



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 53 Being Jealous for the Lord
By Pastor Jody May 11/05/2023**

Acts 17:1-9 ESV

Paul and Silas in Thessalonica

17 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. **2** And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** 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.” **4** 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. **5** But the **Jews were JEALOUS**, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. **6** And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, **7** and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” **8** And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. **9** And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

[REVIEW]

When last we met, we were wrapping up Chapter 16, and the story of three very different individuals: a rich businesswoman named Lydia, a tormented and demonically controlled slave girl, and a Military Veteran Roman jailer all of which who had in common that they were **saved by Christ alone**. This liberation was not well received by all in the town, and it cost Paul and Silas time in jail and literal skin off their backs. And now on this side of October we have an even better understanding of the events that transpired; why the persecution, why the imprisonments, & why the beatings, because all was done to **Glorify God alone!** And when God showed himself, through preaching with the accompaniment of miracles, people were saved, spiritual liberation occurred, and Christ’s servants were vindicated!

The result is Philippi most likely becomes the main supporter of Paul and Silas throughout the NT. This encounter taught these men that through



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persecution, on the other side of it, the name of Jesus was elevated/defended/declared while they themselves **were allowed to suffer** for His name.

Meaning, as we have been watching the Gentile world get rocked, 2,000 years ago, with the saving news of the Gospel, we have witnessed the lives of these apostles and evangelists get even more empowered to speak boldly for Christ! I think what we are seeing is a strengthening or an energizing of these preachers through suffering because their **suffering has a direct link to the glory that Jesus receives**. Peter sees this same relationship and encourages the church to participate towards the same end.

1 Peter 4:13 ESV

But **rejoice** insofar as you **share** Christ's **sufferings**, that you may also **rejoice** and be **glad** when his **glory is revealed**.

I think I know how this works.

[ILLUSTRATION]

This past year I look back and Heather and I are going through a little pressure crucible. Both our old cars within the last two years gave up the ghost, and because of the lack of a market for used cars we had to bite the bullet and buy new cars not out of desire or luxury but necessity. On top of that we have had other unforeseen bills pop out, not by our carelessness, but just by unforeseen life circumstances and I am talking about bills with 3 0s to them. Then on top of all that, starting back in 2020 Heather and I dedicated ourselves to putting Baylee through college. She's deserved it, she is the hardest working student we know, and what she wants to do will actually cost her something as well, graduate school is on her. So right now, the thing we are concerned the most with, is not about the money coming in, it is about keeping our unspoken commitment to her, because **it is a joy and honor to be able to suffer for someone that we love**, someone we believe that has shown to be worth it. We believe that the glory she will receive one day, for Christ, will heighten the pleasure of being able to suffer through some hard times now, it actually sweetens the journey, it makes the whole family appreciate it



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a little more. Suffering for those you love becomes a joyful blessing especially when it ultimately reveals the Glory of God.

MAIN POINT x 2:

This is how it is with being a Christ follower. The more we are allowed to suffer for His name sake the greater our joy becomes for we are seeing the benefits of our faith, not just for ourselves but for others and for Christ's sake, that much may be made of Him! That connection creates in the heart of the believer a **Godly Jealousy**.

Godly Jealousy - loving Christ more than loving oneself.

Through suffering for Christ, we discover the principle of how to decrease so He may increase and even how to like it. Because the Father, wants to teach us what the Son knew and discovered, **that ultimate...**

**Suffering for the cause of God brings about
the most joy a person can have.**

That's what I want to talk about today is the benefit of being jealous for the Lord is that it produces the opportunities to experience the most joy you can have. For what drives all the interactions of verses 17:1-9 is the Jews Jealousy for self and how it was running parallel to and in competition with the jealousy that Paul and Silas had for the Lord.

[READ THE TEXT]

[PRAY]

[INTRODUCTION]

Last time we were in Acts Marty Guy opened up Chapter 17 with a powerful word and commendation for us to be evangelistic of which the thing that I remembered the most was this statistic that he shared with us:



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Who Reaches Who?
HOW ARE PEOPLE INFLUENCED TO RECEIVE JESUS OR ATTEND CHURCH?

