

Living Right Side Up in an Upside Down World

I. Announce:

- A. Slide1-4 Lar/AL: Calv Kids. **Welcome**. Starting up. **Missions**. Harvest.
- B. Slide5 C@R: Jeff/Paula (Safe Families). Charlotte (Unaccompanied Minor Program)
- C. Slide6 Wed Night Identity: David Pham, missionary (NZ-Nepal) *God's workmanship*.
- D. Slide7 My Faith Votes: today after service **Donna and Barb** will be in the info booth to answer any questions about **voting registration** and helping you get set up. **You can check your voting status or register if you're not**. Multiple ipads. *Quick 2-3min*.
1. **Voting Thoughts: So which is it?** Vote your party. Vote your Conscience. Vote your values. Lesser of two evils? [15 mill christians not registered to vote]
 2. We are **discipled** all week long by **pundits & memes**. I challenge us as believers *that our political engagement would be a matter of public holiness*
- E. **Problem:**(CT) *"Almost 90% of Republicans say Democrats are brainwashed and hateful, and the numbers are even higher the other way around. Sadly, these dynamics are paralleled in the church."* How about a little more charitable conversations *especially w/in the community of faith*. How? *2 ways:*
1. **Love:** G.K.Chesterton said, *"the Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because generally they are the same people."* Can you learn to **love your political enemy**?
 2. **Principles Before Policies:** Focus on the **issues** behind the **issues**. How do we honor the image of God in **every person**? What does it mean to **do justice** and **love mercy**? How should the **9th commandment**, *you shall not bear false witness*, impact our speech, and the way we interact with our *political sparring partners*, & esp what we post on social media?
- F. ***Make sure you're registered to vote. *Vote! *Remember Principles b4 policies.**
***Let your political engagement be a matter of public holiness!**
- G. Slide8 Prayer: Elijah Collins (16, seizure in pool w/family). Jamie/Meghan. *Read txt.*

II. Slide9 Intro: *Living Right Side Up in an Upside Down World*

- A. Well, I thought I was going to get farther in my message, so I entitled it *Neck Deep in Greece*. But we're not going to make it to Greece. We're still in *Macedonia*.
- B. All of Acts covered a period of 30 years. It focused on 13 cities of the ancient world. *Thessalonica* is one of the few on the list still a city today, 2000 yrs later.
- C. Slide10 Map: Released from jail in *Philippi*, Paul & Silas with *sleeves rolled up, minds engaged, hearts ablaze*...head to *Thessalonica*. (100 miles)
1. **Enthusiasm, zeal, drive, vision**...these are the characteristics of a person who is **fully alive** (someone *living the abundant life*).
 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** and **pleasure**. They have many questions and some answers. They **cry** and they **laugh**. They **dream** and they **hope**. The only thing that remains alien to their experience of life is **passivity and apathy**. They say a strong yes to **life** and a resounding amen to **love**. They feel the strong **stings** of growing, but their sleeves are always rolled up, their minds are whirring, and their hearts are ablaze."¹

III. Slide11 THESSALONICA (1-9) Read

- A. Slide12 They are following *the Egnatian Way* (main highway through Macedonia). It's the I-40 across US.
1. They arrive in *Thessalonica*, the 2nd largest city in Greece, & still is. 20,000
- B. Slide13 (2) Three pronged approach to sharing your faith:
1. **Reasoning** – To select, distinguish, then to **revolve** in the mind.
 - a) To have *give & take conversation*. (then using OT scriptures)
 2. **Explaining** – To explain thoroughly, *opening something widely to make the contents clearly visible*.

¹ Adapted from Charles Swindoll, Acts 17, pg.151. (John Powell, Jesuit priest)

3. **Proving**/demonstrating – to present evidence, to place alongside. Paul placed *his own illustrations* alongside Scripture to strengthen his argument.

a) **Result? Jesus is the Christ** [**suffer**/atonement & **rise again**/proof of victory]

C. Paul presented the gospel *accurately, clearly, & practically*. Are we able to do the same?

D. (5) **Like magnets**, some people are **drawn closer** (4) & others are **repelled** by it.

1. **Slide14** Why do some get **upset** at the gospel? *Because it confronts people with their **sin** and it calls them to **surrender**.*

E. **Wicked men of the rabble**/KJV *lewd fellows of the baser sort*/evil men from the marketplace – It seems like **every** big city has these guys.

1. They don't have jobs but just hang around & harass others in the marketplace. They were the *city loafers & hoodlums* of the 1st century.

