

Keep Your Mind Open - Acts 17:1-17

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[0 : 00] Lord, we just thank you for your word again. Thank you that it's alive. Thank you that it speaks to us. And if we would just take the time, Lord, to read it and to dig into it, to understand it, Lord, to pursue you through your word.

It's so rich and it returns such a harvest, Lord, of life unto us. We pray that you would give us understanding as we look at these pages and see this mighty man of faith, Paul, that we'd see behind that, Lord, a heart that just beats in love with his Savior.

In Jesus' name, amen. All right, so Paul's second missionary journey, if you remember, he left Antioch. He's gone through the region of Galatia to Troas is where he met.

Luke to Philippi is where we're coming from. He's left Philippi after kind of, in a sense, taking a stand on his Roman citizenship for the sake of the fledgling church in Philippi, which was made up of Lydia, the girl who had been demon-possessed, and a bunch of ex-convicts, and then the Philippian jailer.

And we're going to see that his time there was not unfruitful. That will return a great bounty in Paul's life.

[1 : 25] So my title, I guess, for this section of Scripture is Keep Your Mind Open. And we'll see what that means a little more as we go along. Keep your mind open. So in verse 1, it says, Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica.

So this is 51 AD. Paul's second missionary journey was started about 49 AD. And we're moving pretty quickly through these regions.

He's not staying very long. It's not like he's going to be there years. When we get to Corinth, which will be over in chapter 18, he's going to stay there for like some 18 months or whatever.

He stays for a while, six months, in verse 11 of chapter 18. And then we know another time he stays longer. So he'll start to kind of like extend his stay in these areas.

Right now, he's kind of moving into a region, going into the synagogue after his manor is. We'll see that in verse 2 here. He preaches. There's a response.

[2 : 28] And then he's kind of out of there. The Lord moves him on to the next place. There are movements today within the church that are church planting movements. I don't know if we need church planting movements.

I think God moves people to plant churches when he's ready to. And Paul was a man that he moved a lot. He moved him around a lot. I don't think this is necessarily Paul's idea to be chased out of every city he goes in.

We're going to see Paul's going to travel to Thessalonica. He's going to travel from there to Berea. And then he's going to end up in Athens, where we'll look at briefly. So as we zoom in on that missionary journey, we see from Philippi to Thessalonica will be 100 miles.

Now, it says he stops at Amphipolis and Apollonia. We don't know what he does there. But those are about a day's journey between each one. You're looking at 20 to 30 miles average a day if you're walking.

That's about three miles an hour walking pace. So you can kind of gauge that. So between Philippi and Thessalonica is perhaps three days, and he stayed overnight. This is still pretty quick pace in which he's going until he comes to Thessalonica.

[3 : 36] Thessalonica was one of the main capitals, but there's multiple regions or cities that were in Macedonia that were known for their prominence.

And Thessalonica was one of them. So the name Thessalonica, it means victory of falsity. Victory of falsity.

What a name. What a place to live. Where do you live? Victory of falsity. And this is where Paul's coming to this place. He will then, and we'll see those distances from there to travel to Berea. That's 50 miles. So you're looking at a couple days journey. And then from there to Athens. And it tells us, as we just read, that they went to put him by sea to go to Athens. So that's a 300-mile journey.

But by sea, the distance will be eaten up a little quicker. But you're still looking at possibly one, two-week journey at that point.

[4 : 37] But anyway, in verse 1, we just read that he's come now to Thessalonica, this victory of falsity. And he's just left Philippi, right? He left behind him this fledgling church.

Well, he will eventually write to the Philippians when he is in Rome. He writes to Philippi. And he says this to them in chapter 4. He says, Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only.

For even in Thessalonica, you sent once and again unto my necessity. So Paul's hightailed it quickly out of Philippi. And already, you know, you just see the heart of the Holy Spirit within these people just desiring to give, desiring to be of a service and desiring to minister to Paul, this church of the most ragtag of people.

