**The Apostle Paul’s Same Old Routine**

(Acts 17:1-9)

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

 An efficiency expert was giving a lecture to some bosses who wanted to be able to teach their employees how to do their jobs in the most efficient way. He concluded his lecture by saying, “Just don’t try these techniques *at home.”* One of the bosses asked, “Why, don’t they work at home?” The efficiency expert replied, “Well, for years I watched my wife’s breakfast-making routine, and I noticed that she made a lot of trips between the refrigerator, the stove, the cabinets, and the breakfast table—usually carrying just *one* thing at a time.” So one day I said to her, “Honey, why don’t you try carrying *several* things at once? That will make your breakfast-making routine more efficient.” The boss asked, “What happened? Didn’t it work?” And the expert replied, “Well, yes and no. It used to take her 20 minutes to make breakfast, and now I do it in ten.”

 Well, speaking of efficient routines, the Apostle Paul had one that he’d been using for *years,* and we’re about to see him use it *again* here in Acts 17. The story begins in the first two verses of our text, beginning in Verse 1, where we read:

 **“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” (Acts 17:1,2).**

Now here we see Paul engaging in the same ol’ routine he’d been employing for years. Every time he entered a new city, he made a *beeline* for the Jewish synagogue.

 But before we talk about that, did you notice that Paul just passed right *through* the cities of Amphipolus and Apollonia *without preaching the gospel.* So we have to begin our message by asking why he did that.

 A Calvinist might say that God didn’t choose any of the people in those cities to be saved, so He told Paul not to bother to preach in those cities. But we know God *doesn’t* choose who’ll be saved, so there has to be another explanation—and there is. It has to do with a *new* routine that Paul had only recently starting using. Remember, we saw in our earlier studies that Paul started out his ministry by just going from one small town to the next, and one day he realized that he was *never* going to reach the world that way. So after he examined his methods, and thought it prayerfully through, he decided to target *big* cities, and establish churches in those cities, and then let the gospel radiate out from those larger cities to the smaller ones around them. And the small cities of Amphipolus and Apollonia were in between the big city of Philippi, where Paul just left, and the big city of Thessalonica, where he was heading. So he felt comfortable passing through those smaller towns without preaching the gospel, knowing that they’d hear the gospel from believers in those larger cities down the road.

 And we know that Paul’s new policy *worked,* because after Paul established a church in Thessalonica, he wrote to them and said,

 **“...from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, *but also in every place...”* (I Thessalonians 1:8).**

So Paul may have skipped preaching in Amphipolus and Apollonia, but eventually they heard the gospel. And that means that someday in heaven, you’ll probably get to meet believers who lived in those cities!

 But as we get back to Paul’s *old* routine, we have to ask why Paul kept going to Jewish synagogues, and then told the Romans,

 **“...I speak *to you Gentiles,* inasmuch as *I am the apostle* *of the Gentiles”* (Romans 11:13).**

 If Paul claimed to speak to *Gentiles,* and insisted that he was *the apostle* of the Gentiles, why did he keep going to Jewish synagogues to preach?

 The answer lies in the *context* of that verse in Romans 11, where Paul wrote,

 **“...inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, *I magnify mine office:* If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, *and might save some of them”* (Romans 11:13,14).**

The reason Paul went from synagogue to synagogue preaching to Jews was to *provoke* Jews *to get saved.*

Now that’s a different tactic than the one the Lord and His 12 apostles used. They *invited* Jews to get saved, and some of them did. But the nation of Israel as a whole *didn’t,* they *rejected* Him instead. So before Paul went *to the Gentiles,* God sent him *to the Jews* to give them one last chance to be saved, using this *new* method of *provocation.* That explains what God said in Romans 10:21:

 **“...to Israel He saith, *All day long* I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people”**

After God’s people in Israel rejected Christ, God *bent over backwards* to reach out to them through the ministry of the Apostle Paul. I mean, if *inviting* Jews to get saved didn’t work, maybe *provoking* them would.

