

“Neck Deep in Greece!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. **TY - Ed Hunt**(Samoan Band); **Calvin Russell** A/V Father’s Day DVD.
- 1.2. **Fathers fight dragons almost daily.** They hurry away from the breakfast table...off to the arena which is sometimes called an office or a workshop. There, with callused, practiced hands, they tackle the dragon with 3 heads: weariness, work, & monotony. They never quite win the fight, but they never give up. Knights in shining armor as they march away, to each new workday.
- 1.3. 3 kids bragging about fathers:
 - 1.3.1. **1st** My dad’s so smart he can talk for **1 hour** on any subject.
 - 1.3.2. **2nd** My dad’s so smart he can talk for **2 hours** on any subject.
 - 1.3.3. **3rd** My dad’s so smart he can talk for **3 hours** & doesn’t even need a subject!
- 1.4. Released from jail in Philippi, Paul & Silas with **sleeves** rolled up, **minds** engaged, & **hearts** ablaze,...head deeper into Greece!
 - 1.4.1. **Enthusiasm, zeal, drive, vision...**these are the characteristics of a person who is **fully alive!** (*living the abundant life*)
 - 1.4.2. John Powell describes in his book **Fully Human, Fully Alive** “Fully alive people are not necessarily happy all the time. No they experience failure as well as success. They are open to both pain & pleasure. They have many questions & some answers. They cry & they laugh. They dream & they hope. The only thing that remains alien to their experience of life is passivity & apathy. They say a strong “yes” to **life** & a resounding “amen” to **love**. They feel the strong stings of growing, but their sleeves are always rolled up, their minds are whirring, & their hearts are ablaze.”¹
- 1.5. **Full life** – The abundant life, comes from Jn.10:10.
 - 1.5.1. **The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**
 - 1.5.2. The **thief** came to take advantage or even kill the sheep; **in contrast**, the **Good Shepherd** came to **benefit** the sheep.
 - 1.5.2.1. **He gives life which is not constricted but overflowing.**
 - 1.5.2.2. The **thief** takes life; **Christ** gives it to the full!
- 1.6. So strap on your **hiking boots** & let’s see if we can keep up with Paul.

¹ Adapted from Chuck Swindoll; Acts 17; pg.151.

2. **THESSALONIANS! (1-9)**

- 2.1. **THIS JESUS!** (1-4)
- 2.2. Following the *Egnatian Way* (main highway through Macedonia) they arrive in Thes.
- 2.3. (1) **Philippi to Amphipolis**(33 miles); **Amphipolis to Apollonia**(27 miles); **Apollonia to Thessalonica**(10 miles?). [Prob stayed in Inn's in 1st 2 cities]
- 2.4. **Thessalonica** – the crown jewel of Macedonia, placed in a striking setting on the Thermaic Gulf by the Aegean Sea. [2nd largest city in Greece...& still is]
 - 2.4.1. Behind it the **majestic mountains** of Greece, including the fabled mount Olympus.
 - 2.4.2. It had a **nice harbor**, was the chief center of commerce, & military strength. Nearby **Hot Springs** made it a fashionable luxury resort.
- 2.5. (2) **Three reminders:**
 - 2.5.1. [1] **Reasoning** – “To select, distinguish, then to **revolve** in the mind.”
 - 2.5.1.1. “To have *give & take* conversation, using the OT.”
 - 2.5.2. [2] **Explaining** – “To open”, “to place alongside”, “to present evidence”
 - 2.5.2.1. Making them **clear** so the people could see that the Messiah must die & rise again.
 - 2.5.3. [3] **Demonstrating** – He gave evidence. He placed his own illustrations alongside Scripture to strengthen his argument.
 - 2.5.3.1. Result? **Jesus is the Christ!** [*suffer/atonement & rise again/proof of victory*]
 - 2.5.4. Paul presented the gospel **accurately, clearly, & practically.**
 - 2.5.4.1. **Q: Are you able to do the same?**
- 2.6. **UPSIDE DOWN!** (5-9)
- 2.7. (5) Like **magnets**, some people are **drawn closer**(4), & others are **repelled** by it.
- 2.8. Evil men from the marketplace – It seems like every big city has these guys.
 - 2.8.1. They don't have jobs but just hang around & harass others in the marketplace. They were the city **loafers & hoodlums.**
 - 2.8.2. They swarm Jason's house where the missionaries had been staying.
 - 2.8.2.1. (Like swarming *Gordon Oney's house*, for housing *Dennis Strittmatter*)
- 2.9. (6) 3 unlikely desperados “*upset the world!*”
- 2.10. **Turned the world upside down** – (adapted from *Herschel Ford; Acts*)
- 2.11. In a sense the charge was **true. Christianity is revolutionary!**
 - 2.11.1. The world today needs turning **upside down**, or **right side up.**
 - 2.11.2. This **revolution** must take place in the **hearts** of individuals.
 - 2.11.2.1. [from **revolve**=a complete circular turn]
 - 2.11.3. **The way to change the world is to change the individuals in it.**
 - 2.11.3.1. You can't have a **better world w/o better people!**

