

5/11/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. ... As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Acts 17:1-5,10-12

Although the Apostle Paul had been stoned and left for dead at Lystra for calling Jesus the “Christ” or “Messiah,” he continued preaching Jesus in Thessalonica. In this commercial center at the crossroads of the empire, once again Paul was talking Bible, Christ, Good Friday, and Easter in the synagogue.

In the holy writings of the Scriptures there are two absolute certainties. The first: Jesus had to die. He sacrificed his body and shed his blood to pay for the guilt of our sin. Jesus had to die because by his death he destroyed death and the one who uses death’s power to terrify, the devil. Jesus is our Victor and our King.

The second: Jesus had to rise. On the third day, “just as he said,” Jesus had guaranteed that he would rise. His single sacrifice for sin would never need repeating. Jesus rose to confirm,

“Paid in full.” Now the glorious King comforts his people with his victory over sin, Satan, hell, and the grave. Jesus lives to say, “One sacrifice offered once for all.”

So wherever and whenever the gospel is preached according to the Scriptures, there will be a response to Jesus. In Thessalonica, there was an immediate and favorable response by both Jews and Greeks, by both men and women. But there was also opposition to the gospel. Rabble rousers caused confusion. Even so, gospel preaching continued in Thessalonica, though Paul was forced to flee. It continued, but under a cloud of intense persecution. The word keeps on working despite opposition.

In Berea people listened too, not just to the apostles, but first and foremost they listened to the Scriptures. They opened their Bibles to test what Paul said, and only when they found that his words matched those of the Bible did they listen. And when they listened, many believed. The word keeps on working by grace alone.

Prayer: *God, help us listen to your words which have your power for our salvation. Amen.*

(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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