 And Paul says that he provoked them by *magnifying* his office as the apostle of the Gentiles. And that word “magnify” means *to make things look bigger.* If you played with a magnifying *glass* when you were a kid, you may remember how they work. You’d focus on something, and then draw the magnifying glass closer to your face to make the object look larger.

 But yow do you magnify an *office,* like the office of an apostle? It’s not like Paul could put a magnifying glass on himself, and then draw it close to the face of the Jews. So instead, he went around *telling* the Jews that he was the apostle of the Gentiles. We would say *he got in their face* and provoked them!

 But how would that provoke a Jew *to believe the gospel?* Well, look back at that Romans 11:13,14 reference, where Paul says he hoped to provoke unsaved Jews “to emulation.” That word emulation means *jealousy,* as we see in the *context* of that Romans 11 verse, where it says of the Jews,

 **“...through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, *for to provoke them to jealousy.*..I magnify mine office: If by any means I may *provoke to emulation* them which are my flesh...” (Romans 11:11,13,14).**

 So emulation is a form of jealousy. But how would magnifying his office make the Jews jealous of Paul? It was because he was doing what *they* were *supposed* to be doing! He wasa taking the gospel to the Gentiles, and that was *their* job. But when they refused to get saved *and do it,* God raised up *Paul* to do it.

 So God was using Paul to make the Jews jealous *of his ministry to the Gentiles.* And that made them want to get saved and *help him* go to the Gentiles. You see, emulation is jealous, but it’s a specific *kind* of jealousy. Emulation makes someone *so* jealous, they want to *emulate* you. And *emulate* means to make someone want to *equal you* at what you’re doing, or even *excel you* at what you’re doing. Emulation makes someone say, “I am *so* jealous of what you’re doing, I’ll show you that I can do it as good as you can, or *better.”*

 And that’s what Paul was hoping to do to the Jews, provoke them to emulation! God told him to go around to the synagogues and magnify what he was doing among the Gentiles to make Jews so jealous that they’d want to get saved and *equal or excel him* at what he was doing among the Gentiles. He wanted a Jew to say, “I’ll show you that I can reach the Gentiles as good or better than you can!”

 And some of the Jews *did* get saved, and they became Paul’s *equals* in reaching the Gentiles. The apostle mentions a few of them by name in Colossians 4:10,11, where he said,

 **“Aristarchus...and Marcus...And Jesus...*who are of the circumcision*...are my *fellow-workers*...”**

 The *fellow* part of that word “fellowworkers” means *equal.* So those were some of the Jews who got saved and became Paul’s equals *in reaching the Gentiles.*

But not a lot of Jews got saved and helped him, because this is primarily a *Gentile* dispensation. But this primarily Gentile dispensation is going to *end* at the Rapture, and then an entire *nation* of Jews will believe, and *excel* what Paul did among the Gentiles, just as God predicted in Romans 11:12, where it says of the Jews,

 **“if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; *how much more their fulness?”***

After the Jews fell when they stoned Stephen, God raised up *Paul* to go to the Gentiles, and he brought the “riches” of God’s grace to people around the world. But when Israel’s “fulness” comes in the kingdom of heaven on earth, *way* more Gentiles are going to get saved! Look how the prophet Isaiah describes the kingdom in Isaiah 11:6-9:

 **“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”***

Now Paul did a pretty bang up job of reaching the Gentiles, but knowledge of the Lord doesn’t cover the earth as thoroughly as the waters cover the sea in our own day. But *it will* when a nation of Jews gets saved after the rapture, and God re-introduces a primarily *Jewish* dispensation. You know, the most wonderful thing about the kingdom isn’t that you won’t have to worry that wild beasts will eat your farm animals. The most wonderful thing about the kingdom will be that *everybody on the planet* will know about the Lord.

 But in the meantime, *God’s Word* says that the way to reach Jews is to magnify Paul’s office of apostle of the Gentiles by magnifying his epistles, instead of magnifying the Lord’s ministry to the Jews in the four gospels, as most Christians do. We have God’s word on it!

