



1. **Opening Prayer & Icebreaker:** *Icebreaker:* What was a highlight of your summer? What made that moment a highlight for you?
2. **Additional Icebreaker as we kick off our Fall Term:** What are some reasons you're in a Community Group, and what are you looking forward to in group this term?

Read and Reflect on Acts 17:1-15

When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. ⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. ⁵ But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." ⁸ When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. ⁹ Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go. ¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹² As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. ¹³ But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. ¹⁴ The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. ¹⁵ Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion:

1. **The Authority of Scripture. Read Acts 17:2-3, 11.** Paul reasoned with them from the scriptures, explained and proved that Messiah suffered and rose from the dead; he then points to Jesus. The Bereans examined the Scriptures daily to test Paul's teaching.
 - What practices can help us approach the Bible with the same eagerness and discernment?
 - How do you personally wrestle with making Scripture your true authority when culture, emotions, or preferences push otherwise?
 - Pastor Philip shared the story when he was on Interstate 20 from Dallas to Marshall, TX on April 2, 1992, when he said, "I am such a sinner." While weeping, he asked Jesus for forgiveness. Share a time when you were convicted of sin. How did you respond?
2. **The Inclusivity of the Gospel. Read Galatians 3:28.** Paul emphasized that the Gospel breaks down dividing walls.
 - Where do you see divisions (cultural, racial, gender, class) still present in today's church or community?
 - How might we, as a group, model the radical inclusivity of Christ in practical ways?



- Have you embraced the inclusiveness of the Gospel, allowing God to transform the way you see and relate to others? Give an example.

3. The Exclusivity of Jesus. Read Acts 4:12. Salvation is found in no one else but Jesus.

- Why is it hard in our culture to accept that Jesus is the only way?
- How do you balance honoring this truth with showing humility and grace in conversations with people who believe differently?

4. Turning the World Upside Down. Read Acts 17:6. Paul and Silas were accused of turning the world upside down with the Gospel. If God could turn Thessalonica, Berea, a village in China, and a city in Wales upside down – why not here, why not now, why not through you? And us?

- What would it look like if the Gospel “turned upside down” a part of your life — in your work, relationships, or priorities?
- Where might God be inviting you to live more boldly for Christ in a way that disrupts the status quo?

5. The Necessity of Discipleship. Read Acts 17:14. Paul leaves Silas and Timothy behind to disciple the new believers.

- Who has discipled you in your walk with Jesus, and how has that shaped your faith?
- In what ways might God be calling you now to step into either being discipled more intentionally, or discipling someone else?
- How does Jesus’ last command in Matthew 28:18-20 to His disciples show that discipleship is a command and not a suggestion in our Christian walk?

6. Living for His Name. Read Philippians 2:9–11. Jesus’ name is exalted above every name.

- Pastor Philip said, “the hardest things for many of us isn’t believing in Jesus’ name – it’s letting go of our own.” In what ways do you find yourself tempted to “make a name” for yourself rather than living for Christ’s name?
- What would change practically if you fully committed to living for His name above all?

Closing Prayer: We are reminded in this passage that we carry with us the power to turn the world upside-down. Use me, Lord God, to live out the Gospel and turn the world upside down – religiously, spiritually, socially and relationally.

Faith in Action:

- Fall Ministry Kickoff. www.coswayne.org/fall-ministry-kickoff
- September 16, 6:30 PM, Alpha Launch Party & Alpha Marriage, Welcome Center
- September 21, 9:00 AM, Reimagining Family Life with Disability, B217
- September 28, 6:00 PM, Loving the Poor Prayer Meeting, Conference Room
- October 19, 11:45 AM, Concerts of Prayer for New Partnership in India, F101