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"THREE STOPS ON THE SECOND JOURNEY"

Acts 17

INTRODUCTION:

Paul traveled around on his missionary journey and I am quite sure that he did not select all the places to go ahead of time. We discover that some of the selections were made by the Holy Spirit. He tells us that the Holy Spirit forbid him to preach in certain places in Asia. And then in the last chapter we talked about the second missionary journey getting under way. And a man from Macedonia calling him in a vision. To come over and help. And there at Philippi Paul ministered. As he landed - and he planted the church. There was Lydia, the woman who was converted. In that city. There was the conversion of a girl possessed of an evil spirit. And then there was the conversion of the jailer and his family that were saved. The very beginning of a church at Philippi.

We noticed also that Paul did not tell the jailer that he had to do this, or that, or the other. But simply told him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. This was something of the first victory of this second missionary tour.

Tonight, we continue the missionary tour. By observing three stops that he made on the way. Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens.

I. The missionary spent some time up in Philippi - but following the prison experience, they were released and they went on their way.

Romans 1 - Thessalonica 7 - V. 1-9.

V. 1-2. Paul tells us how they traveled. They traveled through Apolonia and they came down to Thessalonica. Where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

They stayed here about 3 weeks.

V. 3- The Scripture opens here - it says here opening and alleging means to explain and unfold. The matter of alleging means the laying down of the proposition.

Set out in order - and display. Paul took up the Scripture, opened them, and explained them. And did so by a sequence of arrangements. Laying out before them the relationship of this part to that, and to the other. For example, Paul could have said now this is the law of the prophets. This is what the prophets say, and this is what the Psalms tell us. Paul was a grand authority on the Scriptures. This is what he used.

He reasoned of the Scriptures.

Another thing, he preached and declared from the Scriptures the Messiah. That he must first suffer and die, and then rise again. This was the first burden of his teaching. Then other Scriptures were taught about their own Messiah. Now this is what the Jew failed entirely to grasp. So, the first Messiah must suffer, he must rise again.

Then he declared, that the one who fulfilled that teaching was Jesus, himself. So he presented Jesus Christ to them. The Jews believed a Messiah was coming but they saw him only as an earthly king. Paul was convinced according to the Scriptures that he must suffer and die.

And that there would be a resurrection. Now it was not easy for him to go into the Jewish synagogue and preach like that. I imagine that as a preacher, and as he preached - he quoted a great deal of the Scriptures and many of the Jews accepted his sermons as the truth of God.

For three weeks he met with them and a great number was saved among them. Some were very prominent women, that were converted.

V. 4 - The results - some believed. The Gospel either melts the heart or hardens it.

V. 5 - Some were moved to opposition. And they hired certain lewd fellows. Some who would be ready instruments in the hands of evil. Soon a mob against the preachers.

V. 6 - Jason, a good Christian man was seized. The charge - they are contrary to Caesar. High treason against Caesar. Preaching there is another king, one Jesus.

Now Paul had emphasized practical Christianity. That Christians must live holy, godly lives. They must not steal, lie, or do wrong to their neighbor.

Second, he had emphasized the second coming of Jesus. They had lost their loved ones. And the Lord told them that he was going to return. And people were in sorrow - but they had no hope.

Now these experiences are given over in I Thess. Ask Paul to write back to this church later on. This was a great revival and a fine time. Many people were saved and things were going well.

But then some of these people turned against some of these preachers and they became stumbling blocks. And they looked upon them as enemies. They went into Jason's house and got this good man. Being a host, and keeping these preachers - they seized him and they had a charge and the expression was made.

"They have turned the world upside-down." In a certain sense, the charge was true. Christianity is a revolution. The world today needs turning upside-down. Or rather if we'd do that, it will be turning it right side up. This revolution must take place in the hearts of the individuals. The way to change the world is to change individuals.

"Really, what they were saying about them in V. 6 - they were trouble-makers in the world. Their impact upon the world was really considered an exaggerated complaint. They kept the pressure on the world as they went from house to house in every city. We are pretty tame by comparison to be sure. We don't put very much pressure on the world. But I wonder if what we are going to see today in this description, what is found in this text, the church and these preachers of the Lord were labeled as trouble-makers. They put pressure on the world. And the Gospel today, if we'd turn around some of our traditions and politics, and social life - and it would have a little bit of effect on our religious life as well. When we think of the cocktail lounges in Washington, and the top brass today - they can out do Belshazzar's feast. We better look for the handwriting on the wall of these troubled times. We need to look at this generation through some pure eyes.