- 2.12. When **Christ** comes into a life He turns it **upside down**. **How?**
- 2.12.1. Jesus turns our **beliefs** upside down – The things we once thought were **false**, now we believe to be **true**.
- 2.12.2. Jesus turns our **pleasures** upside down – What we used to find pleasurable, vs. now.
- 2.12.3. Jesus turns our **home life** upside down – Different level of home commitment.
- 2.12.4. Jesus turns our **hopes** upside down – From a **hopeless life** He gives us a **hope of heaven & eternal life**.
- 2.13. So, **First**, the world is wrong side up; **Second**, the world must be turned upside down; **Third**, we are the men to set it right.
- 2.13.1. Father's, here is your Fathers Day challenge! **May we be the change!**
- 2.13.2. **Let's "flip our Valley" ...1 heart at a time!**
- 2.13.2.1. Let's start w/**our own hearts** being touched!
- 2.14. Let's learn how to **care & not only believe!**
- 2.14.1. You may **believe** there are kids starving, but do you **care?** (see diff)
- 2.14.2. What we need to **change** about us is what we **care** about **not** what we **believe!**
- 2.15. Men, we have the opportunity to *unwrap God for people!* 😊

3. **BEREAN'S! (10-15)**

- 3.1. **RECEIVE & SEARCH!** (10-15)
- 3.2. He targets another town for the gospel...& the way they go.
- 3.3. **Berea** – a smaller community located about 50 miles from Thessalonica.
- 3.3.1. The atmosphere is different. [Today, Veria]
- 3.3.2. They were **fair(noble)-minded**, or had *noble-character*, (i.e.) they were **sensitive & responsive** to the truth.
- 3.4. **How?** 2 ways:
- 3.5. **Received the word with readiness** –
- 3.5.1. Not arms folded, with a critical heart.
- 3.5.1.1. [Some think that's actually spiritual, no that's critical]
- 3.5.2. **Some love apologetics & forget it's about loving people!**
- 3.6. **They searched the Scriptures to back up these things were right** –
- 3.6.1. A spirit, **not** to prove him wrong, but prove it right.
- 3.6.2. Obviously dangerous for us to **blindly accept** what people teach.
- 3.6.2.1. That's how cults get started.
- 3.6.3. **Instead ask: Did Jesus/Gospels teach it? Did Acts/early church reveal it? Did epistles expound on it?**
- 3.6.3.1. May we always ask, "*does the bible or Jesus say*"...rather than "*what does this man or this movement say*"!

- 3.7. As an **athlete** needs to keep fit in their core exercises; and **musicians** better practice their scales; so **Christians** must exercise God's Word.
- 3.7.1. **Jesus is never boring & always relevant!** (Erwin mcManus)
- 3.8. **Fully alive people** don't always have it easy:
- 3.8.1. They do however know how to handle **life's storms** with **enthusiasm, grace, & balance**.
- 3.8.2. If Paul could give us 4 ropes to moor/tie down our ship, they'd be:
- 3.8.3. **[1] Stay determined** – Paul had the **courage** to stay on course in spite of hardships, beatings, even public slander.
- 3.8.4. **[2] Expect rejection** – When truth is declared, not all will receive.
- 3.8.4.1. If nobody rejects it, we probably aren't telling the **whole truth**.
- 3.8.4.2. If they reject it, remember, they are rejecting **God** not you.
- 3.8.4.2.1. **Q-TIP = Quit Taking It Personal!**
- 3.8.5. **[3] Don't wait for appreciation** – not always expressed at the right time. No one held banquets in Paul's honor.
- 3.8.5.1. But we can't survive w/o **encouragement**, & our most unfailing source of that is **Christ!!!** [He cheers us on; reminds us what we're fighting for; & supplies the power to win the victory!]
- 3.8.6. **[4] Be enthusiastic** – enthusiastic means "one inspired (by a god)"
- 3.8.6.1. It's from 2 Greek words "en" & "theos", "in" & "God".
- 3.8.6.2. To be **enthusiastic** then is to be **inspired by God**.
- 3.9. **Prayer:** Lord, where our life is flickering, stoke the divine fire in our hearts!