

Right Side Up

Acts 17:1-4 (NKJV)

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." 4 And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

Here we have Paul and Silas sharing the gospel of Jesus for a couple of weeks...persuading some, many joining them.

Sounds great, doesn't it? But not everyone was happy about it...

Acts 17:5-9 (NKJV)

But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. 7 Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." 8 And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. 9 So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

You know I've always heard this one verse:

"These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

And I've thought how awesome that must be. And then I think, what do those guys have that I don't have? And the answer is "not a thing."

They have the same Savior, same Lord, same Holy Spirit, same power, same testimony, same calling, same mandate.

Church, they didn't even have a lot of people...not to start with.

Yet they turned the world upside down.

This means they upset or disturbed the way things were.

But did you know, the world was already upside down? When God created it and put man in it, it was very good...perfect in fact. It was right side up.

Everything pointed to God. He was the focus. But when Adam sinned, he turned the world upside down. Now everything has become self focused, pointing at us.

So when these men “turn the world upside down” all they are really doing is turning it back right side up...the way God intended it to be.

Man upset and disturbed God’s perfect creation and it’s been like that for so long that people think it’s normal and right. It may be the way the world is but it’s not the way it is supposed to be.

This arrow represents our world, our lives...God created it this way (UP). He is the source of our worship, our attention, our focus, our desire. But sin turned it upside down.

Now what happens when it’s upside down. It’s pretty much impossible for it to stand straight when it’s pointed to man. When people and things become the source of our worship, attention, focus, desire.

When it’s pointed at us, we try to make things “right” by our way, our ideas, our thought and feelings (according to our soul that likes sin). And since we can’t find balance, we try the ideas of the left...we try the ideas of the right...but they’re both off...neither is the answer.

Yet it consumes people...this game of right and left because there is no way to truly stay perfectly balanced in the middle. Sure you can prop it up from time to time...but it can’t stand on it’s own without being off one way or the other.

This is what our lives look like when the arrow points to man.

And I’m telling you that there isn’t a politician that can save us. There’s not a man or woman that can hold this straight, so long as it’s pointed at us...

Now we have some born again believers running for office...and as the people of God, you should vote for them. I’m talking about people like Darren Baliey that is not ashamed of the gospel. People that love Jesus. People that pray. People who know the word. They can make a difference.

But they can’t make all the difference...

We need to turn this world upside down to get things right side up!

And there’s only one way to do that...

Acts 17:2-3 (NKJV)

Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."

That's at least 2 full weeks that Paul was in the Jewish synagouge. A place where they kind of had their own ideas. A place where they really liked their religion. But it was a place where they were way more focused on themselves than they were with Jesus...

So they have their ideas. They knew what the scriptures said. They were looking for the Messiah to come and Jesus has come. He was what they were waiting for...but they missed it

Paul reasoned with them from the scriptures. This means there was a discussion. "Here is what the scriptures say, what do you think, here's what I see"

And then he explained and demonstrated that Jesus had to suffer and die and rise from the dead!

He showed them that the prophecies in the scriptures DO in fact speak of Jesus...He IS the Christ, the Messiah.

And the only way to make this world right side up...is by making the lives of people right side up...that as we live a life for ourselves, a life of sin, where everything is about us...the only way out was for Jesus to die on the cross, giving His life as a ransom, paying the price for our sin...that whoever believes in Him would be saved!

And He rose from the grave so we may have NEW life in Him! It turns OUR world right side up! OUT OF SIN.

From our way to His way. Not do what makes you happy, but do what Jesus did.

"The tragedy of today is that the Church is pursuing happiness, not holiness."
- Leonard Ravenhill

This is happiness (down arrow).

This is holiness (up arrow)

Holiness is giving up our ideals for God's.

Pursue holiness instead of happiness. Because there's nothing that will make you happier, than living within God's plan for your life and abiding in His presence!

You can't be holy without being different. You can't be holy with another king on the throne of your heart.

Church, the way for our world to be right side up is for each of us to be right side up. And then for it to spread like wild fire...uncontrollably where man can not stop it or contain it.

It's up to US to let the Holy Spirit loose!

Stop looking at things the wrong way...we gotta look UP.

We must come to this conclusion...there's only one way that's right and it's all found in Jesus! It's in His Word and by His Spirit.

We do not have to and should not have to bow to the world system. Look at why these Jews were so mad...

Acts 17:7 (NKJV)

Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.”

One of the most serious crimes in the Roman Empire was to acknowledge allegiance to any king but Caesar.

And these men were acting contrary (opposite) of Caesar! Christians SHOULD act contrary to government unless that government is operating according to God's Word and Spirit!

Jesus is the reason for treason.

THERE IS ANOTHER KING!

One who is worthy of our worship.

One who is faithful and true.

One that is holy and just in everything He does.

One that saves, delivers, heals, restores, provides, comforts, and gives us hope, peace, and joy!

And His name is JESUS!

He turns worlds upside down. Our government and ideas of man can only do this (back and forty) but Jesus turns things right side up.

We are not called to go with the flow or follow the masses. We are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

We need a little more of the spirit of Elijah in our world...

1 Kings 18:17-18 (NKJV)

Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals.

People should see us as a troubler...because a troubler "upsets and disturbs" the same meaning as turning the world upside down.

People that have not followed the Word of God and have allowed other kings in their lives...they are the real troublers. Bound in sin and sharing a contagious disease that destroys life...

But Jesus came to turn and upside down world, right side up again.

And His bride, the church has a mandate, to continue that work.

But you've gotta let Him turn your world right side up first. Whether it's for the first time in your life or just the first time today. It requires submission and obedience. A willingness to lay down your life.

Matthew 16:24-25 (NKJV)

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

You have to lose your life to find it. Your world has to go from upside down to right side up.

But when you hand your life over to Jesus...we say you give up everything, but really you give up nothing of value and you gain everything in Christ.

In heaven you'll never look back at the things you lost for Jesus and wish you had them back. Because you'll still have that peace. And you'll still have that joy. And you'll still have the love of God which NO ONE and NO THING can take away from you!

When you lose your life for Jesus...it turns your upside down world, upside down, making it right side up.

And when you are changed by Jesus...you're not ashamed of the gospel!

Romans 1:16 (NKJV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The message of Jesus is the POWER of God to salvation for everyone who believes!

There's nothing else that can turn our world right side up...nothing but the gospel of Christ.

His people reasoning from the scriptures, explaining and demonstrating His resurrection...will bring salvation to this world.

"These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

That's our heritage. That's the family you've been adopted into. That's the company you should keep. That's the call of God for every believer.

"No Christian is exempt from the call of Jesus to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth." - **Sean Feucht, Bold**

It's up to us to turn this world right side up.

Habakkuk 2:14 (NKJV)

For the earth will be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea.

Can you hear what the Spirit is saying to you this morning?

It's hard to hear God's voice when you've already decided what you want Him to say.

Look to Jesus today. Surrender to His Spirit.

Let the upside down be turned right side up.