And so Paul, in verse 2, So Paul's custom was to find a place to do what?

To present the scripture. He went into the synagogue and he didn't make a fellowship meal. He didn't tell stories. He didn't, you know, have a lot of merchandise to sell.

[6 : 00] He went in for one purpose, which was to preach and present the scripture. And he went in unto them and reasoned with them out of the scripture.

We will look at that word at a later time. But Paul's custom was to present the scripture. He was reasoning out of the scripture. He wasn't using something else to bring in and interpret the scripture.

He was taking the scripture and letting the scripture speak for itself and reasoning out of the scripture. He didn't reason with the scripture. He didn't, you know, reason by the scripture.

It was out of the scripture. And then what did he do? Opening and alleging. Opening means by dividing. It's like to cut, like almost like to divide the pages of a book.

To open the book. It also means to open the womb. And alleging. That means to set beside, to compare one thing to another. And that's what we do when we come to the word. We open it.

[6 : 58] We read it. And then we want to say, well, what does this mean? As I open up this text, what is it? What's really happening here? How does this apply to our lives? What is the Holy Spirit trying to get across? And then we do that by setting one thing alongside another.

Now, not another person's opinion, right? I don't have 15 commentaries. And they, well, this guy says this, this, this. We take the average and we go with that. No. We say, well, what does the Bible say? What is the scripture?

How does it interpret itself? And scripture is the best interpretator of itself. And actually tonight, I have a bunch of different scriptures that kind of tell us what's happening in the text.

And so Paul did this. This was his method. This was his usual manner to go in and to open the scripture, to show the scripture, and that Christ must needs have suffered.

And so Paul did three things here when he presented the gospel. He discussed the scripture, right? In presenting this gospel, Paul was discussing the scripture.

[7 : 59] Again, he wasn't telling stories. He wasn't talking about politics. He wasn't talking about the latest thing in the news. He wasn't worried about whatever pop star just did what, I don't know.

I almost said what J-Lo's doing. But wow, that dates me, doesn't it? I don't know anybody. He discussed the scripture. He explained the scripture, right?

He said, this is what it means, expository preaching and teaching. That's what we're all about. And he proved the scripture. He proved that Christ must needs, opening, alleging that Christ must needs.

He proved that there was a need and a reason for this. This wasn't just an idea, but this had to happen. And he proved that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Christ, this is what he came with. You know, we know later Paul's going to write and say, I didn't come to you in man's wisdom, in wisdom of words. I came to you in weakness.

[9 : 07] I came to you with the gospel. But there's three essential parts here to the gospel, aren't there? He says that first, Christ must needs have suffered. The first essential part is the suffering Messiah.

Messiah would suffer. He must suffer. So we couldn't have a risen Messiah and Jesus as the risen Messiah if he didn't first suffer and die, could we?

The second is a risen Messiah. We have to have a risen Messiah. Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead. You couldn't have a suffering Messiah and a dead Messiah, and you could believe it's Jesus.

But if he didn't rise again, well, then we are among most men. We are among all men to be pitied, as Paul would say. And lastly, and this is the thing that kind of hung up the Jews, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Jesus is the Messiah. Those three essential parts. The suffering Messiah, the risen Messiah. And then that Jesus is that. So Paul took the scriptures. He didn't have the New Testament.

[10 : 12] He took the Old Testament, and he said, I'm going to show you that Jesus is the Messiah. That he suffered for our sins, and that he rose again, and that he met all of the requirements as Messiah.

Some of these people really like that. In verse 4, and some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women, not a few. You've got to love the old English, the King James. How many came? Not a few. I like a lot. And some of them believed and consorted. The word consorted means just to join or to throw in with. You know, like, hey, let's throw in together in this. And they recognized what Paul was saying was worth joining with, and so they did. And who was it? It was the devout Greeks and the chief women. So you have the devout Greeks would be Jewish proselytes, right? Well, the Greeks who were seeking to follow Yahweh through the Jewish system, and then the women.

