

World Upside Down

Acts 17:1-15

Each day, it's important to take your bearings. Where are you today? In the Easter season, in the scriptures, in your daily life, in your very self? Spend a few minutes getting your bearings for the day.

Let's briefly examine where we are in the Book of Acts and then begin our day with a prayer for deliverance—for ourselves, our fraternity brothers, and all Exodus Men.

You are fighting through difficulties. Whenever we set out on mission, there will be many obstacles. We have to remain faithful, no matter the challenge, and look for new ways to witness to Jesus.

Pray that the Lord grants deliverance to you, your family, and your fraternity.

Pray for freedom for all men in Exodus, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who have taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of Acts

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 for three weeks he argued 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 fellows of the rabble, they gathered a crowd, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the people. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city authorities, crying, "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 this. And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Beroea; and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Beroea also, they came there too, stirring up and inciting the crowds. Then the brethren immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

Reflection

Paul receives a telling accusation when Jason is drawn before the authorities: turning the world upside down. This is what God does, although we could rightly describe it as turning the world rightside up. The world was turned upside down in the Fall. It was then that we were inclined more to material things than spiritual things. We became more focused on ourselves than on others—even more than on God. Jesus came to fix this disaster, straightening our priorities so that we could love God and others more than ourselves. We know that our faith is operative if others could look at us and see that we live so differently that our lives look upside down to them.

Another accusation scared the city authorities, however. Paul was accused of proclaiming another king. And it was true. He told the synagogue in Thessalonica that Jesus is the Christ: the anointed Messiah or king. We know that Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world, but it is over this world. It is a more real kingship or authority than any other. This was the accusation that led to Jesus's death sentence from Pilate and it led to the persecution of his disciples, who recognized a greater authority than Caesar.

The Acts of the Apostles teaches us the Christian life. It should look different from the world, putting God before vain things, sharing the faith with others, and being willing to suffer persecution for the true king. Christians rejoice with glad and generous hearts even in the exile of this world because of their confidence in this king, trusting in his rule.

What have you learned from Acts so far? Has it inspired any concrete changes in living out your faith? Bring this question to prayer.

Week 5 Action Items

Pray about your mission.

Watch an uplifting movie.

Stay vigilant with technology use.