

Acts 17:10-15 A Beautiful Mind

Intro: If your heart were a field what Kind of soil would it be?

A) The **Human heart is like soil** - Jesus explained this in the Parable of the sower – Mark 4

B) Seed is God's word – The gospel – 4 soils

1) **Hard** – resistant to the gospel - **Pathway**

2) **Stony** – Shallow emotional response – no depth

Sign of fruit – stem – but nothing happens

3) **Thorny** – Choked – Distracted – riches/cares

4) **GOOD SOIL – PLANTED** takes root – yields fruit

C) That is the Human heart – in relationship to God's word.

But I think you can take the Parable one step further/ all 4 soils are represented in our hearts

A) For example – The Lord speaks to our hearts about one thing - **Yes – all for that – good soil .**

B) **EX Worship** – love to worship!

C) But then there is message about submission – **Wives submit** – a lot of women struggle with that.

1) That part of the field of their hearts is hard.

WOMAN & LEWIS T TALBOT.

D) Or **Tithing** – Lady struggled – wrote and called

Sometimes our response is like the seed sown among the stones – Immediate response – Yes Lord.

A) But it is an emotional response – convicted or excited but there is no

follow thru

B)And then we have all experienced what is like to have good intentions get distracted by cares and responsibilities of this life. **Thorns**

C)We get ministered to – convicted, moved – we **promise to make a change – do something**

1)Start with a bang – but then the word gets choked out – LIFE – all the stuff – NO FRUIT.

D)The best is when our heart is like the fertile field – God’s word takes root – we bear fruit

1)That is our Purpose in life.** Our purpose on earth is to bear GLORIFY God and to bear Spiritual fruit.**

Here is the thing that many of us fail to realize – is We have a part to play in what the soil of our hearts is going to be like.

A)We see a great illustration of what that looks like our text this morning and in the life of a man named Ezra.

B)We noted in our study last time that Acts 17 chronicles the response of three cities to the gospel.

1)1st Thessalonica – RESISTED – Some Jews believed – great multitude of greeks women

C)But overall the city was resistant!

**1)The Last city he comes to in the Chapt is Athens
Athens – RIDICULED – too intellectual/ Philisophical**

D)In between those two – Paul found himself in Berea

1)Berea – The message was received – This Church becomes an example to the rest of us of how to approach God’s word.

10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

A) Think for a minute about what Paul has been through on this 2nd missionary trip –

B) He had been imprisoned in Philippi; he had left Thessalonica in peril of his life,

1) Under the cover of night, Paul and Silas left the city and headed for Berea, which was about 45 miles away.

C) Most men would have abandoned a struggle which seemed bound to end in arrest and death.

QUOTE: When David Livingstone was asked where he was prepared to go, he answered, *"I am prepared to go anywhere, so long as it is forward."*

D) The idea of turning back never occurred to Paul

1) Kept going – God gives him a great blessing in the city of Berea – **A Bright spot in the darkness -**

As was Paul's Pattern – he went in to the synagogue of the Jews – blessed by what He discovers

11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

A) Now there is something that I want you to note here – about Berea – signals a Change in Paul's pattern.

B) We noted last week that Paul's patterns was to go to a major Metropolitan area. – Population center

1) Reach that city and then – let the church in that city reach the surrounding communities

C) But here – Paul does something different – Paul goes off the beaten path

1) Berea was not on the major Highway like Thessalonica or Athens – it was on the byway.

D) It was a city that was off the beaten path.

E) But the People that he meets there become **synonymous with lovers of God's word.**

Lesson: It is great to have a plan and a pattern, but if you remain yielded to the Holy Spirit, your life will be full of pleasant surprises.

We are blessed today because Paul was open to being directed by the Spirit of God.

The first thing we are told about these people is they were more fair-minded. – Noble minded.

A) Another translation puts it this way: They were of a Beautiful mind.

B) The world thinks that the FUNDAMENTALIST evangelical Christian is not a person to be regarded or respected intellectually.

C) They are frowned upon, looked down upon and ridiculed.

The word Fundamentalist has become a derogatory word in many circles – “Are you one of those fundamentalist?”

A) The word Fundamentalist speaks of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

B) You are a fundamentalist if you say that this book is inspired inherent word of God.

1) And you hold on to it in faith and practice.

C) You can say that Proudly – Yes I am!

The world looks down on a person who actively embraces the scriptures but the Bible says – You are of a Beautiful mind! – Noble in God’s sight

A) In God’s sight the Bereans were of a Beautiful mind – because of their approach to God’ word. B) They received it with a readiness = Eagerness – a rushing forward – can’t wait to get into it.