[11 : 15] But, verse 5, the Jews, which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company.

And so you have the Gentiles believing. You have the women believing, but not the Jews. Paul will eventually explain this to us, what this phenomenon is that continues to happen over and over. See the same thing when he goes to Berea? And he explains it in Romans, chapter 11. He says, And boy, is the church today full of those that are wise in their own conceit, thinking that we've replaced Israel.

That Israel is under a curse from God. They are. The curses from Deuteronomy still apply to them, but not a curse where God has rejected them.

And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written. There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. All of Israel, in other words, nationally, shall be saved.

[12 : 31] So Paul is experiencing this now, this blindness to the Jews. It just, it seems so obvious. He presents the gospel. And come on, if Paul's presenting the gospel, you're not going to be left with a lot of questions.

He's going to do a good job. And the women believe, and the Greeks believe, but the Jews. And look what hangs them up. Move with envy. Move with envy.

They are desiring what Paul has. And what does Paul have? Paul has something real. Paul has something that when he gives it to someone, they don't just say, well, that was really interesting. Good job. And Pat, Rabbi, so-and-so on the back. But it changes their life. And they respond in a way that these Jews have desired to see, that God had put in their hearts to want to see.

But they rejected the Messiah. He primed and prepared the Jewish nation for the Messiah. But they rejected him. And they were moved with envy. But they didn't believe, right?

[13 : 32] They believed not. Unbelief opens the door to all kinds of ills, right? Unbelief will open the door to a whole heap of a mess. And it attracts interesting people.

They were moved with envy. They went out and took unto them lewd fellows of the baser sort. It just means like the lowest of society. Those with no character.

And gathered a company and set all the city on an uproar and assaulted the house of Jason and sought to bring them out to the people. That sounds like something you'd read today, right? Well, in such and such a city, they assaulted the house of so-and-so and brought them out to the people, beat them up.

And, you know, the police and the news media stood around and took pictures. This is today. It's so bizarre. It's reading through Acts and seeing how in every city he goes in, people are stirred up into a mob and then just kind of act in frenzy against them.

It's like, well, that would never happen here. And now we're living it. It's crazy. But what does unbelief do? Well, unbelief opens the door to all types of ills. Of course, as we just saw.

[14 : 44] It attracts the lowest of associates. As soon as we reject and we move into unbelief, these are just the natural progression of rejecting the gospel.

It prevents peaceful living, doesn't it? He gathered a company and said, all the city in an uproar. The whole city now is in an uproar. Unbelief reacts in violence to the truth.

They went in and they gathered, grabbed this guy, Jason. They assaulted his house. Come on. Just because you don't agree with him? And unbelief justifies its actions by numbers.

They gathered a large company and sought to bring them out to the people. And it's the same today. It's exactly what we're watching happen around us. It's because of unbelief.

Because they've rejected God. They've rejected the gospel. And then they reject God's people. And they reject God's order. And it just spirals down into unbelief.

[15 : 44] And so they go and they grab Jason. Well, who's Jason? The house of Jason. Oh, he's just some dude here. They couldn't get Paul and they couldn't get Silas. Well, sin is not very particular in his target, is it?

Sin will grab anyone and anything. And sin incited must also be appeased, right? They were all stirred up.

Man, they were going to get it. They were ready to kill. They were going to have blood. Somebody was going to get it. And so they grabbed this guy, Jason, instead of Paul and Silas.

And certain brethren, so some of the others who believed, and they dragged them unto the rulers of the city, crying, these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.

And so sin, once incited, it must be appeased. And this mess all stemmed from what? Unbelief. The whole city. We've just moved in like three verses from Paul preaching at a conference in a church, essentially, for three Sabbaths, right?

[16 : 48] Three weeks in a row. He's held over week after week. I think like when Billy Graham first came to, I think it was L.A. And he had the tent out there, the big tent. And there's a big sign, held over, held over, held over.

