

## **Thessalonica - sharing the gospel in a hostile environment**

### **Acts 17v1-9**

Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia and an important communication and trade centre with a population of over 200,000. It is the modern day city of Thessaloniki in Northern Greece and is located at the North-West corner of the Aegean sea.

Here on one of his missionary journeys Paul spends some time in reaching out to the Jews in the synagogue - taking the gospel first to the Jew then to the gentile. Paul's preaching consisted of two interlocking elements - proclamation and persuasion.

### **Proclamation**

What is Paul proclaiming?

Is the message that we need to proclaim the same?

Hint: Think about the starting point of peoples understanding.

When is proclamation a good/ the best method of evangelism?

### **Persuasion**

What is Paul trying to persuade them of?

When is persuasion a good/ the best method of evangelism?

How would you structure an argument to persuade someone of the truths of the gospel.

### **Persecution and the Pax Romana**

Paul and Silas are charged with causing trouble and disturbing the peace. Local rulers were very keen to maintain the Pax Romana - The "Peace of Rome" so disturbing the peace was a serious crime and led to swift and severe punishment. Proclaiming Jesus as king rather than Caesar would have been treason.

What are the modern equivalents to disturbing the Pax Romana?

Suggestion: Don't think about the EU or the referendum. -Think more about cultural issues.

Where does hostility to sharing the gospel come from? In the UK? In other countries?

Despite the opposition Paul has good things to say about the believers in Thessalonica. - 1Thess. 3:6-10. Could the same be said of us?

### **Prayer**

ADB

For boldness in proclaiming the gospel.

For wisdom and grace in persuading people of the truth.

For wisdom for politicians and civil servants.