 Now before we talk about how the church in Thessalonica got started, I want to say something about the church Paul just *left* in Philippi. Look what Paul wrote to his beloved Philippians in Philippians 4:15,16:

 **“...*in the beginning of the gospel,* when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. *For even in Thessalonica* ye sent once and again unto my necessity”**

As you can see, when Paul left the Macedonian city of Philippi, those Philippians sent money to Paul “once and again.” Now don’t forget, verse 2 of our text here in Acts 17 says that Paul was only in Thessalonica *for three sabbath days,* or a total of fourteen days *in between* those three sabbath days. That means the Philippians sent him *two gifts* in *two weeks.*

And according to what I can ascertain from the internet, it would take a healthy messenger about three and a half days to walk the 100 miles from Philippi to Thessalonica, making it a 200 mile, 7 day round trip. so if they sent Paul *two gifts* in *two weeks,* that means they sent some poor guy with money for Paul, and when he got back to Philippi a week later, they sent him *back* with *another* gift for the apostle!

 Can’t you just picture how that went down? That poor man got back from walking 200 miles in seven days, and they say, “Well done! Here’s another gift to take to Paul!” How’d you like to walk *400 miles* in *14 days?*

You say, “Maybe they used more than one messenger.” And that could be. But remember, the church in Philippi was made up of *mostly women,* and the few men they had probably had jobs, and couldn’t call off two weeks in a row. The Philippian jailer certainly couldn’t leave his wife to feed and guard the prisoners!

 So I think the Philippians used the *same* messenger to take *both* their back-to-back gifts to Paul. As a matter of fact, we even know his name. Paul wrote them and said,

 **“...Epaphroditus...*your messenger,* and he that ministered *to my wants*...was sick nigh unto death*....*Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: *Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death,* not regarding his life...” (Philippians 2:25-30).**

 Now here, did you notice Paul didn’t call Epaphroditus *one of* the messengers who ministered to his wants, as he would if they had *two?* Epaphroditus was the *only* messenger they had to take that money to Paul to minister to his needs.

 Now we know he didn’t get sick from all that walking because Paul didn’t write Philippians until ten years later. But doesn’t Epaphroditus sound like the kind of guy who would walk 400 miles in 14 days and work himself nearly *to death* to serve the Lord? When you hear about Christians like that, I hope you do what Paul said to do and hold them in reputation, for they are the *real* heroes in life.

 Now in verse 3 of our text, we read *more* about Paul’s routine when it tells us that in that synagogue he was

 **“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” (Acts 17:3).**

Now here you have an example of how Paul *stuck* to his routine *no matter how much it cost him,* for he just left Philippi where he preached that same ‘ol routine message, and they *beat and imprisoned him.* So you’d think that he would dial it back a little, and not be quite as aggressive with the gospel. But that was *not his routine.* That’s not how the Apostle Paul rolled, as we would say today. Look what he told the Thessalonians in I Thessalonians 2:1,2:

 **“...even after that we had suffered before, *and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi,* we were bold in our God to speak unto *you* the gospel of God...”**

Paul didn’t let the abuse he received in Philippi stop him, or even slow him down. If anything, it *spurred him on.* Listen, it took a lot of courage to go into a Jewish synagogue and allege that *Jesus* was Israel’s Christ. It took courage because they didn’t *want* to believe that the lowly carpenter from Nazareth was their Christ. They wanted a King riding on a white horse, not a carpenter riding a donkey, as the Lord did on that first Palm Sunday.

 And the idea that their messiah would be crucified *really* tripped them up, as Paul tells us in I Corinthians1:23, where he declared,

 **“...we preach Christ crucified, *unto the Jews a stumblingblock*...”**

To understand why this was such a problem, you have to remember that crucifixion was the death of *criminals,* not *messiahs.* It was the equivalent of the electric chair or the gas chamger. If you died that way, you looked more like a *crook* than a *Christ.* So when the Lord Jesus died that way, it caused a lot of Jews to *stumble* on Him instead of *believing* on Him.

