

PLOT TWIST

When God Surprises His People

Part 7: The Sermon That Rocked a City

INTRODUCTION — When the Ideal Meets the Real

2 Thessalonians 3:1

DINE IN – Proclaiming the Story of God

Acts 13:13-52

Acts records three Gospel sermons by the Apostle Paul... 13:16-41; 14:15-17; 17:22-31

Parts of Paul's teaching parallel parts in Paul's sermon... Romans 2:28-29; 4:7; 10:4; 6:7; 8:3

GOD CHOOSES US...

John 6:44 (VS 12:32)
Romans 8:29-30
Ephesians 1:4-5
Romans 9:13-23

WE CHOOSE TO RESPOND...

John 3:16
1 Timothy 2:1-4
2 Peter 3:9
Romans 9:30-32

TAKE OUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

TAKE OUT #1 – The Gospel as Foundational Story

Paul preaches the gospel as the story we find ourselves in – the place where our story intersects with God's story. He roots his telling of the gospel in the experience and history of his audience. Naturally, the story of Israel leads to the story of Jesus. And yet equally true for Paul, the story of every other human being and culture leads to the story of Jesus (see 14:15-17 and 17:22-31). Because the gospel is the centre of God's plan for humanity, it is the centre of everyone's story. Our job is to help people draw lines of connection between their story and God's. How might this effect how we share the gospel with others?

TAKE OUT #2 – The Gospel as Irreligious Story

Every society has some form of religion – a system of thought and function that holds it together. The gospel undercuts all religion and calls for our complete loyalty to Jesus – his life and teachings – as the centre of our story and the guiding principle of our lives. All of our religious assumptions must be held in submission to the ongoing correction of Christ. How might this supremacy of the gospel challenge how we live? How we approach others with the gospel?

TAKE OUT #3 – The Gospel as Transformative Story

The new believers were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, even though their start in the faith was surrounded with antagonism and controversy. When we fully embrace, delight in, and live out the implications of the gospel, the world loses the power to dominate our disposition. Some of us need to study, to understand, to gaze into the gospel better and the more we get a clear view to its profound truth, the more the gospel will overwhelm us. Some of us understand it enough, but we need to meditate and act on it, letting the gospel message influence our thoughts and the choices we make. Others of us understand and embrace the gospel, but we need to surround ourselves with others who likewise live out a gospel-centric, passionate faith in order to continue in the grace of God. And some of us need to be more active in sharing the gospel with others, for in repeatedly explaining gospel we will find ourselves growing in our own understanding and experience of God's word and Spirit. What changes could you make in your life to better "honour / glorify the word of the Lord" (v. 48)?

CONCLUSION – Glorifying the Gospel

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Q & Eh? Text 647.330.2789 or email ask@themeetinghouse.ca

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. In the Tyndale Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, William J. Larkin writes: "Paul was aware that his "Good News" was not only good but in many respects startling. God's surprise move is that through his incarnate and risen Son Jesus, he makes salvation blessings available to all who will believe, including Gentiles – apart from the law! For legalistic, ethnocentric Jews this might indeed be unbelievable, perhaps even outrageous and offensive." How might the gospel be offensive to the variety of people you know? How might that alter your way of presenting it to others?

Look to the Book...

2. Read this week's main text, then compare Paul's sermon with the two other sermons of Paul recorded in Acts – 14:15-17 and 17:22-31. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) What aspects of the gospel message are consistent? What are different? What lessons can we learn from this?

So What?...

3. Review the three TAKE OUTs and talk about them.
4. Take a few minutes to meditate on Acts 13:39. Let it sink in. Turn it over in your mind and consider the implications. Allow your heart to rejoice in and glorify the message. Then talk briefly about any new insights or convictions that have settled in. Pray for each other, that you will experience the infilling of joy and the Holy Spirit spoken about in verse 52.

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Notes are available online at themeetinghouse.ca/teaching