

**Date** : 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020  
**Theme** : Back to the Basics  
**Title** : Discerning God's word with readiness of mind  
**Passage** : Acts 17:10-15  
**Key Verse** : *Acts 17:11 – These were more noble character than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily , whether those things were so. (KJV)*

## **Introduction**

In Acts 17:1-15 the outbreak of riots from fake news looks like breaking news on television. At both places, in Thessalonica and in Berea, Paul's customary preaching of the gospel at the local synagogues, attracted sincere seekers as well as skeptics who recruited the riff-raff of society to ferment riots.

Beneath the societal turmoil (as in Acts 17:8) are the undercurrent mental challenges to the gospel today. With the global rise in fake news, which distort reality and cause social problems (Fake news in goggle search, 1.48 billion results, 380 million for Jesus Christ. In Fake News and Hard Truths Oct 2019), who has the final authority on issues of faith and belief?

In our age which celebrates the sciences claiming to have as much knowledge as God, how seriously should we pursue the objective truths found in God's Word?

Pastor Philip in the past 2 Sundays started our discussion on how do we discern God's truths from personal subjective interpretation. That makes the Bereans' effort in our key verse in Acts 17:11 so outstanding and admirable. Whilst many Christian scholars in recent times had succumbed to doubts and shipwrecked their faith, what was it in the Bereans' diligent search and concern for the truth that they did not become skeptics? That is our focus today.

What does readiness of mind entail?

1. Emulate the Bereans' **Attitudes** towards Scriptures ...
  - a. Noble in character...
    - Willing to learn
    - Put aside the "knew it all" attitude.
    - The most common blockage to learning is failure to know what one needs to know.
    - God opposes the proud, who think they know it all.
  - b. Readiness of mind
    - Received the word readily, eager for truth
    - Set their mind to read patiently expecting God to speak.
    - Solutions to overcome distractions in mind
      - Too busy to read? Dedicate a specific time.
      - Not in the habit? Set a goal to read a chapter a day.

- Discourage by comprehension? Take it in slowly.

2. Emulate the Bereans' **Action** towards Scriptures

- Why did they search daily?  
*... and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*
  - To avoid being gullible
- How to search the Scriptures effectively
  - Make an effort to understand what the Bible says through meditation.

How does meditation look like? (Use the 6 wise-men technique - WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW, WHY and WHEN)

1. **Ask "Who?"** to find out who the passage was originally written to, who wrote the passage and who are you reading about.
2. **Ask "What?"** to determine what the author is talking about and what is the main point of the passage
3. **Ask "When?"** to learn when was this passage written, when the event that is talked about did or will happen, and when the people written about in the story did something.
4. **Ask "Where?"** to help you understand where did the story take place, where was the author writing from, where did the people in the passage go
5. **Ask "Why?"** to figure out why the author said something, why did characters do something, and why the passage is there
6. **Ask "How?"** to discover how was something accomplished, how is something to be done, how did the people in the passage respond

- Journal
  - Write a few sentences summing up the main lesson you have learnt.
  - Take action to apply using the 3 Ps':
    - Personal (receptive & obedient)
      - What does God want me to understand / think?
      - What does God want me to believe?
      - What does God want me to desire?
    - Practical (specific & tangible)
      - What does God want me to do?
    - Possible (realistic, today or this week)
      - When to take action?

## **Application**

Do you see any need for change?

2. A Readiness Attitude towards reading the Word by solidifying your commitment to:
  - a. Desire - Is reading God's Word really important for me?
  - b. Decide – Have I set a goal (time / where to read)?
  - c. Determine – How have I determined to claim this victory in my devotional life?  
What must be changed to claim victory this time?
  - d. Be Disciplined – What must I do to discipline myself to be consistent?
  
3. What Action can I adopt to read daily? What bible reading plan?  
Choose one:
  - a. ambitious plan: Read 3 chapters / day
  - b. can do plan: Read 1 chapter / day