



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

Acts 17:10-15 ESV

Paul and Silas in Berea

¹⁰ The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they **received the word** with all **eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily** to see if these things were so. ¹² Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. ¹⁴ Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

[REVIEW]

As Paul has been getting further out in his travels, he's been narrowing down his strategy on how to deliver the Gospel. He goes to the synagogues first, to offer to his people the promise of Salvation, remembering that was the desire of Jesus and it's his heart too. He then proceeds to preach a message revealing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the promised savior King of the OT. This King would not only be the King of the Israelis, but He is the King of all men, as he was promised to all men from Gen. 3:15, and we also know from Abraham's promise of a descendant to do this was to all nations (Gen. 22:18). So, his evangelism is basically an Apologetic Argument as to Christ being this King, and that Salvation is found only in Him through repentance of sin. This makes the Gospel, the good news, a message of a King to a world that He has already overcome, and there is a treaty of peace extended (new covenant) of which without acceptance one dooms themselves to an eternity in Hell.

Now, ever since Chapter 16 with the arrival of this Gospel to Macedonia (Greece), representing the official launch of the Gentile campaign to reach the pagans and convert people outside the middle east, we have witnessed different ways in which the Gospel affects people.



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
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In Chapter 16 (Philippi) we saw a **Gospel that produces liberation**/freedom not just for the elite but to all men: the rich, the enslaved, and the blue-collar man. That to be freed from this world meant to be enslaved to Christ, for one cannot serve two masters. At the end of Chp. 16 we saw those that preferred the chains of this world quietly walk Paul and his companions to the edge of town and begged them to leave, to leave them in their bondage to this world. The lures of money, ease of their life, and earthly pleasure was too much in their eyes to leave behind.

Then in Chapter 17: 1-9 (Thessalonica) we saw the **Gospel produce jealousy**, a Godly Jealousy in the elect and prideful jealousy for those desiring to remain enslaved to this world. For the Thessalonian elect it had meant the promise of a better King, they had found a person worthy to follow and worship and that developed a jealousy or a desire for Christ above themselves (as seen in 1 & 2 Thess.). For the rest of them, led by deranged jealous Jews, their jealousy was about loving themselves more than Christ. They didn't want to lose their way, their prestige, their prominence in their community. They took bail money from Jason and chased Paul and his friends out of town.

[INTRODUCTION]

Luke is showing us that the Gospel, when it comes to different towns, with its' message of a new king, the requirements of repentance of sin, and a mandate of surrender, it all affects the different populations in different ways. Today as the messengers of this Gospel roll into Berea I want us to see how it **produces an attitude of discernment**, or a people who go looking seeking, or searching of God's will to discern if it's worth it to change sides.

Christ gave us a command to be this type of person, a searcher so we could learn how to discern God's good will for us:

Matthew 6:33 ESV

But **seek (to look for what is missing from your life)** first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
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The word seek – ζητέω (zēteō). vb. **to seek**. *To seek what is lost, what is due.*¹
To look for that which is missing. It goes along with the parable of **the Hidden Treasure**.

Matthew 13:44 ESV

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure **hidden** in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

We are to treat the message of the Gospel as something that should be valued, we should want to understand it, we should desire to obey it, it is to be thought of as the ULTIMATE TREASURE, and you should be willing to lose all of your earthly possessions to acquire it. The attitude of seeking, to discern is something the Christian must acquire.

The **other promise** Jesus gave us is that if we obey this principle, **we will find the Kingdom!**

Matthew 7:7-8 ESV

“Ask, and it will be given to you; **seek**, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and **the one who seeks finds**, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Discovering God’s Kingdom through discernment/seeking/searching, means to find eternal life, to find reason in our existence, to find purpose in our daily struggles, and to find joy even amidst the storms.

MP:

If you seek, you will find!

This discernment, or act of searching out for answers, will produce three different kinds of people in our text today: **Converts** (People on the lookout for real truth), **Connivers** (people on the hunt for arguments to justify their

¹ Merrill, R. (2014). [Seeking](#). D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
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beliefs), & **Comrades** (people on the lookout for opportunities to go the extra mile).

[READ THE TEXT]

[PRAY]

Paul and Silas in Berea

¹⁰ The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to **Berea**, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.

Berea lies 40 miles west/southwest of Thessalonica, it is not along the Egnatian Way. The next stop would have been Apolonia to the south, they went almost due west way off the beaten path. We don't know why whether this was to maneuver away from the jealous Jews, or they heard of the Bereans and their devoted synagogue of OT believers, but what I do know is that there were a lot of stops that got overlooked.

The Bereans were people that were searching for truth in the [Septuagint](#)². What I do see here is that God gave His Word to these people through the Jews in that town, God put a desire in their hearts to know the true God, and God elected to visit these people because many of them were His children he had put there as evidenced by this passage. There were many other towns with synagogues that God overlooked so my point here is if God is putting a desire in your heart to go looking for Him, don't deny it, this may be your one chance before He passes by.

When Paul and Silas arrive, after a rough but fruitful time in Philippi and Thessalonica, they have a much better welcome in Berea. Let's look back at v.11 and find the first thing that the Gospel will produce when it comes to those that seek God's Kingdom.