And he just, people kept responding. And then we go from that to all of a sudden, the whole city is like a mob and is in an uproar.

All because of unbelief. And I think, what does unbelief do in my heart? What do I, what happens when I don't believe God will do what he says he'll do? Think of the, how unsettled I become, the lack of peace in my life.

And then I'll have to find somebody else, you know, come justify my viewpoint. It doesn't quite line up with the Lord. But do you agree with me? You do.

Good. Let me find someone else. James tells us that every man, when he's tempted, is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. That when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin.

[17 : 51] And sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. And he tells us, do not err, my beloved brethren. But don't think we can escape that cycle. That unbelief leads to sin.

Remember, scripture says, whatever's not of faith is sin. So, if we are in unbelief, then we enter into sin. And sin must be appeased. And once sin is conceived, it's just this progression.

This mess of unbelief. And they say this interesting phrase here. As they drag Jason and certain of the brethren onto the rulers of the city. Crying, these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.

And you think if you're one of the rulers of the city, you're like, isn't that that guy Jason? He lives in this city. You know? And who are these guys? I don't know who these people are. What are you talking about?

But then they say the magic words, don't they? Whom Jason has received. And these also do contrary to the decrees of Caesar. Saying there's another king, one Jesus.

[18 : 52] Uh-oh. Okay, you know what? I can tolerate Jesus. I can tolerate the church. But he better not mess with my politics. Yikes. In that case, we need to compromise. In that case, we need to do something so that we don't have Rome coming down on us.

For the sake of Jesus. We can't do that. The word there where it says upside down. It means unsettled.

It's very poetic in the English that's turned the world upside down. But it's unsettled. And you get the idea. Right? If you take someone and you turn them upside down and hold them by their ankles. Henry, come here. Then you shake him. Right? He's going to be unsettled. Everything he has on him is coming out of his pockets. And his whole world is now unsettled.

Right? That's what's happening here. It's something that was once in a place of normalcy is now moved from there.

[19 : 50] And there's no going back. Galatians uses the same word, Paul will again, in Galatians 5.12. He talks about those that are troubling the Galatians.

Those that are bringing in false doctrine. And that word there, I would, they were even cut off, which trouble, which unsettle you, which turn you upside down. Why are you turned upside down by these people?

Jesus has put you right side up. The whole world is actually upside down. Right? The world is unsettled. Are the brethren unsettled? Have they unsettled the world?

No, this is going wonderful. If they've unsettled those that are in unbelief. In Daniel chapter 2, Daniel, he answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are his.

And he unsettles. He changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom unto the wise and knowledge to them that know understanding.

[20 : 50] So yes, God unsettles things. He does. He's the one who does that. He says, see that you refuse not him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven.

If we turn away in unbelief. Whose voice then shook the earth. But now he's promised saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word yet once more signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace. Whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.

It's God's nature to do things that would to us look unsettling. Right? Because we are not in a settled place. It is only when our God, who comes in and seemingly shakes us, and we see the thing that we thought was so permanent, is kind of cast to the wayside.

When God is the consuming fire, burns away the wood, hay, and the stubble, that what's left is very settling. It's like, oh, that wasn't shaken. My faith in God.

[22 : 06] God wasn't shaken in my life. Because we are not by nature in a place that is settled. We are in a place where we're kind of walking around, you know, upside down, as if someone's got us by the feet.

And the Lord's like, I want to turn things around for you. And so the gospel, what does it do? The gospel reveals the true nature of the heart, doesn't it? They were envying them.

They were troubled by them. They've turned us upside down. They've unsettled our lives. Well, the gospel is going to reveal the true nature of the heart. Why? Because there's only one response to the gospel.

And we've said that before. The only response to the gospel is belief. There is nothing else. You either believe it or there's nothingness. That's called hell. That's called death.

That's called outer darkness. There is only truth. There is only the gospel. And then there's nothing. There's nothing else to choose. Say, well, there's unbelief. Unbelief is just nothingness.

