wk – one of my favorite stops for Paul and the A-Team – Athens.**