Initiated by pastor or church staff	0 – 3 %
Visitation	½ – 1%
Small Group Activity	4 – 6%
Church Programs	2 – 4%
Benevolent efforts/special needs	1 – 3%
Uninvited visit	2 – 4%
Special services/big events	½ – 1%
Friends/relatives/associates	75 – 90%

This information was provided by Win Arn, Thom Rainer and Bob Orr.

To that point, what I want to do now is go back and start chapter 17 again, not because Marty missed something, but because I want to contribute to what Marty said. I believe that within this text is the necessary juju, or battery/fuel/driver that propels us to go and invite our friends/relatives, and associates. Because here is my **challenge for you today**, I want everyone to invite someone to this church, to hear the gospel within the next two months – **no excuses**.

Just a couple of opportunities off the top of my head. 1st is our end of the month potluck for November, it's bring your left-over day, so that has to be a select someone because I only want the good stuff 😊. The 2nd one is we will have a **Christmas Eve service**, of which everyone in here can make, for it falls on a Sunday this year. Now as I say this, I hope no one is starting to have a panic attack, because you have time to go to your CGs, pray with them, and strategize together. As well, pray with me today that God would open up your heart today to hear why you would want to do this! Now let's look at how jealousy affects bringing glory to God.

1. When Godly Jealousy consumes God's servants.

²And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³explaining 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."

Paul and Silas spend three weeks with the people of Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia, taking the time to meticulously layout for them the case of Christ, that he is the true King and leader of the world. These men want to move these folks away from relying on an earthly king for their good and pleasure and instead want them to put their trust in a heavenly King, ³**explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead.**" This becomes the driving heart for Paul's ministry in that



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he desires to see Jesus' Kingdom, His number of followers increase (Godly Jealousy). He has become obsessed with the idea that Christ is worth everything and that core belief of Paul is revealed to **us 2 Cor 11:**

2 Corinthians 11:2 ESV

²For I feel a **divine jealousy** (godly, heaven born, mandated emotional standing) for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. He wants no one else touching the church, he's jealous that Christ alone would receive an unadulterated heart from His bride.

Paul is showing us in 2 Cor 11, what it takes to fulfill his evangelistic drive and that is a **godly jealousy** for people to follow God and give their lives to Christ, forsaking all others.

Now you may be wondering, isn't jealousy a bad thing? ^{1st} let's look at the word:

ζηλόω (zēloō): set one's heart on, be deeply committed to something.¹

According to scripture it is a neutral behavior much like anger and can be used as a force for good or bad depending on the hand that wields it.

In short jealousy can lead to envy and covetousness, if it is used for purely a worldly behavior to obtain desired attention from others.

Acts 7:9 ESV (from our example last week)

"And the patriarchs, **jealous** of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him

But when used by God it leads people into rightful worship. For example, jealousy is a word that the Lord uses to describe Himself.

Exodus 20:4-5 ESV

⁴"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water

¹ **2420** ζηλόω (zēloō): vb.; ≡ DBLHebr 7861; Str 2206—**1.** LN 25.76 **set one's heart on**, be deeply committed to something (1Co 12:31); **2.** LN 25.46 **have deep concern for** (Gal 4:17); **3.** LN 25.21 **covet**, desire another's possessions (Jas 4:2), for another interp, see next; **4.** LN 88.163 **be jealous**, **be envious** (Ac 7:9; 17:5; 1Co 13:4; Jas 4:2), note there may be overlap with the verses and entries.



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under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a **jealous** God,

If God was not a jealous God, then He would show Himself to be an imperfect or an unworthy God. To be a jealous God would show that He alone is worthy to be praised and that praise is due Him alone, as He is the creator. He is jealous for His own worship which sets the stage for how we should respond to Him. ² Paul and Silas (which should be us as well) should inherit and display the same behavior, a Godly jealousy for the Lord, to desire that He alone should be praised, and when that happens see the results.

