



HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions
Week 5: Oct 10-16

**WE RECOMMEND YOU SELECT 1-3 QUESTIONS BELOW FOR YOUR DISCUSSION.
FEEL FREE TO MODIFY THEM TO BETTER FIT YOUR GROUP SITUATION.**

“Fake news” is a label made popular in politics and social media. It’s a natural byproduct of this information age where endless truth claims are broadcast quickly and easily. In such an age, how do we filter out the junk and instead give our attention to what’s real? And not only with political issues, but how about with the gospel? In this age, we need to hone our skills or habits for distinguishing between what’s fake news and what’s truly good news!

MAIN TEXT: Acts 17:1-15

CONNECT

1. What comes to your mind when you think about fake news? Do you just try to ignore it or does it make you respond with anger, frustration, or some other emotion?

“Fake news” does not come up in the sermon, but it’s being used here as a modern-day illustration for what will happen in this chapter when Paul and Silas visit Thessalonica and Berea. This question may be relevant in this political season; however, PLEASE don’t ask this with a “political” objective or agenda! We don’t want to get into a discussion about politics, but it might be helpful to think about how prone we are to falling for headlines or other claims that aren’t true.

2. How was this past week for you? What was the highlight?

LEARN

3. Pastor Thomas pointed out how verse 5 says the Jews (likely the Jewish leaders) were jealous of Paul and Silas. Why were these leaders jealous and what does that reveal about their true motivations behind the charges in verses 6-7?

These Jewish leaders are jealous because of the response to the gospel in v. 4 preached by Paul. These leaders come up with accusations about Paul and Silas, but those accusations are only partially true and are being fueled by jealousy rather than accuracy.

4. Two charges are made about the early Church in verses 6-7.¹ Think about both of them. In what ways are these charges true and in what sense might they be untrue?

The two charges are (1) that “These men...have turned the world upside down,” (see the footnote below) and (2) that “they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” The first claim—especially when understood from the NIV and NET translations—has an exaggerated tone. The early Christians had disturbed the status quo in some places, but that was about the extent of the “trouble” they had caused. The second claim is only partially true as well. Yes, the gospel makes the claim that Jesus is Lord, but it doesn’t seek to overthrow Caesar or any other government. See, for example, 1 Pet 2:13-17. Remember that these charges are inspired by jealousy, not truth.

5. What qualities did Pastor Thomas mention that the Bereans had that make them receptive to Paul and Silas’ teaching?

The Bereans “received the word with eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (v. 11). Thomas gives attention to both *eagerness* (using the illustration of a flat tire) and *examining*.

6. Paul can’t stay in one place for long until he’s run out of town! This could feel defeating, but what do you notice about Paul’s response whenever opposition comes?

This doesn’t come up in the sermon, but is certainly a pattern we see in the text. Paul could feel discouraged and take the opposition as a sign that “God isn’t blessing his ministry.” It should only be easy, right? (That’s sarcastic.) No, Paul knows that God is at work even as he’s being beaten, imprisoned, falsely accused, and chased out of town.

APPLY

7. At least part of the reputation of the early Church was that it had “turned the world upside down” or “caused trouble all over the world.” What kind of reputation do you think Calvary should have in Erie, Boulder and Thornton?

The intent here is to imagine what kind of reputation we should have in our local communities. What should the average outsider unbeliever think about Calvary? What should our local mayors and other government officials think of us? What should the homeless think about us? What should the other churches think about us? What should local businesses think about us? This is an invitation to imagine and then (time permitting) ask what one or two things you could do to help build that reputation.

8. As Jesus-followers, we do proclaim “that there is another king, Jesus,” yet we aren’t seeking to overthrow the government (see 1 Pet 2:13-17)! How could the gospel make us better citizens of earthly “kingdoms” rather than a threat to them?

¹ The phrase in v. 6, “turned the world upside down” (ESV), can also be understood as “caused trouble all over the world” (NIV) or “stirred up trouble throughout the world” (NET).

This isn't an issue raised directly in the sermon, but it does somewhat indirectly relate to the text. Ironically, we should become better citizens for our earthly "kings" when we give our ultimate allegiance to King Jesus. One example might be that we have more realistic expectations for and greater grace toward our earthly government when we have our ultimate hope set on God's Kingdom.

9. We are just one-click-away from unlimited quantities of teaching and preaching through podcasts, streaming videos, and other online resources. In light of the Bereans' example, how should we be "examining the Scriptures daily to see if [what we're hearing or watching] is so"?

This is a core question or issue from both the text and the sermon. How do we emulate the Bereans so that we use Scripture as our fixed reference point for truth and the claims of others?

10. What else did you find significant, challenging, or encouraging from this week's sermon?