[23 : 04] I choose to believe whatever you want to believe. But what you've done is you've just chose nothingness. So the gospel will reveal the true nature of the heart. It will reveal whether the heart says yes.

Yes to life. Or whether it will say no. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 18. He says, The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.

But unto us which are saved is the power of God. To one it looks like you are turned upside down on your head. You believe what? That's silly. And sometimes it does seem that way. I am waiting for a man who rose again and was ascended to heaven, who happens to also be God, to come and beam me up from the earth.

And I can't wait for him to do it. That is a little silly, okay? By what this world considers silly. But according to God, that is the power of God.

Paul writes again in 2 Corinthians 2. He says, talking about those and their response to the gospel. He says, For we are unto God, a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish.

[24 : 14] To the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life. All we're doing by shining our light, by proclaiming the gospel, is just allowing people to determine which camp they're going to be in.

They're either one or the other. And I'm not saying predestination. I'm not like, oh, well, you're predestined to hell. Not at all. But it reveals where their heart is and what they decide to choose. And so these have turned the world upside down, and they've come here to Thessalonica. Can you believe they've come to the city of the victory of falsity? How dare they?

And Paul is shaking it up by bringing the victory of the truth. And then they say that, well, he's speaking against Caesar.

He's calling another king, this King Jesus. Well, the enemy tries to distract from the real issue by focusing on the non-issue. This is a total non-issue. Nobody's trying to, like, take over the government.

[25 : 18] The enemy is just trying to distract from the real issue, which is you are a sinner and you need to be saved. Listen to Paul. Yes, he'll shake up your life, but so you can then be settled in something that's permanent.

But this is just the enemy's ploy to turn their attention to a non-issue. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.

The ultimate end of unbelief is trouble. This just all started with these men who wouldn't believe.

The whole entire city is turned up. You got the rulers and politics involved.

This is a mess. If you tried to sort this out yourself, if you just entered into this, you wouldn't be able to. But what's at the root of it? Unbelief. Guess what the mess today we're in?

What's at the root of it? Unbelief. Unbelief. You're not going to sort it out with a better guy and a different guy or just getting some different, you know. We can just get the opposing parties together to talk.

[26 : 18] They need Jesus is what they need. Unbelief. And then I think for us, what we can take from this too is, man, make sure you're listening to the right source. Right? They were troubled by them when they heard these things.

Listen to the right source. Because if you're someone who doesn't know your Bible and you're just watching the news and taking it in, man, you are now unsettled by unbelief, by someone else's unbelief that they're trying to propagate onto you.

So, don't watch the news. And so they were troubled by these things. Paul will warn Timothy of this. Timothy's here and Luke as well with Paul and Silas.

Paul and Silas are kind of like who we're gearing in on and who the Thessalonians are gearing in on. The Jews that don't believe. But Timothy's here as well. And Paul will eventually write this to Timothy.

He'll say, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. But after their own lusts, they shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth. It shall be turned into fables.

[27 : 18] They'll listen to something else. I'm not going to listen to the truth anymore. It's too unsettling. I don't like how it's unsettling me. So I'm going to turn away from the truth. So why didn't Timothy and Luke get wrapped up in this?

Why Paul and Silas? Well, if you remember, Paul brings Timothy with him. But Timothy is there to minister to the minister at this point in his ministry.

He's there to minister to Paul and Silas. That's what his role is right now. Luke, he's not really there so much for his gift to preach or evangelize as he is.

To care for Paul and those that are with him. And he's documenting this. So they all have their roles. Not all is visible. But we're going to see, actually, as we continue, that Timothy is going to change tonight as well.

But in verse 9, And when they had taken security of Jason and of the others, they let them go. So like, hey, you got to post bond, dude, if you want to go. So there's no justice in an unjust world.

[28 : 23] And we're not going to find it. And unbelief costs everyone. But so does belief, doesn't it? But unbelief will cost everyone.

