

Turning the World Upside Down – Question 3  
Acts 17:1-8  
July 9, 2017

The topic of our message today is disturbance. In the last three weeks, we have been considering the statement made by the Thessalonians about Paul and Silas: *These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also* (Ac 17:6 ESV). However, Paul and Silas didn't come to Thessalonica to incite riots or organize mass protests. They came to Thessalonica as Christian missionaries.

The Thessalonians knew who and what Paul and Silas were. They say as much when they express their fear that their world could be turned upside down. What disturbed the people wasn't what Paul and Silas might physically do, but their unabashed profession that Jesus Christ is King of kings, Lord of lords, and Savior of all.

During the past three weeks, we have been considering what impact we might have on our community if we were like Paul and Silas. We have asked probing questions. What if people spoke about us like we were Paul and Silas? What if the people of Farmington Hills knew us as a group of people who were turning the community upside down? What if we were so effective in our living for Jesus that things were radically changed?

Let's review the four questions on which this sermon series is based.

Question 1 – Are we a threat to turning our world upside down? Do we have what it takes to make a difference in our world? Is Jesus so important to us that nothing will stop us from seeing his name lifted up and praised?

We talked about three things that would make us a threat: threat nobodies like somebodies; challenge what people think the church is; and being completely dedicated to seeing people's lives changed.

Question 2 – Are the people of our community talking about our impact? Does our community see that we're bringing change? Is our community different because we exist?

We talked about what will lead us to making an impact. We need to love our community and its people. To love our community we need to consider two things. How much does God love Farmington Hills, and does Prince of Peace need a new mindset?

Question 3 – Are we doing anything that will disturb our community? Are we shaking up those people who have no use for Jesus? Are we doing anything causes people to be disturbed by our presence?

Question 4 – Is our presence leading people to consider eternal matters? Are we leading people to regard Jesus as their King?

Today, we come to question 3. Are we doing anything that will disturb our community? Let's begin with a working definition of the word "disturb." For this study, we will define disturb as "to upset the natural balance," "to overturn the status quo," or "to perplex." To be sure we are all on the same page, the natural balance or status quo of this sinful world is the kingdom of Satan. That is the world we want to turn upside down.

Today's text is the same as the last three weeks, with two extra verses added: *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 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." 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. But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things.*

What was so disturbing? Paul and Silas showed up in town and suddenly normal wasn't normal anymore. Just two men, by their appearance and their message, had radically altered the city. They disturbed the city, the people, and the authorities. The disturbance was so great the people were looking to kill Paul and Silas.

Disturbing the "normal" the "status quo" of a city can be a very dangerous thing. It's not for the fainthearted. Doing such a thing could ruin your reputation. It could change the way people look at you and think about you. You might get involved in something that would irreversibly change your life forever. Standing up for Jesus can be very dangerous.

When Jesus walked this earth, he disturbed people. It was never his first intention to disturb people. His first and only intention was to speak the truth about God and his love for people. His first and only intention was to lead people to repentance, but repentance means change and, more times than not, change is disturbing.

The text tells us that Paul and Silas disturbed people. They didn't set out to be a disturbance. However, Paul had a message to deliver, and the content of that message combined with his determination to speak it, created a disturbance.

If we are going to turn the world upside down for Jesus, our attitude is very important. We know that the message of salvation through faith in Jesus can upset some people, but our goal must never be to disturb people only because we can. That would not be speaking the truth in love.

However, today's society is heavily focused in the wrong direction. Because of that,

going all out for Jesus will bring a disturbance. An individual who takes a public stand for Jesus disturbs people. A group of people taking a public stand for Jesus disturbs people. The fact that some people put their full trust in Jesus disturbs other people. When the truth that Jesus is the only way to salvation is made known, it disturbs a lot of people.

Given those facts, if we are going to turn the world upside down for Jesus, we must be sure we are ready. Let me give you a chance to ask yourself some questions.

**Am I truly ready to take a stand for Jesus and not back down?** We don't have to be combative in our stand. We don't have to be the loudest, or the pushiest, or the most overbearing, but we do have to be committed.

Being committed means living all out for Jesus no matter what circumstance or difficulties come our way; no matter who does nor doesn't like it. Some people will be disturbed. Sometimes we might feel uncomfortable. But we must humbly stand firm.

**Are you ready to stand united for Jesus?** There is strength in numbers so we must be united with our brothers and sisters in the faith. We may not agree on everything, but we must not let our disagreements hurt the family of God.

A group of people united for a cause will be disturbing to other people. That means there will always be attempts to undermine that unity, to attack that unity, to weaken that unity. Protecting our unity as believers must be a priority. The unity of the body of Christ must always be more important than individual desires or preferences.

**Are you ready to fully and completely trust Jesus?** A successful stand for Jesus can only come when we put our complete confidence in him. When we do that, there may be times when things happen we don't understand. There may be times when our faith makes us appear foolish to the rest of the world. But if our goal is to lead others the Christ, there is no substitute for our complete trust in him.

**Are you willing to trust everything to Jesus?** People who are willing to trust everything to Jesus disturb other people. People who are leading others to a real relationship with Jesus disturb other people.

There might be times when we are tempted to change our message in order see people come to Jesus, but that is never the answer. There might be times we are tempted to take matters into our own hands, but that is never the answer. If we lose our complete trust in Jesus, we will lose our positive influence on our community.

**So, are you ready to hold up Jesus and only Jesus?** We must always hold up Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We must stand firmly on Jesus' words from John 14:6: *No one comes to the Father except through me.* We must lovingly, but unwaveringly, hold up Jesus as the only way to God and eternal life.

That is very exclusive, and exclusivity disturbs people in our politically correct, liberal tolerant society, but the truth is the truth. If we compromise on Jesus as the only way to salvation, then we are no longer a Christian church.

Knowing and believing that Jesus is the only Way, Truth, and Life will become the catalyst that takes us out of our pews, outside of these walls, and into our community. It will power us up to disturbing people with the best news the world has ever known.