Did you know most Christians come and go and they do not disturb anything at all. In fact, they have a no disturb sign hanging over their door. Do not wake up, or get up. But the disciples of Jesus need not to be sleeping - as Jesus said, let us rise and be going. I don't think really, I will leave you comfortable.

He said I wouldn't leave you comfortless - but we need some personal convictions like Paul had. And he preached these convictions. And then a pattern of work, and their sense of mission was tremendous as it made an impact upon that part of the world.

I think of Sir William Cranfell, who went out when he left medical school and his medical practice. And he went to the barren coast of Labrador and he said simply, I am in Labrador working because God cannot redeem the world without me. We need to be upset like that. But we can sleep through everything today. We can hear the good news of the Gospel and go to sleep. No wonder the sinac wrote - the clock struck 12 on a Sunday, and the church gave up her dead.

There are too many of us that are balcony type Christians. We are on-lookers. Peter Marshall said we need to equip ourselves for deep sea diving. But most of us fool around pulling plugs out of bathtubs.

How many of us today cause anybody to sit up and take notice because of our Godliness. No, we make room for all shades of evil in our lives. We promote the world. Even sometimes in the church. Rather than promote the church out in the world. Thus, we do not trouble anybody.

The greatest need tonight is for some of the Christian people to get involved in the kingdom of God. If we were moved like Paul and Silas, we would cause Hell's foundations to quiver.

V. 9
After this charge of Jason in V. 9 - they had taken security of him. They let the others go and they moved on to the next stop. Stop number 1. They turned the (world upside down).

II. BEREIA - V. 10- *Stage II*

U-10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night. Unto Berea, and coming thither they went to the synagogue of the Jews. And they preached the same message.

V. 11- They were more noble and we see what happens when people study the Bible. They receive the word with all readiness of mind and search the Scriptures daily - whether those things were so.

So to avoid further trouble for the brethren, Paul and Silas left at night and they arrived here. This is a real contrast here - these people were more noble. It would be a wonderful thing to have people go home from church, get out their Bibles and verify the truth of the preacher's sermon. To get down the chapter and study it. If lost men would listen to the Gospel and open their Bibles, and check up on the preacher's sermon. Here at Berea, these people listened. And we discover that they were ready to receive. It was not quick belief, but they appealed to the Scriptures to find out if these things were true.

Here is a side note - these people did not live on the highway. They lived on the *Plain, Ga.* byway. And they were willing to stay. Sometimes we think we are more intelligent when we live in a certain place. Some people have an idea to preach in the city - is different or a difficult thing. By no means, the people in the country will get their Bibles out and they will study. These Bereans were noble and they were determined to find out the interpretation of the Scriptures.

I remember hearing a story about a young city preacher. Who went one time before a country church to preach. He had worked on a scholarly sermon. He had a lot of big words that he was going to get off that day. And when he had finished - one old woman in the congregation said - I knew he has his wick turned

too high when I seed him coming.

Now those who were born in the country, know what that means.

Now these people daily studied the Gospel. And what it had to say to them.

V. 12 - Tells us that many of the honorable women believed and the men, not a few. That little statement there tells us something.

V. 13 - He tells us that the Jews back in Thessalonica heard about this meeting, what was going on this village and quiet country town of Berea. So they came down to stir up strife. This was a mean trick. But their tribe is not dead yet.

You get something going pretty good - and you see, the Devil still uses people to hinder the work of the kingdom. And it is a shame in the world how the Devil can do this. You know Christ is wonderful, his love is great, and Christian living is marvelous.

Sometime ago, I heard of a man who said - I am the chief critic in my church. Personally, I don't want that man in my church. And I wouldn't like to be in that man's shoes.

Someone has said, it is a good thing to have a little opposition. "Well, we expect opposition from the outside. But we do not need opposition within the church or within the ranks of the church. If our churches were 100% on God's side, we too could turn the world upside-down. If we lived like Christ with patience, cleanness, kindness, etc.

It is a shame to our own record. Gandhi said I think I would have become a Christian if it would not have been for Christians.

So the first stop, we see they were charged with turning the world upside-down. And now the second stop, they find the happy wonderful experience of people who study the Bible. The Bible is not an old antique. And so many people doubt the Bible. I read about an old preacher who never doubted God's Word for truth and authority. He believed it. He read from the large pulpit Bible. On one occasion he was not aware that some of the pages were stuck together. He began to read and Noah took unto himself a wife. Which was, he turned the page. And read on. 120 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, made of gopher wood. And covered with pitch inside and out.