2. They swarm **Jason's house** where the missionaries had been staying.

F. **Slide15a** (6) **These men who have turned the world upside down** – (Lit. *men who have **upset** the world*)

1. **Did they turn the world upside down? Or right side up?** The world is **already** upside down *because of the fall*. **So** the people in Thessalonica saw them turn it **upside down**, **because** they didn't realize it was already **upside down**...**thus** making it now *right side up* :)

G. **Slide15b** So, the charge was true. *Christianity is Revolutionary*.

1. Our world today needs *turning upside down, or right side up*.

2. This **revolution** must take place in the hearts of individuals.

3. **Slide15c,d** *The way to change **the world** is to change **the individuals** in it*

a) ***You can't have a better world w/o better people.**

H. When Christ comes **into** a life He turns it upside down. **How?**

1. **Jesus turns our beliefs** upside down – the things we once thought were false, **now** we believe to be true.

2. Jesus turns our **pleasures** upside down – what we used to find pleasurable **vs. now**.
3. Jesus turns our **home life** upside down – different level of home commitment
4. Jesus turns our **hopes** upside down – from a hopeless life He gives us a *hope of heaven and eternal life*.

I. **Slide16** So, **1st**, the world is **wrong side up**. **2nd**, the world must be turned **upside down**. **3rd**, **we** are the men and women *to set it right*.

1. May **we** be the change.
2. Lets you & I, **flip our hearts, our valley, our country, our world... 1 heart at a time!** [**but** we have to start *w/our own hearts* being touched **1st**]

J. **Slide17a** Men who have upset the world.

1. The world needs to be upset (eg. *2020 snow globe*. Covid. 100 West Coast Fires. West Nile Mosquitoes. Hurricanes). *But that's not what I'm talking about...*
2. **17b** To upset the world for Christ, God uses men & women committed to Christ and the Gospel. John Wesley put it this way, "*Give me 50 men who love nothing but God and fear nothing but sin, and I'll change the world.*"
3. **17c** To upset the world for Christ, God uses the message of the Gospel.
4. **17d** The proper response to the gospel is: **1st** to verify its truth, **2nd** to believe in Jesus as Savior, **3rd** to follow Him as Lord, *no matter what the cost*.

K. In the 1950's there was an *American teacher* who prayed for **her HS students**. She asked God to touch the world through these students. Her name was *Dorothy Clapp*. She gave 1 young now and *the Gospel of John*, who ended up giving his life at a Billy Graham meeting. His name was **George Verner**, & in 1961 he & 24 other students drew up a **Christian Manifesto** for *world evangelism*. In part they wrote:

1. Literal adherence to the principles laid down by Jesus Christ would, without a doubt, result in worldwide revolution - a revolution **motivated by love**, a revolution **executed by love**, and a revolution **culminating in love**!
2. And **we are revolutionaries**! We are only a small group of Christian young people..., yet we have determined by God's grace to **live our lives according to the revolutionary teachings of our Master**. Within the sphere of absolute, literal obedience to his commands lies the power that will **evangelize the world**. Outside this sphere is *the nauseating, insipid Christianity of our day*.
3. We have committed ourselves **in reckless abandonment to the claims of Christ** on *our blood-bought lives*. **We have no rights!** Every petty, personal desire must be subordinated to the supreme task of reaching the world for Christ. We are debtors. We must not allow ourselves to be swept into the soul-binding curse of modern-day materialistic thinking and living. Christians have been "**willing**" long enough to forsake all - the time has come (and is passing) when **we must forsake all!** Christ must have absolute control of our **time** and **money**. We must yield possessions, comforts, food and sleep; **we must live on the barest essentials, that his cause might be furthered**. The propagation of the faith we hold supreme! **Christ is worthy of our all!** We must be ready to **suffer** for him and count it **joy**, to **die** for him and count it **gain**. In the light of the present spiritual warfare, anything less than absolute dedication must be considered insubordination to our Master and mockery of his cause!
4. This is our commitment, and we will press forward until every person has heard the gospel. We will soon be in many different countries, engaged in combat with all the forces of darkness. We look beyond the **thousands** to the **millions**; beyond the **cities** to the **countries**. The world is our goal! And our primary targets are *the seemingly impenetrable areas of the Communist and Moslem countries* which can only receive freedom as they have opportunity to receive **the Truth**. These countries will be

reached for Christ **no matter what the cost**. The ultimate victory is ours!

(George Verwer, Come! Live! Die! [Tyndale House], pp. 14-16.)

L. This was the beginning of *Operation Mobilization* which now has missionaries all over the world, often in the most difficult places to reach for Christ. The young man *George Verner* was *the founder* of **OM**.

1. Even if the Lord does not call us to go to other countries, He does call us **all** to the same revolutionary commitment to Christ and the gospel.
2. He wants us to **upset our world** for Jesus Christ.
3. May **we** be believers who *live right side up in an upside down world*.

M. Pray for Lizzie.