There's no escaping it. Unbelief has cost so much. But belief will cost, too. And Jesus warns of this. We looked at this, I think, Sunday. In Luke 14, The cost of unbelief may not be seen in this life, but it will surely be paid in the next.

Count the cost. Unbelief will have its due. In this life, doesn't look like it. Those are the people that are, you know, buying up all the farmland and putting their devices in our home and all that kind of stuff, right?

Doesn't seem like they have any troubles. Can you imagine how unsettled someone like that must be, right? The George Soros of the world. The Jeff Bezos.

Whoever. These people with lots of money and power. Joe Biden. Can you imagine how unsettled they must be when they lay their head down at night? They don't have peace. Pray for them.

[29 : 35] And not that God will smite them. But he saves them first. Then he smites them. Right? God takes no delight in the death of the wicked. None.

Not even a little bit. Not even a little, Lord. Not even a little. Well, he takes no delight in the death of the wicked. And there are people that have no peace in their life. Though it seems like it's not costing them anything in this life.

But unbelief will have its due in the next life. And so the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea, who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

This is just kind of like a comedy almost. It's like, Paul, it just got you safe, bro. Take a day off. He went right back into the synagogue of the Jews. But they sent him away by night.

This isn't cowardice. This isn't fear. This is care and friendship. This is their desire to take care of Paul. And I think they recognized, too, that Paul had more to do.

[30 : 36] There's nothing more Paul could do at Thessalonica. But they realized there was more he could do elsewhere. Their first thought was for his safety. And their second thought, I think, was that the work would continue.

They knew Paul had more to do. Turn to Matthew chapter 10, verse 16 through 23. This describes exactly what's happening to Paul over and over and over.

And again, what are we doing? We're just opening and alleging the scripture. We're just kind of opening it, dividing it. And then we're setting side by side. So here's scripture in Acts.

And then we're going to set this scripture in Matthew beside it. We're going to look at them and go, yeah, that fits. That's what's happening. In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus said, Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be you therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

That's what you see here with them sending him away. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

[31 : 38] But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaks in you.

And the brother shall deliver a brother to death, and the father the child, and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated for my name's sake.

But he that endures to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another. For truly I say unto you, you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man become.

And that's true because Titus, the Spasian, will eventually put an end to the cities of Israel, as it was known at that time.

And when God kind of puts a pause on the nation of Israel. But it will start back up very shortly. But there we see where he describes exactly what's happening. Paul's being taken before the rulers.

[32 : 38] He's being taken into their synagogues. But what does he say? Look, flee to another city. Just when they do that to you here, go to another city. I would have written that.

But when they persecute you in this city, go home. Go home. This isn't for you. Obviously, God's not blessing you in this. Go find something else to do. But he says, nope.

Go into another city. This is God's plan for sending out missionaries. How do you know what city to go into? Well, let's see. What one do they not want to kill me? That one. I'll go there.

Right? It's kind of obvious. And so this is what Paul is doing here. And he goes into the synagogue, into this place called Berea. So real quickly, again, back to our map.

We see it's about 50 miles. So he's gone a couple days from Thessalonica to Berea. Him and the boys. They're all together still. And they're moving into Berea.

[33 : 33] Berea, as opposed to Thessalonica, has a wonderful meaning. It means well watered. Well watered. And so Paul, there it is, the end of verse 10.

He enters into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word of God with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so.

Therefore, many of them believed also of the honorable women which were Greeks and of men, not a few. So here we have something different. The Jews are also responding.

The male Jews. It's not just the women. It's not just the Gentiles. But there's others as well. The word noble. There are more noble. It's a wonderful sounding word. It means, can mean well born. Someone who's a noble. Or noble minded. So a higher, kind of like a higher placement. Paul will use that again, that same word in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 when he says that not many mighty, not many noble are called.

[34 : 39] Not many high born. Not many that are lifted up. Right? And so he says a few things here about these Bereans that we'll look at briefly.