⁴And 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.

Some of the Jews, many of the devout Greeks, and a few leading women and of course that meant some of the wives of the Thessalonica rulers. Paul and Silas instead of worrying about what happened before to them, instead of looking at where talking to Jews got them last time, they put to use their jealousy, their extreme desire to see Christ high and lifted up, to work and the results of that is not Salvation for just a few but these are converts that would lead to future saving work.

Being jealous for the Lord is a good thing, for it is given by God, to make much of Him, and in turn makes your sufferings look light and momentary and even bring joy. Now let's make this a case study and see how jealousy when removed from Godly influence messes everything up.

2. When Unholy Jealousy controls the lost.

⁵But the **Jews** were **jealous**, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd.

The Jews, those in the synagogue not converted, what was their response, they were jealous, of what? ^{1st} what Paul was saying about Christ which had

² <https://www.gotquestions.org/jealous-God.html>



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been compared to Cesar for three straight weeks showing Christ to be the rightful ruler of the world. 2nd this preaching elevated Paul in the view of those converting. You see, the Jews wanted the attention that Paul was getting, they liked the life they were living under Roman rule not Christ's, and they became enraged that the focus was taken off of them. Up to this moment, they had the ears of the upper ruling Gentile class through those leading women and now that luxury had been removed from their grasp.

In response they resort to a tactic that puts them around men they would never otherwise be around - **rabble**. These are men that you would find around the warehouse district. These are the ones that would rather not work if they could avoid it. They could have been the dirty labor union bosses, or perhaps they are the ones that have gotten the bad reps in the city, possibly the organized crime guys (teamsters).

So, the Jews go and find the ones that would make them unclean by association, showing that they really had no care for their God worship, it wasn't real to them. They used their synagogue like the priests used the temple in Jerusalem, to gain favors in the Gentile world. So, they joined forces with these evil men, formed a protesting mob, got the whole city in an uproar, and went to the home of Jason, most likely a converted Jew, to get them by force.

[ILLUSTRATION]

Now where have we seen this behavior before? People who had once said they were for the good of their communities, that were thought to be upstanding individuals, and then when threatened with a loss of attention, prestige, and power lowered themselves to conniving with rabble. **This is a politician's game, isn't it?** Pretend you are for the little guy, but God forbid someone steals your voting base or even worse elevates Christ and His cause and people start to flip out. They make deals with known terrorist organizations (Antifa/Iran backed groups), groups that support child trafficking, groups that support generational genocide (abortion/eugenics), groups that support gender mutilation and sterilization, groups that support making money off of child labor and oppression of the poor, and groups that



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want to traffic illegal substances without hinderance, and the reason they do that is because **they are jealous of losing their attention, power, and spotlight. They use angry mobs with mob mentality seeking scapegoats to take out their anger on.** This is a 2,000-year-old ploy, don't buy it, they don't care about feelings or rights, they care only for themselves.

[GOSPEL]

And the only way to help stop this movement of mass hysteria and anger is to keep preaching the truth! We have to be like Paul and Silas and keep laying out Christ and holding him up as a better way.

Worldly rulers highlight hate among people to gain power and influence. Christ highlights His love that removes hate and the ability to blame others.

Worldly rulers use fear of an unknown future to retain control.

Christ calms our fears by preparing our future home in glory by His side.

Worldly rulers turn people over to vanity, depravity, and every form of lust of the flesh to keep the loyalty of the people.

Christ reclaims and redeems people from the grip of sin and in return He earns the trust of the people.

In every way Christ is a better King and because of that, we should be jealous for Him, AMEN!

You can't agree with wayward rulers for one moment, because their motive is not to help people but to satiate their envy. But if we are faithful to remain jealous for Christ, and His praise, and we are not swayed by the complaints of those in power, then we have to be prepared for some suffering. Although that suffering can and will lead to some beautiful things and remember it will bring you joy when you get to suffer for His name.