² The Septuagint (also known as the LXX) is a translation of the Hebrew Bible into the Greek language. The name *Septuagint* comes from the Latin word for "seventy." The tradition is that 70 (or 72) Jewish scholars were the translators behind the Septuagint.



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

¹¹Now these Jews were **more noble** than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all **eagerness, examining (seeking)** the Scriptures **daily** to see if these things were so **(to discern)**. ¹²Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

1. The Gospel will produce Converts, recipients of real truth.

Converts – people who go looking for truth. When God saves by Faith through Grace you will always see people who are open or desire to know the Truth about God, themselves, and this world because they have been prepared by God.

The Jews in our story are professed to be more **NOBLE**, now what is that? Noble means to be born of an aristocratic family, a blue blood if you will. People, whom because of their family name, have a perception about themselves, that they have a higher place in society. It means that they took their role as representatives for God in this world seriously, it was their right and privilege by birth.

That exact word for nobility εὐγενής (*eugenēs*), **open-minded**, formally, of noble character (Ac 17:11+)³ was used by the Historian Josephus to describe the Jews at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 ad. At the time of the destruction of the temple Caesar tore down the altar, defiled it with pork, removed all the stonework in the temple, and commanded the Jews to stop circumcising their male children. The noblest of Jews upon pain of death refused because of how they saw themselves in this world, as God's people and representatives. Their families were killed, and they were beaten and crucified themselves. That is some serious notions of nobility.⁴

These noble Jews in Berea received the Word with all eagerness for they knew that in God's Word was where they found their answers, their definitions of self, and what it was in the world they were to be doing. They took

³ Swanson, J. (1997). [*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁴ Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). [*The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged*](#) (pp. 323–324). Peabody: Hendrickson.



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

seriously being associated with the Most High God. So instead of turning off Paul or accept blindly what he was teaching, they went searching for answers, to see if he was wrong. They sat with him daily, made him give an account of what he was saying, so that they could weigh it against God's word for themselves. Because of this attitude of searching first, looking to discern what is right, they were rewarded with Grace, and believed in Jesus for eternal life.

The Gospel calls not just the Bereans to this type of investigation but it calls all of us to this type of life, because for all those that **seek the Kingdom will find it!**

God calls us all to eager examination not spiritual stagnation.

Part of the process to becoming more Kingdom minded, driven, committed, **NOBLE**, is to ask God to give you the Wisdom to discern His will.

James 1:5 ESV

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (especially looking for the Kingdom)

That's a pretty easy request to make, you want to understand the things of God and the Kingdom just ask, but you have got to be open to the answers. God has given His wisdom, and it is yours to grasp, you already have it in your hands!

Psalms 19:7 ESV

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. (the testimony/Law is your Bible)

We like the Bereans, are to act nobly, and we are to search out what we already have, we are to pray and ask for wisdom, and by this we keep those at bay that would seek to influence us and lead us astray.

Colossians 2:8 ESV



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Wherever you are, if you are serious about the Truth my friend then seeking Jesus will all your heart, I can tell you this, you will find answers, but are you looking in the right places? And if you are already a converted soul then I can tell you this as well. This must become a habit you cultivate; you must continue learning about the Gospel, the Kingdom, and your King for that is how you stay next to Him and retain your **own nobility**.

Romans 8:17 ESV

¹⁷and if children, **then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ**, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

For you too are a blue blood, you are nobility, you are an **heir to the throne of God**, and by seeking Him daily you will be living like it (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21).

If you seek Him, you will find Him, that IS a promise in scripture, but the expectation of scripture is that you ARE eager in your examination, and you flee spiritual stagnation. If not, then verse 13 shows us the dangerous alternative.

¹³But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds.

2. The Gospel will expose Connivers, deceivers of self and others.

Talk about carrying a grudge! Look, what this means is that these Jealous Jews, their envy, their covetousness, I don't know what has gotten under their skin, but they can't let this alone. I would assume that because of their ability to turn Berea against the brothers (v.14 says again they got them to leave) they would have had a large contingency, numbers on their side. Think about this it is a lot of work to organize a large amount of people in that day to



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

leave work and home to travel 40 miles just to protest someone that you don't like.

They would have been able to drown out reason, to drown out the evidence already poured through by the noble Jews, to drown out the sense and wisdom that had been discovered by seeking wisdom. The Gospel when it starts producing converts, people freed by the Gospel, it will also expose connivers, people who want it silenced for fear of things changing for the better of all. Instead, they chose to be ignorant and try to keep others in the dark to keep it better for them. And make no mistake it is usually for their earthly gain.

[ILLUSTRATION]

(Pro-Hamas Demonstrations) Let's say for example you have something you want to change, but the thing you want to change makes good common sense, then what do you do? Well, you isolate people who have time and low commitments, and you energize them with flattery, crying to them about injustices and inequity, and then based on that call you get them to march with you, because your message is one of just being fair. (Illustration of the pro Hamas marches in NYC and Washington DC.). There are connivers everywhere, people who get other people to come along with them and deny the Truth they see before their eyes.