Brothers and sisters, that sounds mighty strange doesn't it. Let me read it again for emphasis. And he read it again. The preacher believed this was the word of God. AND if God said it, it must be so. And he said, that goes to illustrate another verse. That says, "man is fearfully and wonderfully made." Now this old preacher believed the word of God. And our church needs Bible Study and our people today need to get into the Word. And to examine the Word. The Word is food - from it we get strength for daily living. The Word is power. And the word reveals Jesus Christ. The Word brings victory to us. Over our sins.

V. 14 - immediately we discover that after people had been stirred up, Paul left to move on to the next stop.

III. ATHENS 87-90 III

116 We begin with V. 16 - we are impressed. While Paul waited for them at Athens his spirit was stirred in him and he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. What he saw, wonderful buildings - idolatry. Gods on every hill top and in every

street and in every home.

Paul was not impressed by the things that would impress other men. All the splendor and the history of their schools. He admired the skill that chisled out the marble. But he felt that all of this was preverted power. Since it was all on the side of idolatry. That they had wasted their genius and their intellect. And that this had not brought a moral purpose for life. And they had spent a life-time. As he walked along every street - there were more than 30,000 altars, statues, and gods. As one historian wrote - it was easier to find a god than to find a man in Athens. These were man-made deities that were lined up.

V. 17 - The synagogue. He went there to the Jews, to the devout persons and preached. Reasoned with the Jews.

The marketplace. Here he reasoned with the philosophers daily.

V. 18 - Certain philosophers, Epicureans - *Made a Rel. out of Pleasure,* the highest good in pleasure. They ascribed the creation of the world to chance. So eat, drink, and be merry

- tomorrow you die. They thought only of the pleasures of the flesh. The lust of all forms. *Man said as he see that horse, people live there not married and the*

not - those two never married - one night horse black the man runs around on wife -

Stoics - *God is in Everything - No Difference Between God + Man -* the highest good is virtue. The world is ruled by fate. There was no use to weep over anything. Whatever will be will be - so we will just harden our hearts against everything. *Question is - where is the Action This Week End? Engatim's Life -*

How they reacted. What would this babbler say? In other words, he is just a seed picked. He picks up something here and there and he goes around reciting it. Some people today see no sense in preaching the Gospel. They say it is foolishness. And yet God's plan calls for preaching. Gospel is the power of

God and salvation. But it seems to set forth a strange god.

V. 19 - 22 -

Mars Hill - They told him about this gathering place where they listened everyday to the latest gossip or slander. And we read that they spent their time in nothing else. But to tell or to hear something new.

Now this is something like the Supreme Court getting together, and say we are going to put Paul on trial. And he stood there in that position.

V. 22 - Paul stood in the midst, of Mars Hill.

I have stood there on Mars Hill. I have a picture standing on top. Looking out toward the Acropolis. And the hill that is covered with gods. And it is from this position that Paul spoke. Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

Paul started off and said, you are religious. Now these people had more religion than they knew what to do with.

V. 23 - Paul talks to them - and he said I have found an altar here to the unknown god, whom therefore ye ignorantly worship.

Now this was quite a sermon and quite a message for Paul to capitalize in the famous city of Athens and to give his observations here on Mars Hill. He was speaking to a learned audience. Most of the people who heard Paul speak there at Athens were indifferent people. The Scriptures say, a few of them believed.

V. 24 - This God that I want to talk to you about is the Creator. The Lord

of Heaven and earth.

V. 25 - He is independent. This God is self-sufficient. Paul said, and you people have missed it. He is the supreme personal God and furthermore is the source of life. Breathing and everything. Paul says, rises from him and makes him above the philosophers and your gods.

V. 26 - Paul says, he set the nations in their bounds. This view runs counter to the Greeks. And he claims here that one God, the creator of one race.

V. 27 - That they should seek God. One thing about him is - he is near to all. He can be found.

V. 28 - He gives life. For in him - here is proof of God's nearness. Right here. That we can be made sons of God.

V. 29 - He is not an idol of stone. We ought not to think of him in this way.

V. 30 - Paul says I am extending a call to repentance. Since of call of Adam - where art thou. God calls today for repentance. God says that I want you, and you, and you! In the face of the proud temples, God says repent. In the face of this unknown God and these other gods, here is a chance to change your soul. God is not far off. And he is ready to receive you. This was a radical message for these people. That God is everywhere. And they have Gods all around. But now here is a God that can come in and change the situation of life.

