Thessalonica and Berea
Message 11 in the series, "Faith under Fire"

"So they came to the jail and apologized to them. Then they brought them out and begged them to leave the city. When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left town." Acts 16:39–40 (NLT)

"Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As was Paul's custom, he went to the synagogue service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people. He explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, 'This Jesus I'm telling you about is the Messiah.' Some of the Jews who listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women. But some of the Jews were jealous, so they gathered some troublemakers from the marketplace to form a mob and start a riot. They attacked the home of Jason, searching for Paul and Silas so they could drag them out to the crowd. Not finding them there, they dragged out Jason and some of the other believers instead and took them before the city council. 'Paul and Silas have caused trouble all over the world,' they shouted, 'and now they are here disturbing our city, too. And Jason has welcomed them into his home. They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, named Jesus.' The people of the city, as well as the city council, were thrown into turmoil by these reports. So the officials forced Jason and the other believers to post bond, and then they released them. That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men. But when some Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they went there and stirred up trouble. The believers acted at once, sending Paul on to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained behind. Those escorting Paul went with him all the way to Athens; then they returned to Berea with instructions for Silas and Timothy to hurry and join him." Acts 17:1–15 (NLT)

1. **Great things are accomplished by people who take the next faithful <u>step</u>, even when the last one hurt.**

   "You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi just before we came to you and how much we suffered there. Yet our God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition." 1 Thessalonians 2:2 (NLT)

   "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

   "The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again. But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked." Proverbs 24:16 (NLT)

   "No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us." Philippians 3:13–14 (NLT)

2. **Paul used scripture to reason with people. And the Bereans searched the scriptures to see if what he was saying was true.**

   Note: Let Scripture, not your <u>opinions</u>, be the foundation of the advice you give others.

   "Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24:27 (NLT)

"Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it." 1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)

Note: Let Scripture, <u>NOT THE SPEAKER</u>, be the standard for what you believe.

"Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good."
1 Thessalonians 5:20–21 (NLT)

"Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world."
1 John 4:1 (NLT)

"Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark." Isaiah 8:20 (NLT)

3. Paul had to trust the Holy Spirit to keep working in people's lives long after he left them.

Note: We need to <u>trust</u> God to keep working in people even when we can't always be there!

"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

"And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself." Acts 20:32 (NLT)

"I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow." 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 (NLT)

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