He says they receive the word. How do they do that? With all readiness of mind. They search the scriptures daily. Whether those things were so.

So how to be a well watered Berean? Well first, embrace the word. Right? They were more noble. Their mind was inclined to the scripture.

And a mind inclined to the scripture is a noble mind. They embrace the word. They received it with readiness of mind. Incline your mind to the word.

Let your mind be tipped, as it were, towards God's word. And daily sift. That's the word there where it says search the scriptures daily.

[35 : 44] Literally means to sift. Sift as if like a sieve so that everything else falls away and what's left, you know, the treasure or what you were looking for.

Sift the word daily. It's a key. Daily. And be assured of the word. They searched it daily to see whether these things were so.

They said, okay, I want to be assured of this. I want to know what Paul's saying. And I think one of the things that jumped out to me the most was what did they search? They searched the scriptures. You see, a commentary on the word can never replace time in the word.

Commentaries are great, but they cannot replace daily sifting through the word with an open and ready mind. Right? They didn't go and ask someone else's opinion.

They had the word of God there. And Paul's using the word so they could see what Paul's doing and go, okay, I recognize this. So truth is best verified by the source of truth, not another person's opinion or an idea.

[36 : 47] Therefore, many of them believed. The response, instead of unbelief, this time is belief. And belief came by way of a scripture-filled mind. They filled their mind with the scriptures.

And then that turned their minds to belief. But, when the Jews of Thessalonica, oh my word, they can't even stay home.

They had to follow him there. See, unbelief does not sit still. Unbelief is agitated and unsettled and it can't handle the truth. When those Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they would have been fine if he did anything else, but don't preach the word of God, Paul.

They came thither also and stirred up the people. Knowledge held in unbelief is a dangerous thing. They had knowledge of what Paul was doing.

But that knowledge that they had was in unbelief. And look how it corrupted their view of the preaching of God's word. Unbelieving knowledge has produced many an abomination. Unbelieving knowledge has produced evolution, abortion, gender perversion, and the destruction of the family.

[38 : 03] That's what knowledge held by an unbelieving mind came up with. That these are all wonderful things in the world. They think this is great if we do these things.

You know, if you believe in evolution, you practice abortion, you want to change your gender, and you don't have the confines of a family as God designed it, you get a gold star.

Good. And you have no peace and you're unsettled. And so that's just, again, what we see in the word is just being reflected in the world around us, unfortunately.

All right, let's wrap this up as we get down through these verses here. And so what happens again, the people, they're stirred up. That means to agitate. They've been shaken up. It's a little different word there than being unsettled, turned upside down, but it's very similar.

And so the brethren, they immediately sent Paul away to go as it were to the sea. But Silas and Timotheus abode there still. So here we see something different with Timothy. Timothy. Paul will tell him eventually when he writes to him in 1 Timothy, speaking to when he leaves him in Ephesus, we've not yet got there yet, but he'll say, as I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith, so do.

[39 : 29] I'm sure that's what Paul was dealing with with these guys coming in. So he leaves behind Timothy and Silas. You see, Paul, he was fit for one type of work, but at this point in time in his ministry, he was not fit for building up the church by continuing to teach long term.

Timothy and Silas were able to stay there. They didn't, the whole city didn't come against them in the way they did with Paul. And so he leaves them behind to minister in a way that he can't. And God may have it for others to do what you could not. Maybe you started, but he would have someone else to finish as he moves you on. And Paul's circumstances aren't the best as he's being kicked out either.

But they conducted him, Paul, unto Athens and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. So they bring him to Athens. That's again, even by sea, you're talking like one to two weeks and they get ready to turn around and go back as escort. And he says, hey, tell Timothy and Silas to get here as quick as they can. So you're looking at, you're looking at like maybe a month turnaround that Timothy and Silas, they're ministering there to the people in Thessalonica.