John Wayne - Cancer - Big Tough Man - about 2 yrs before died -
Heard first Shuler "some one may have Problem ⁻¹²⁻ - to Big for you & you have never taken
Christ into your life & turned everything over to him - may need get on knees & pray now - "said
from a
give my
whole life
to you Jesus

V. 31 - The judgement day. Because he hath appointed a day in which he will
judge the world of righteousness. By the man who he has ordained. Whereof he
has given assurance unto all men. In that he hath raised him from the dead.

Wayne, Big frame, on knee bed - Hard to hold - said I need to do that now -
Tough Man, going was tough, turned his Problem over to Jesus !!

There has been a day, we know not the day nor the hour. When the son of man
will come in his glory.

The judge has appointed the day. The son of man will sit on the right hand
of power.

Now you tonight can laugh away the idea of judgement. In Noah's day, people
all laughed. What happened. The flood came. In Lot's day, people laughed.
The fire and brimstone fell. In Jesus' day he predicted the fall of Jerusalem.
People pushed it aside. They were carried away in the captivity.

Paul said, you laugh. God hath appointed the church - he died and he arose
again. And you can go on rejecting him. And live without him. But he says, you
are going to have to face this judgement.

A small boy in Sunday School once was heard to pray - oh God, why don't you
hurry up and kill the Devil. Now, God has appointed the day when he is going
to judge this old world in righteousness, and it is an absolute certainty. And
I guarantee the judgement day is going to come. Men often escape in human
courts. But when God sends forth his officers to gather the people together
on judgement day, they will have to come. And they will have to be there until
the case is settled. Men may often escape even preaching today, they might go
and get out from under it, but they can't escape God.

He is going to judge the world in righteousness. How you would rejoice if every believer believed this. And how we would rejoice if every unbeliever and every infidel would believe this. But there will be a meeting in which every infidel and every hypocrite, and every unrepentent member and person will come. That is a meaningful matter.

1 Fix in your mind, the day is fixed. It is appointed. I'll tell you tonight - the judgement day has already been set.

2 The second thing I'll tell you - there is going to be a crowd there. At that judgement bar. The graves are going to be opened up. The sea will give up its dead. The infants, and the oldest man in history. Kings, emperors, generals, and the Scripture talks about a great day. Rev. 6.

The judge has already been appointed - Jesus Christ. The lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

3 Another thing, the standard of judgement has been set. The judge who is younger than the courthouse - already has his standard set. And it is going to be righteousness - Christlikeness. That is it!

Young Man - Huston - Disillusioned - Followed the "swinging crowd" - brown girls - parties - Plastic People, Plastic Parties - One A.M. looked mirror, "Oh Plastic Me" - I knew what to Fall The Real Answer!

You no doubt have heard people say - Lord, just give me justice. Spurgeon used to say, everything above Hell is mercy. And yonder at the judgement, our lives are going to be measured by the life of Jesus Christ. If we should be called tonight to stand before him - what would we say about the sins, the thoughts we've had, the doctrines we have believed in. The account of your life. The deeds done in the body. They will come up. The things that you have forgotten. The base deeds. This whole world will be judged. The secret things will be judged. And will be brought up.

Sad fact behind the labels of Rep. People need to know what's real!

And you will be judged according to your words. And I say unto you that every idol word that man shall speak, they shall give an account therefore in the day of judgement. The words of your heart, the words of your mind, the impure words, the unkind words. The gossiping words, the slandering words. All of these will come up in the day of judgement.

Inspite of the love of God, inspite of the blood of Christ, inspite of the call of the Gospel - conviction of the spirit. This tells us that there is going to be a judgement.

*College Student - Dr. Ki Chaffin, busy, asked if Paul could help him come to conclusions about God & God's will. P.M.C. asked, "if he was prepared to see God's will once he discovered it?"
OK - no - he was just interested in discussing it. He would make a good attention -*

V. 32 - Results. Some mocked. Paul called for repentance. And they thought life was fate. Some postponed - humanity does the same thing this hour.

Some believed. John Wesley was holding a meeting, in a barn. Some of the people were going to break up the meeting. They concealed a man in the sack he was going to unlock the door and open the door, and break up the meeting. They sang a hymn and listened to a prayer, and then a sermon was preached. The man in the sack was so moved and convicted - that he cried out for mercy. The people were astonished to find a sinner in a sack. Seeking the Saviour. The door was never opened and the man was gloriously saved.

Now tonight, God can bless you and save you from your sins.