 But why would that trip Jews up if Old Testament Jews like Abraham and David got saved by believing that someday Messiah would die for their sins, as most Christians believe and teach? The answer is, that’s *not* what they believed to be saved. It’s certainly not what *Abraham* believed. Galatians 3:8 says,

 **“God...preached before *the gospel* unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”**

 That word “saying” there tells you that what follows are the very words of the gospel that God preached to Abraham, and it wasn’t, “Someday Christ will die for your sins.” Instead, the gospel that he believed to be saved was, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” When he believed that, God saved him from his sins by applying the blood of Christ to his heart. So he was saved *by* the blood, as we are today, but he wasn’t saved by believing *in* the blood, as we are today (Rom.3:25).

 Now there *were* verses in the Old Testament that said that Christ would have to die. The reason it took Paul three sabbath days to *convince* them He’d hav eto die is that Jews didn’t *like* the verses that said their Christ would have to die. They didn’t like to hear that their Messiah would be killed by His enemies. They liked the verses that said He’d come and kill *their* enemies. Those are the kind of verses that John the Baptists’s father quoted in Luke 1:68-75:

 **“...the Lord God of Israel...hath...raised up an horn of salvation for us...that we should be saved *from our enemies*, and from the hand of all that hate us...that we *being delivered out of the hand of our enemies* might serve Him.”**

The Jews *loved* verses like that! But they *ignored* the verses that said that their Christ would come and die.

 To be fair, the verses that said He would have to die didn’t always make it clear that they were talking about Israel’s coming Christ. So when the Lord Jesuscame and died, most of the Jews didn’t believe on Him. But Paul spent three sabbath days telling them that christ *needed* to die to fulfill those Scriptures, *and* so He could die for their sins.

 And when it says at the end of Acts 17:3 that Paul told them “that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ,” that wouldn’t have been hard to reason with them out of the Scriptures would it?

 For one thing, He was from the tribe in Israel that the Scriptures said Christ would rise from. Genesis 49:10 says,

 ***“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,* nor a lawgiver from between his feet, *until Shiloh come;* and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be”**

“Shiloh” is one of the many names for Christ in Scripture, and the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the kingly tribe of Judah.

 Paul probably *also* quoted what the Prophet Micah said in Micah 5:2:

 **“Bethlehem...*out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel;* whose goings forth have been from of old, *from everlasting.”***

As I’m sure you know, the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem, though his goings forth were of old. He existed in eternity past with God as a member of the Trinity.

 I bet Paul also quoted what Isaiah had to say about Israel’s coming Christ when he wrote,

 **“...*your God will come*...He will come and save you. *Then* the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man *leap*...”**

**(Isaiah 35:4-6).**

Paul would have quoted that passage because he knew *that the Jews knew* that the Lord Jesus did all those things—things that *their Bibles* said *Christ* would do. So he opened *his* Bible and alleged that Jesus was their Christ.

 And hearing all that evidence from the Old Testament, you’d think that a great multitude of the Jews in Thessalonica’s synagogue would have believed. But that’s not what happened in the next verse of our text, where it says,

 **“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” (Acts 17:4).**

Only “some” of the Jews believed, in spite of *3 sabbath days of evidence from the Scriptures.* But a great multitude of *Gentiles* believed! I don’t think they were allowed *in* the synagogue, but if they weren’t, we’ve seen evidence that they were certainly allowed to hang around *outside* of Israel’s synagogues and listen in. So they knew the Scriptures too, and *they* were convinced at the evidence that Paul brought that Jesus was their Christ, and that He had to die.

 And what you’re seeing there is a picture of what we see today in the Body of Christ. The Body is made up of Jews and Gentiles in one body, but the vast majority of the members of Christ’s body are Gentiles.

 But there are *some* Jews who believe, and verse 3 says that the ones who believed in Thessalonica “consorted” with Paul and Silas. That word means *to associate with* someone. Now before this, *no* Jew would associate with Paul. They considered him a turncoat *traitor* who turned his back on Judaism, and was running around with those icky unclean Gentiles. But some of the Jews in Thessalonica were open to what the Scriptures taught, and the Scriptures can overcome some pretty powerful prejudices like that, can’t they?

