

- ***Read Acts 17:1-9*** As Paul and Silas are making their way through the land proclaiming the Gospel, they come upon Thessalonica, and Paul proceeds to go about his usual business. He visits the synagogue and gives effort persuade the multitudes to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The truth of Jesus, His resurrection, and His deity are compelling and Jews, Gentiles, and leading women of this city come to believe in Jesus and follow Paul and Silas. Sadly, not all the individuals of this city were moved to Jesus and they proceed to hinder the efforts of Paul and Silas. Angry Jews along some men from the market place form a mob and even raid the home of a disciple named Jason in order to find Paul and Silas. When they couldn't find them, the mob drags Jason and some other disciples in front of the city's authorities on charges that they had upset the world with their teachings that there was another King besides Caesar. After stirring up the crowd and receiving some kinda pledge from Jason and the others, they are let go.
- I want us to focus in on what is said by these trouble makers about the Christians that they perceived to be such a problem. They said that these people had upset the world! The NKJV says that they had turned the world upside down! That's some strong language to be directed any group of people, but I believe it to certainly be an accurate description of these people. They had changed the world, and they changed it based upon the Man who they had sworn allegiance to, Jesus Christ. Jesus was a man who changed the world. He was a man who turned the world upside down. This morning, I'd like for us to consider Jesus upside down and how exactly He and His disciples turned and continue to turn the world upside down.

I. The World...

A. relies on subjective reasoning.

1. A defining characteristic of how this world operates is that it does not recognize just one standard as being the proper standard, but it allows each person to be his/her own standard for what is right. Since we are all people, there is no way that any of our opinion's should be more valuable than another.
2. Because of this, there is no such thing as absolute truth. What I believe to be true is true, and whatever you believe to be true is true. My truth is true and your truth is true. No one is false.
3. What this boils down to is that each of us is our own authority. I am the top dog and run the show.

B. leans upon worldly wisdom.

1. Another characteristic of this world is its reliance of people on their own wisdom. They act based upon what they believe to be right and good.
2. Often, decisions are made with short term glasses on. Whatever is fun, enjoyable, or fulfilling right here and now is what we will see as the proper or right thing to do.
3. Worldly wisdom tells me that I should make sure that this life is lived to its fullest with nothing spared because after all...I only have one life to live, right?

C. focuses on self.

1. Both of these characteristics stem from the fact that this world stresses that we focus on ourselves.
2. Remember that my own reasoning is what matters. Remember that I am relying on what I think is best in every situation. What ever I think is best for me in the short term is what I will do.
3. If someone does me wrong then I ought to be able to take revenge that satisfies my feelings for what justice should be. Again and again, everything is about me.

II. Jesus...

A. gives people an objective standard.

1. Yes, Jesus was a man, but He was much more than just a man while on the earth. Peter declared that He was not just man, but that He was the Christ the Son of God. **(Matt. 16:16)**
2. This characteristic of Jesus gives Him the ability to speak as He spoke during His great sermon on the mount in **Matthew 5-7** and beyond during His ministry. (you have heard it said...but I say)
3. Even those who were against Him and heard Him speak were aware of the fact that He spoke as someone who possessed authority. **(Matthew 7:29)**
4. Jesus's final earthly declaration of His authority was given in **Matthew 28:18**, when He declared without any question that He had been given all authority. Jesus declared Himself as the standard of authority. He is the one who declares some things as good and other things as bad.

5. Of course, this type of living is counter to the thinking of this world because it requires that individuals recognize the superiority of Jesus and follow Him in humility. Humility is a must when it comes to the way Jesus expects for His disciples to live and it is completely upside down from the way that world operates. Man desires to call those things evil that are good and good those things that are evil (**Isa. 5:20**), but Jesus has set the standard and it remains unchanged.
- B. relies upon heavenly wisdom.
1. As Jesus concludes His teachings for the sermon on the mount, He states that those who hear His teachings and follows them will be a wise man while the one who does not would be foolish. (**Matt. 7:24-27**)
 2. Jesus expects for His disciples to reject the wisdom of this world and seek wisdom from above, from God. (**James 1:5; 3:13-18**)
 3. This wisdom from God teaches us that this life is not the end all be all. It teaches us that there is life beyond this world and that our actions will give an impact on our experience in the next life. (**Gal. 6:7,8**) This world's wisdom would tell us that our actions ought to be all about the here and now, but Jesus's Apostle says that we will reap what we sow.
 4. If someone does us wrong, then heavenly wisdom through Jesus's Apostle says that we ought to allow for God to handle it without doing something foolish ourselves. (**Rom. 12:19**)
 5. The world would tell us that this is foolishness and that we should be able to do things our way, but Jesus says that this true wisdom is keeping our eyes on the long term and not simply the here and now. The world leans on its own wisdom but Jesus flips the script by demanding that we rely on God's heavenly wisdom.
- C. focuses on others.
1. Many of the things that Jesus addresses in the sermon on the mount focuses on taking the attention off of our ourselves. Many of the "things they had heard" benefitted themselves in someway, and therefore people were good with following those things they had heard. Jesus turned the attention from themselves and sought to get them to focus on what was better for God and others for these are the two greatest commandments. (**Matt. 22:36-40**)
 2. Jesus is selflessness personified when it comes to His actions while on the earth. The world would say that we ought to only do what is best for us, but Jesus showed us that doing what is best for others is of more important. The world would say that the innocent giving themselves for the guilty is foolishness, but God uses that "foolishness" of selflessness to save mankind. (**I Cor. 1:18-25**)
 3. The world seeks to have each person look out for his or herself as number one, but through Jesus's objective standard and heavenly wisdom we recognize that Jesus's focus on others is what is truly the better way. Jesus turns the world upside down by showing us the better way.

Truly teachings of Jesus are often seen as being upside down or backwards to what is held up as being right to the world. Sometimes, those who follow Jesus are thought of as being backward from the world, and that just might be the case. We are often backward from the world, but further is that we need to consider who possesses the better way. Who has the better way? Does the world have the better way or does Jesus have the better way? I am convinced that we all would declare that Jesus is the better way. Amen? If we truly believe this then we must give every effort to come to know this better way. May God help us to follow our Master in all things, and may He give us the courage to stand up against this world as we do those things that are pleasing in His sight as faithful disciples.