You know as God's people though we are to be different, because in the conniving group are still people that are seriously looking for truth it's just that they have been misled. **Our job as the church is not to change the mind of fools but it is to call out the elect from the foolish.** The way you do that is you keep to the message of the Gospel, there is one Lord, He is King, you can know His will, you must repent, and put your trust in Him or there's Hell to pay. Unlike the Connivers let's remember it this way:

God calls us to faithful proclamation not hostile defamation.

While our role is not to use the same strategy and lie to others, and build up a big loud mob **(last 150 years of emotional altar calls)**, we are still called to speak.



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

2 Timothy 2:24-26 ESV

²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Our arguments are won with kindness not anger, not only that we are to act the opposite to those angry with us.

Romans 12:20 ESV

To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

It's hard even with our own countrymen that want to change state constitutions to unlimited abortion on demand, and that want to march for the sympathy of terrorists, that want to raise your taxes for an over legislated and diminished America. **BUT**, we are still called to kindness, you can still do it by expounding God's Word, for God's Word is the most Offensive message to sinful man! It is SO much better at it than you, and it has been given to open up men's eye's to truth not your anger.

There are people who are elect, who are lost walking among the Connivers of this world and the promise still applies to them, **If they are seeking Truth they will find it!** But if you and I are not patient with them then how will they ever hear it?

This type of commitment to God's Word, **to proclamation instead of defamation**, to put down one's anger for the sake of the Gospel, will help produce converts out of connivers and will help converts become even more discerning to their own role in gospel expansion. Let's go look at the last section of our story here and see how the Gospel works at helping the seekers discern what to do.



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

¹⁴ Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

3. The Gospel will dispatch Comrades, supporters of the faithful.

In this last section the Bereans see the signs and out of their collective wisdom, from the Word, they send Paul away. Not only that but they were also able to see the need to keep those that could train the brothers left behind so they keep Silas and Timothy (a devout Jew and Greek). They provide an escort for Paul to take him as far as Athens. It's almost 100 miles down the coast, a route traveled by the sea. So, the Bereans left home, and in comparison, to the Connivers, go twice as far for Paul and the Gospel, and stay with him until he is settled, and he sends them back for Timothy and Silas.

They were the ones best equipped for the journey, they understood what would be needed for the trip, and they were prepared to stay with him as long as needed. The Bereans didn't stop with looking for wisdom about Salvation in the Bible, they went all the way with the truth and lived out the ramifications of Salvation they saw in the Bible, love your brother as yourself for that is the [law of Christ](#)⁵, their new King (Mark 12:28-31)!

The Gospel not only saves us as a good work it saves us unto good works.

Anyone with any kind of discernment should be able to see that.

Galatians 6:20

⁵ [Galatians 6:2](#) states, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the **law of Christ**" (emphasis added). What exactly is the law of Christ, and how is it fulfilled by carrying each other's burdens? While the law of Christ is also mentioned in [1Corinthians 9:21](#), the Bible nowhere specifically defines what precisely is the law of Christ. However, most Bible teachers understand the law of Christ to be what Christ stated were the greatest commandments in [Mark 12:28-31](#), "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, 'The most important is, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'"



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the **law of Christ**.

You see when you seek wisdom in the scripture it is pretty easy to find, bear one another's burden is how you love and go the extra mile.

Philippians 2:3-5 ESV

³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility **count others more significant than yourselves**. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

It is easy to read but it is a hard thing to follow, but to do so is to simply model Christ. Who counted for us equality with His Father as something not to be grasped but put that down out of humility to be associated with us (Phil 2:8-11). To walk the extra mile with us, to incarnate into this world, to be a light in the darkness, yet to be despised and rejected, and he walked in our shoes, and did the work we could not accomplish, and He walked our path to Calvary. Any discerning person that calls Himself Christian today CANNOT say they shouldn't do the same! No, the Gospel has saved us BY the GOOD WORK of CHRIST and in that very act it CALLS US to the LAW of CHRIST, to BEAR one another's burdens! It is because of this that we humbly pick up our crosses and we walk with each other in this life, and we bear each other's burdens. AMEN...

[CHALLENGE]

So yes, we will be serious about our examination of the scriptures for God's Word was bought with the price of our Lord and His martyrs (Law of Christ begins with Loving God first).

So yes, we will proclaim and not defame for we understand that the connivers of the world hold within them the converts that God will call (for by grace we were once there ourselves).



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 54 The Search for Truth
By Pastor Jody May 11/12/2023**

So yes, we have the bandwidth to go the extra mile with our family for Jesus walked the road of Calvary for us (life was given unto us to do the works we were called to).

Let us all be better discerners of God's will, to be NOBLE seekers of Truth, better seekers of the Lost, and be ready for the call to action for we are a Kingdom Minded People. Amen.

[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, who by calling out our names before time, chose us to receive His good Grace, so that we would find Him.

Go in the name of the Son, that came on a Mercy Mission, to find us when we were still sinners, to show us the way home.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that has called us to a more NOBLE way, experiencing and living out the Law of Christ.