

“Jesus People Change the World”

(Or rather, they allow Jesus to change the world through them.)

“These men who have turned the world upside down . . .”
Acts 17:6b (English Standard Version)

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²²strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith . . . Acts 14:21-22 (ESV)

As we grasp how and why God used Paul to change the world, we see how Christians today can change the world as well.

- Believers change the world **WHEN THEY LISTEN AND RESPOND TO GOD’S CALL AND ENTRUST THEMSELVES TO GOD’S GRACE.**

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen . . . and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. ⁴So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. Acts 13:1-4 (ESV)

And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, ²⁶and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. ²⁷And when they arrived . . . they declared all that God had done with them . . . Acts 14:25-27 (ESV)

Two Definitions of Grace

- Definition #1: Grace = the completely undeserved, loving commitment of God, given to us who are saved (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- Definition #2: Grace = God’s enabling power (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- Believers change the world, **WHEN THEY ARE GUIDED BOTH BY GODLY WISDOM AND BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.**

And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” Acts 15:36 (ESV)

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. ⁸So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:6-10 (ESV)

- Believers change the world **WHEN THEY PERSEVERE IN DIFFICULTIES AND STAY COMMITTED TO GOD’S CALL.**

A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. ²³They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. ²⁴So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. Acts 16:22-24 (New Living Translation)

Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. ²⁶Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! ²⁷The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul shouted to him, “Stop! Don’t kill yourself! We are all here!” ²⁹The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Acts 16:25-30 (NLT)

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24 (ESV)

- Believers change the world **WHEN THEY DON’T SHRINK FROM SPEAKING GOD’S TRUTH.**

Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. ¹⁸And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you . . . ²⁰how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house . . . ²⁷for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” Acts 20:17-18, 20, 27 (ESV)