

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer ways for you to grow personally as well as in community through Personal Growth Guides and Summer School @ The Gathering. Personal Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and will be available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online. You may sign up for Summer School any Sunday between now and June 9.

THE SPRING QUARTER OF COMMUNITY GROUPS WILL END ON MAY 31ST.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

This week we saw an interesting pattern emerging in the life of Paul in Acts 16 and 17. In each of the 3 cities that he visited (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea), he followed the same pattern: he preached and he saw people respond. In fact, Paul saw 2 responses every time he preached the gospel and he kept preaching the gospel because he had 1 quality. Each of them are listed below:

1. **He saw CONVERTS:** Can you imagine the thrill of always seeing people respond positively to the gospel? In each of the 3 cities we mentioned, people were converted to Christ. A woman, a jailor, Jews and Greeks all came to know the hope and freedom of following Jesus. When we share the gospel, we don't have to hope that people will be converted; we can know that some will be converted every time!
2. **He saw CONFLICTS:** In Philippi, they were imprisoned. In Thessalonica, they were attacked by a mob. In Berea, they were hunted down by the same mob from Thessalonica. Paul came to expect that if he preached the gospel, he would usually end up in the middle of a swirling conflict. We shouldn't be surprised when we find ourselves in conflict when we take a stand for Jesus, either. But he didn't stop preaching because...
3. **He had CONFIDENCE:** Paul didn't have the kind of confidence that we're encouraged to have in popular self-help books that tell us to believe in ourselves. In fact, Paul didn't have any confidence in his ability to preach (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) or in his possessions (Philippians 3:7-8). But Paul had a TON of confidence in the power of the gospel to save souls and to lead us to victory. In fact, he later wrote that Jesus ALWAYS leads us to victory (2 Corinthians 2:12-14). Paul understood this week's Big Idea: **the gospel wins.**

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- Paul made it a point - a part of his normal routine - to preach the gospel (see Acts 17:2). Compare this with the way most of us have been taught to share our faith?
- How intentional are you in talking with others about Jesus? How many conversations have you missed because you were waiting for the "perfect" opportunity instead of making it a priority?
- Paul experienced converts and conflicts each time he preached the gospel. Is this similar to what the church is experiencing today in our country? What does it mean if we aren't experiencing these 2 things?
- How do our day-to-day experiences affect the confidence we have that the gospel wins? Read 2 Corinthians 2:14. Discuss the importance of the word "always" in that verse. How does the victorious nature of the gospel offer hope to us when we face conflict because of our stand for it?