



DATE: 07 April 2024 AM

TEXT: **Acts 17:1-6**

TITLE: **Fruit**

noun: the result or reward of work

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

John 4:35-36

INTRODUCTION

- as we approach our Missions Conference, I have attempted to draw your attention to those things that relate and to instruct you concerning our biblical mandate to evangelize the world
- this morning's message may be more *teaching* than *preaching*, but it concerns the birth of a church and how the plan for missions came about

Acts 16:9

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

this is known as **THE MACEDONIAN CALL**

Macedonia was a region north of Greece and the birthplace of Alexander the Great

- in **Acts 17**, we find three cities where Paul preached...three cities with different responses to the gospel message

Thessalonica

resisted the Word

Berea

received the Word

Athens

ridiculed the Word

- our text this morning concerns the planting of the church by Paul in answer to this call
 - the letters of **First and Second Thessalonians** were the first epistles written by Paul
 - in these letters, he touched on every major major doctrine of the church

1 Thessalonians 1:2-8

this is how Paul perceived their beginning

1. A METHOD DEVISED *Acts 17:1-2*

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures...

Paul's visit to Thessalonica came on his
SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

thus, sufficient time had passed and he had gained enough experience to know what worked and was most effective

verse 1 notice that Paul and his entourage bypassed the smaller towns and ministered in major metropolitan areas...Thessalonica had a major port...many ships, etc.

NOTE: Thessalonica was a "free" Greek city with no Roman garrison stationed there

Paul, Silas, and Timothy were together
Amphipolis and Apollonia were much smaller villages...it would be Thessalonica's responsibility to minister to these towns

Paul was the **APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES** according to **Romans 11:13**, but he made it a habit to first go into the local synagogue...he did this for several reasons:

he was a well-trained Pharisee

Philippians 3:5

salvation is of the Jews

John 4:22

the Jewish people would already be familiar with Jehovah and the promise of a Messiah

the people would have a basic knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures

and notice Paul's **consistency** in ministry...he went for three consecutive weeks on the Sabbath day

NOTE: Paul labored during the week at his tent making trade:

1 Thessalonians 2:9

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

see also **2 Thessalonians 3:7-10**

and **Acts 18:3**

2. A MESSAGE DELIVERED *Acts 17:2-3*

...[he] reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

METHODS in missions can be debated, adapted, or rejected, but the **MESSAGE** we preach can never be changed

1 Corinthians 1:17

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

1 Corinthians 1:23

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness...

four key words describe Paul's approach to the synagogue congregation:

he **REASONED**

dialogue; Q & A

he **OPENED**

explained, taught

he **ALLEGED**

lay along side of

he **PREACHED**

to announce

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain...and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Paul was well-versed in the Old Testament and had been trained in rhetoric and debate

as believers, we may not have a degree in these things, but we should be students of the Word of God

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

1 Peter 3:15

...and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you...

3. A MEMBERSHIP DERIVED Acts 17:4

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

there was a variety of people who heard the Gospel message and then received it

remember, these were all to be found in the Jewish synagogue

believed = convinced; persuaded

consorted = to cast lots with; join

DEVOUT GREEKS were in the synagogue searching for answers...they were tired of the empty promises of idol worship

they were put-off by circumcision

CHIEF WOMEN were wealthy and influential ladies associated with the synagogue

not a few = there were many

at least two men came to Christ as a result of these meetings, and would become disciples of Paul later on

Aristarcus and Secundus

Acts 20:4

And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

this is the goal of missions: to plant churches and find faithful members who will in turn repeat the process elsewhere

1 Timothy 2:2

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

CONCLUSION:

- in **verses 5-6** we see that not everyone received the Gospel message or even *liked* the Word of God
the Jewish leaders were losing their financial sponsors and their spiritual seekers

people of the baser sort literally means "belonging to the market"...these were people who were not invested in the church...not invested in the message...but felt compelled to cause a problem

- Christ promised to build His church and the gates of Hell would never prevail against it

Matthew 16:18

as a result, we must continue to preach the Gospel and send out workers until the Lord comes back

the church at Thessalonica came to understand the Great Commission

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

sounded out = to echo; reverberate

Paul was contrasting the pagan practice of repeating hollow words and phrases that would work followers into a frenzy

at Thessalonica, the Gospel was more than some chant that was to be repeated...it was their life song, repeated for the benefit of others to be saved and changed

...and they turned the world upside down