3. The Harvest that is reaped by jealous endeavors.

⁶And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also," ⁷and Jason has received them,



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and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”

When you go looking for a scapegoat you will find one. They couldn't find Paul and Silas, but they found this guy Jason, a supposedly known sympathizer. In their haste they make a public claim about God's glory. **“These men who have turned the world upside down.”** At this point in history, it is a known fact that there has already been some political unrest due to Christian teachings in Rome and Alexandria.

Jesus' kingship was catching like fire, it is the one thing the Roman govt. hates to hear. Any kind of threat to their governance, was met with extreme prejudice. These Jews were in danger of losing their prestige and instead of desiring a Jewish King, THEIR KING, to control it all, they would rather settle for their little piece of the pie in Thessalonica.

[CHALLENGE]

Is there a place in your life where you may not be giving Christ the credit, where are you not giving Him control, because you are jealous for yourself. Is there a relationship that you should walk away from, but you like the attention you are given from it. Is there a job you are in that defames your faith, but you like the prestige and money it brings? Is there a hobby that robs your family of your time and care, but you like how it makes you feel? Is there an attitude you portray to others because it makes you seem better than them? Do you get angry at others quickly and irrationally because you feel they take from you in some way? Then you may have a **jealousy problem for yourself**. If so, like these Jews in this town then know you are trading in the worship of your king for the worship of self and that will never fill you up. The only thing that will bring you, is a life-long pursuit of trying to be more and never making it. Which only leads to making it harder on other people.

⁸And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. ⁹And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.



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Well at least they didn't beat Jason, most likely because he's a Roman citizen and without Paul and Silas they couldn't make blame stick. But they made him put up bail money for behaviors to force their political correctness before they would leave them alone. But it wasn't enough just to make Jason, nor the brothers stop.

A few months later Paul puts pen to paper (Papyrus) and comments on what has happened since the brothers in Thessalonica were fined:

1 Thessalonians 1:2-9 ESV

The Thessalonians' Faith and Example

²We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

These folks have been put through testing right after their birth, if you read the rest of Thessalonians, you will see they have been persecuted for their beliefs by both Gentiles and Jews. But the suffering of Paul and Silas, their Jealousy for Christ, empowered them to start a good work and that attitude caught like fire and was now producing joy and a success among this fledgling church.

⁴For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with **full conviction**. – **the preaching was powerful and effective**.

⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, – **the believers tried to imitate Paul**. – for you **received the word** in **much affliction**, with the **joy** of the Holy Spirit, – **they gained a godly jealousy**

⁷so that you became an **example to all the believers** in Macedonia and in Achaia. – **they became themselves models for others**

⁸For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has **gone forth everywhere**, so that we need not say anything. – **they became a missionary church helping in the great commission**



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⁹For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you **turned to God from idols** to serve the living and true God, - **they had turned from their idols**

Family, the trials and tribulations of the Thessalonians is what has matured their faith, their suffering for Christ has brought them joy. This joy has now made them jealous no longer for themselves but for God. Is that your story today? I pray that your trials have not embittered you against God and you too are discovering the joy of getting to stand up for Christ and portray what His love has done for you.

[CHALLENGE]

[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

Bread – this was the life of Christ, who lived over 3 decades as a man totally jealous for the love of God. He never caved, he never bowed down, so that he could be found worthy in our place, displaying perfectly for us what it means to love God more than loving oneself.

Wine – this was the blood of Christ, that was given so that we could be forgiven of our traitorous behavior of loving ourselves more than Him. The sin and shame of our self-jealousy has been removed, let us live with the freedom of having a Godly jealousy for Christ.

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that is jealous for His glory and has made it our greatest pursuit and joy to make much of Him.

Go in the name of the Son, that demonstrated in life and death the value of God's name and has shown Himself to be worthy of all our praise.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that has revealed the glory of God by causing us to come alive so that we may demonstrate to this world our jealous love of our God.