

SAME DIFFERENCE

THE RESULT OF CONSISTENT COURAGEOUS FAITH

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO ACTS 12 or PAGE 181

ILLUSTRATION //

How many people remember the phrase “same difference”?

- Share some examples of what the same difference would be...
 - I’m going to share people who always try to correct you by adding more details (example: I say it was a color and they say no it was actually a color that no one knows how to pronounce. Or man, my team is doing bad, they have 42 losses. Actually 45 if count the off season. Bro same difference!)
- Same difference is a phrase used to say that two things are not really that different.

Tonight we are going to look at a story that shows us the pattern of the ‘same difference’ and if we could grasp this concept, it could change our lives and the lives of others...

SCRIPTURE // Acts 17:1-13 (You can sum some parts up if needed)

Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. **2** 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. **3** 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.” **4** 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.^[a]

5 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.^[b] **6** Not finding them there, they dragged out Jason and some of the other believers^[c] 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. **7** 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.”

8 The people of the city, as well as the city council, were thrown into turmoil by these reports. **9** So the officials forced Jason and the other believers to post bond, and then they released them.

Paul and Silas in Berea

10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. **11** 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. **12** As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.

13 But when some Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they went there and stirred up trouble.

BIG IDEA // WHEN IT COMES TO PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL, OUR APPROACH IS THE SAME WHETHER IT IS RECEIVED OR NOT. SAME DIFFERENCE, GOD IS STILL MOVING.

1. RIOT OR REVIVAL

SCRIPTURE // v 1-9 (The gospel will either start revival or a riot)

- Paul was in Thessalonica (a major city in the Roman province of Macedonia).
 - It served as a port with close ties to Rome.
 - Paul's audience in Thessalonica was predominantly Jewish though there were also some “God fearing Greeks” or Gentiles who worshiped the true God.
- Paul doesn’t go into this city in need of Jesus with fancy words, or attractive programs, or cool giveaways. Paul preaches the simple and powerful message of Jesus. Jesus died, he suffered, He rose again, He is the Messiah.
- In Paul preaching and sharing the gospel there were some that received it, and there were others that started an uproar because of it.

APPLICATION //

- **Whether the gospel causes a riot or revival, same difference, the reaction is always explosive!**
- The thing you have to understand about proclaiming and sharing the gospel, is it is a bold statement! You are telling someone that there is no other way to eternal life and true joy except for through Jesus. You are telling people that the way they have lived their

lives up to this point and all the things you have done, that there is still something missing and His name is Jesus.

- The gospel is offensive. It hits the part of the human heart that most would like to ignore. That we are sinners that can't save ourselves, nothing we do in our own strength will change that, and the only way is Jesus.
- But though the gospel is offensive, it's in your face, it is a truth that sets the captives free. It is a reality that changes lives forever! It is a story of how an all powerful, all loving God loves us enough to come close and help us in our time of need.
- Because the gospel is so explosive, it comes with explosive reactions.
- Over 2000 years there has been wars, persecution, killings, but also freedom, life change, revival, miracles all because of this story of a man named Jesus!
 - Riot: People opposing the message and you like they did Jesus.
 - Revival: People accept the message and come to know Jesus.
- Our job isn't to determine whether riot or revival will break out. Our job is to have...

2. SAME APPROACH (WITH COURAGE + BOLDNESS)

SCRIPTURE // v 10-13 (Paul didn't know the outcome but kept the same approach)

- In Paul, preaching and sharing the gospel there were some received. Notably, some Jews (who grew up very rigid in system of laws and religion) and Gentiles (those who grew up in a custom and culture with many Gods)
- There were some who opposed, notably, mainly the Jews. The people who grew up in religion. The people who couldn't see past their ways and system of doing things. The ones that were blinded by their laws. The ones that went to the synagogues and temples of God but were missing out on God completely.
- Paul is ran out of town due to the jealousy of the Jews.
- He ends up in the city of Berea. And what does he do? The same thing. He preaches the gospel with confidence, boldness, and courage.

APPLICATION //

- What this story shows is that all people need to hear the gospel and all people will receive it differently, but the job of a Christ follower isn't to worry about the reaction, the job of the believer is to proclaim Jesus, anytime, anywhere, to everyone.
-

ILLUSTRATION //

- **Share an illustration of how we are called to plant seeds.**
- **Matthew 13:1-9 - Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. 2 A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore. 3 He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:**
- **"Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds.4 As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. 5 Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. 6 But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the**

tender plants. 8 Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! 9 Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

- **Seeds fell on a Footpath**
- **Seeds fell on Shallow Soil**
- **Seeds fell among Thorns**
- **Seeds fell on Fertile Soil**
- **•••If you want to go the extra mile by seeds to use during the illustration.**

The amazing thing about the gospel is there will be riots that break out (people will disown you, hate you, talk about you, call you crazy, come against you) but the revival (lives changed, bondage broken, blind eyes opened, eternal life given) makes it so worth it!

- Whatever the person, situation, sports team, grocery store, job, neighborhood, school hallway, same difference. Our job is to have the same approach, plant seeds and those who have ears let them hear.

CHALLENGE //

- Are you willing to have the courage and boldness to go and proclaim the gospel?

ALTAR //

- Salvation
- Call the rise up and proclaim the gospel
- Commissioning