 Now the Jews who *believed* in Thessalonica probably *rejoiced* to see such a great multitude of Gentiles believe on Israel’s God. But the Jews that *didn’t* believe were not quite as joyful, as we see in the next verse of our text:

 **“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people” (Acts 17:5).**

When those Jews who refused to believe saw all those *Gentiles* believe, it moved them with *envy.*

 Now *envy* is *another* form of jealousy. Emulation is the *good* kind of jealousy, and *envy* is the *bad* kind. So when Paul magnified his office to provoke the Jews to *jealousy,* instead of being provoked to *emulation—*the *good* kind, those unbelieving Jews were provoked to *envy,* the *bad* kind of jealousy. They said to themselves, “How come *we* couldn’t get all those Gentiles to believe, and start putting money in *our* offering box!”

 It’s the same thing that happened back in Acts 13, where it says that

 **“...the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, *they were filled with envy,* and spake against...Paul” (Acts 13:44,45).**

 So here we see that unsaved Jews had a routine too—a routine of envying the results that Paul was getting among the Gentiles. Only here in Acts 17, they were getting more *violent* in their envy. They found “certain lewd fellows of the baser sort” to lead an assault on the house where they thought Paul was staying.

 Now the word “lewd” means *lustful,* and “base” means *lowly—*like the *base* of something is always the lowest part, right? So these were some pretty *lowlife* dudes. Those unsaved Jews probably found them on street corners, waiting around for the hookers to come by to satisfy their lusts.

 And those lewd, base men got a company of citizens together, and the next thing you know *the entire city’s in an uproar.* If you want an example of how a little sin like *envy* can *snowball* and end in disaster, *that’s it!* That verse started out with *envy* in the *heart* of a *few* unsaved men, and two lines later it ended with *a major city in complete upheaval.*

 So when you get to envying things, just remember this passage here—and *then* remember that envy *killed the Son of God,* as it says in Matthew 27:17,18, where we’re told that

**“Pilate...knew that *for envy* they had delivered Him.”**

Those unsaved Jews envied *the Lord’s popularity among the people,* and their envy led them *to deliver Him to Pilate.* So don’t let envy get so much as a *toehold* in your life, or it will snowball into an *avalanche* of misery and destruction in your life, and in the lives of the people around you as well.

 Now it’s easy to understand why they assaulted the house of Jason, when you consider what Paul wrote in Romans 16:21:

 **“Lucius, and *Jason*, and Sosipater, *my kinsmen,* salute you”**

If that’s the same Jason, he was a member of Paul’s kinfolk. And we think that it *was* the same one, because he’s the only other Jason in the Bible. So naturally those unsaved Jews thought they’d find Paul at his house.

 But we know that Paul wasn’t dumb enough to stay with relatives, because the next two verses of Acts 17 begin by saying,

 **“And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;**

 **“Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.”**

 Now when it says that those unsaved Jews got those lewd fellows to draw Paul and Silas to the rulers of the city, you can be sure that Satan was behind that. And what you’re seeing there is a downard progression from what we saw in Chapter 16, where Satan used a better class of men to draw Paul to the rulers of the city. Remember how

 **“...a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination...brought her masters much gain by soothsaying...But Paul...said to the spirit, *I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.*..And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, *they* caught Paul and Silas, and drew them...unto the rulers...saying, These men...exceedingly trouble our city” (Acts 16:16-20).**

Only a short time ago, Satan used *some local businessmen,* some *city merchants* to sic the law on Paul. Here in Acts 17, he’s using a much lower class of rabble to do it.

 And that begs the question of just how low Satan can go. I almost entitled this lesson “The Limbo Dance of the Devil.” Do you remember that ancient Chubby Checker song called “The Limbo Rock”? I have to tell you, the older and chubbier I get, the less chubby he looks in those old pictures!