[40 : 48] We're going to see in chapter 18, eventually in verse 5, it's going to say, and when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia. So he does not meet Paul. They don't meet Paul in Athens. So Paul gets into Athens and it says in verse 16, now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

And so Paul is waiting for them. It's interesting that as we saw in the beginning of chapter 17, that as his manner was, he went into the synagogue of the Jews. But now he feels, for whatever reason, to wait, that he needs to wait here until something happens.

His spirit was stirred within him. Here again is this idea, this unsettling or the stirring within him. Stirred is not just to be stirred up.

It is to be irritated or to be angry. Like Paul, he just cannot contain his frustration at what's happening in Athens. And so he begins to preach.

First, what does he do again? Therefore, disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

[42 : 02] So you see, the Jews, devout persons, and anyone who would meet him. The word met, it literally means by chance. Anybody he would come in contact with in the market. See, Paul had seen a city wholly given to idolatry.

Eventually, he will write to Timothy and he will tell Timothy, which one is it? Here it is. In chapter four of first Timothy, to not neglect the gift that's in him, which was given on by, given by prophecy in the laying on of hands of the Presbytery.

Meditate on these things. Give thyself wholly to them that your profiting may appear to all. Whatever you give yourself, whatever you give yourself wholly to will own you wholly.

Right? And so here, they've given themselves wholly over to idolatry, and now, they are in the grip of idolatry. And so Paul will dispute with them. That means to mingle thought with thought.

And that's where we go back to right at the beginning of what we looked at. Opening and alleging that Christ must, needs, have suffered. And then here, we see where Paul is disputing with them in the synagogue.

[43 : 13] Well, that is the exact same word used there in verse two, where it says that Paul reasoned with them. He's laying thought by thought, and he's mingling thought with thought.

And this is how we interpret the scriptures. He did this all day, every day, with anyone who would listen. So we're going to leave Paul there. in Athens.

He's had quite a little journey. And for us, be wholly given to the word of God all day, every day, with a noble mind. Right? We saw what that was.

It's a mind that's open, inclined, and ready to receive the word of God. And how do we do that? How do we keep our minds in that state? That's where we go back to the title, keep your mind open.

Keep your mind open to the word by letting Jesus keep your mind. Philippians 4, 6 and 7. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

[44 : 14] And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Be wholly given, right? In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

That's your part. Wholly given. Give yourself over to the Lord. Open your mind to the Lord. And then God does his part and he keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. So that like Paul, we can be ready.

We can be ready in a world that has rejected truth and is in unbelief. So next time, Paul will kind of tear through Athens and then he'll meet up with his buddies, Timothy and Luke and Silas.

You know, Paul seems like he's not afraid ever. He seems like, I'm just going to go in there and rip their throats out in love. But he'll eventually write and tell us that he was among them with much fear and much trembling.

We're going to see in chapter 18, the Lord's going to come to him and say, be not afraid to speak. Don't hold your peace. I'm with you. Paul's afraid. Yeah. It eventually got too much for him.

[45 : 26] And he's like, I just don't want to do this again. I just can't do this again. He will write and he'll say, not that we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. He'll write and say, who is sufficient for these things?

Right? But it's God that gives more grace. So Father, we thank you for the grace you've given us. Thank you for everybody being gracious tonight. It was a long one. But Lord, you're so amazing in our lives, Lord.

Lord, you've inclined our hearts and our minds to the scripture. You've given us a sensitivity to understand what the spirit is speaking. Lord, I pray that you would search our hearts.

You'd see if there's any wicked way in there, that you'd know the unbelief and that you would remove it, Lord. Because Lord, it's the unbelief, it's the anxiety, it's when we're not turning those things over to you in prayer, that we become so unsettled.

And so Lord, settle our hearts tonight and help us to settle issues in our heart with you so that Lord, we can go out into the world and we can be a savor of life unto life, Lord, that we can call men and women and boys and girls out of unbelief and into the kingdom.

[46 : 41] We thank you and we love you. And in Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.