 Now the charge they leveled against Paul in verse 6 was true. Paul *was* turning the world upside down! But the world *needed* to be turned upside down, because it was *already* upside down. *Adam* turned it upside down when he sinned, so turning it upside down *again* would make it *right side up.*

 And the way that Paul was turning the world upside down was the *nice* way to do it, because he was doing it *by preaching the grace of God.* But once this dispensation of grace ends at the Rapture, the gloves are comin’ off, and God is going to turn the world upside down in His *wrath,* not with grace.

 First, He’s gonna go after the Jews, because they should have known better. II Kings 21:12-15 says,

 **“Thus saith the LORD...I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, *both his ears shall tingle.* And...I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, *and turning it upside down*...because they have done...evil”**

Now that’s actually talking about how God planned to allow *Old Testament* Jews to be taken into captivity because they broke God’s covenant. But you can tell by the way that those verses are worded that this passage is one of the many that will have a double fulfillment, one in time past, and the other in the ages to come. In that day, God is going to *start* turning the world upside down by turning *Israel* upside down *with judgment.* Peter wrote,

 **“...judgment must begin *at the house of God...*at *us*...” (I Peter 4:17).**

But after God turns *Israel* upside down, He plans to turn *the whole world upside down,* as Isaiah said in Isaiah 24:1,19:

 **“Behold, the LORD maketh *the earth* empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth *it* upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof....The earth is *utterly broken down*, the earth *is clean dissolved,* the earth is moved exceedingly.”**

 That kind of gives new meaning to that old song, “He’s got the whole world in His hands.” I mean, that sounds nice and all, but one of these days God is going to fix all that’s *wrong* with mankind by taking the world in His hands and turning it upside down and *shaking it in judgment* to fix it.

 But for now, God wants the world turned upside down with *grace,* and *not* with angry petitions, or protest marches, etc. If you’re trying to turn the world right side up by becoming a political activist, *please* stop calling yourself a followers of the Apostle Paul, for there’s absolutely nothing Pauline about what you’re doing. Paul turned the world upside down with the preaching of grace! It turned *my life* upside down, how about yours?

 But now, if this phony charge of doing things that were contrary to Caesar sounds familiar, it should, for that’s what they charged *the Lord* with in Luke 23:1,2, where we read that

 **“...the whole multitude...led Him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, *and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar*, saying that *He Himself* is Christ a King.”**

And listen, this tactic of sic-ing the law on believers works every time, as we see in the final two verses of our text:

 **“And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.**

 **“And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go” (Acts 17:8,9).**

Now if this *reaction* to this tactic of sic-ing the law on believers sounds familiar, it’s because it’s the same reaction the Jews got from Pilate when

 **“...Pilate sought to release Him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, *thou art not Caesar's friend:* whosoever maketh himself a king *speaketh against Caesar”* (John 19:12).**

Pilate had the Lord executed because of that trumped-up charge. And you might not be aware of this, but thse unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica killed some of the believers in Thessalonica. Look what Paul told the saints that remained in that city in I Thessalonians 2:14,15:

 **“...ye...became followers of the churches...in Judaea...*for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen,* even as they have of the Jews: *Who both killed the Lord Jesus,* *and their own prophets...*”**

He told them, as it were, “The Jews killed the Lord and their prophets, and now you’re suffering the same things from your countrymen,” the rabble and citizens of the city. That means they were suffering *death* from the countrymen that those unsaved Jews riled up!

 Did you ever wonder why Paul picked *the Thessalonian church* to write,

 **“I would not have you to be ignorant...*concerning them which are asleep,* that ye sorrow not...For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven...*and the dead in Christ shall rise first:* Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds” (I Thessalonians 4:13-17).**

 The “dead in Christ” in Thessalonica didn’t die of malaria. They died at the hands of their countrymen, because they got accused of doing things contrary to the king. And the further you stay away from men who are trying to pervert *this* nation, the more likely you won’t die the same way. Be Pauline, and preach *grace* instead!