Bb) That was how they approached the study of the Scriptures

C) I received a great text -2 weeks ago – Wed afternoon – it was from Mario Gonzalez/ A Professional musician who attends our fellowship

D) He was doing a gig with Shelia E - “Rob I am in Washington DC, at the Whitehouse, getting ready to play for the President – really bummed I am going to miss Bible Study tonight.”

E) That was the heart of the Bereans – an Eagerness to study the word.

And They Searched the Scriptures daily!

A) Search = to Examine, to scrutinize, to investigate

B) It is a word used in forensic science – like CSI – turning over every leaf and every rock.

A.T. Robertson, the Greek Scholar said of the people of Scotland in his

day: “In Scotland people have the Bible open on the preacher as he expounds the passage, a fine habit worth imitating.”

C)Having the Bible open on Me – I like that –

**1)IPad guys – greek – You say – I can look it up
Go for it.**

D)Go home and study it further – Test it to make sure that what I am saying is true.

E)Paul was thrilled that this was their Practice.

1)Berean Church stands out to Believers thru/out history as great example of students of the word.

**What we see in the Church in Berea we see in an individual in the OT –
Named Ezra**

A)Ezra was a scribe who was instrumental in helping Israel relocate spiritually in Jerusalem after their 70yrs of exile in Babylon.

B)God used him along with Nehemiah to bring about a spiritual revival in Israel.

C)Ezra 7:9 gives this description of Ezra – “the good hand of his God was upon him.”

So the good hand of the Lord was upon Ezra’s life !

A)God blessed him gave him strength / direction / and protection.

B)Now I think we can trace that blessing of God upon his life to what we read in **Ezra 7:10 –**

C) This describes what Ezra was all about!

V.10 Tells us why: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.”

Ezra 7:10

D) Like the Bereans Ezra had a heart for the word of God.

Listen God’s love for you is not affected by whether you read the Bible or not.

A) His Love is constant – But reading the Bible is important to your spiritual health

B) There are promised blessings – benefits – effects to being a student of the word of God.

Joshua 1:8

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

C) God’s promise to Joshua and that is God’s promise to us.

D) Problem with a lot of Christians– is they just don’t read the word. – Lazy

E) A lot of us view the Bible like men view – instruction manuals – Emergency only

You get some new Cadjet – instead of reading the manual – you just start pushing buttons – “I can figure this out on my own.”

A) Now most Cadgets have these warning labels – stop don’t do this – somewhere someone did – broke

B)Some warning labels make sense – but some are really weird – which means someone out there did something – sued – won – thus warning label

C)Examples of some weird warning labels

Warning on an electric router made for carpenters: *This product not intended for use as a dental drill.*

That means some guy somewhere said – I got this sore tooth – or his wife had a sore tooth – he didn't want to pay for the dentist – **come here babe – I will fix it -**

Warning on a cartridge for a laser printer: **Do not eat toner.**

A)Some computer geek – hungry – toner color

Microwave warning – “Do not use for drying pets.”

A)Urban legend – Poodle** - well some guy tried it – **Come here fluffy – Honey the dog just exploded what do I do now?****

On a box of rat poison: **Warning: Has been found to cause cancer in laboratory mice.**

A)GOOD! – BUT** I was hoping for something – that would work – faster**

B)A warning label found on a baby stroller cautions the user to “Remove child before folding**”**

C)A prescription of sleeping pills stating, “Warning: May cause drowsiness**”**

Uh yea I was hoping for that

A household iron warns users: “Never iron clothes while they are being worn”

Children’s cough medicine bottle – Do not drive a car or operate machinery after taking this.

A) I was really hoping my 5yr old could run the Fork Lift today

B) A child size Super man costume – “Warning wearing this costume does not enable you to fly.”

1) there is a hurt kid out there somewhere – roof

C) Those are some weird warnings – The Bible also has warning and admonitions – but not weird

1) They are given to us by a loving heavenly father who wants what is best for us – wants us to Prosper

D) But the heart of the Word is not just about Warnings or instruction/ really – It is to know God.

Ezra believed that – affected his approach to the Word - He prepared his heart in 3 ways.

#1 Ezra prepared his heart to SEEK the Law of the LORD {idiom for whole word

A) Preparation is a part of life!

Elementary/ Middle/ Highschool

B) Go to Highschool –preparing for College

1) Go to college to embark on a Career

C) Prepare to go to work Shower shave clothes –
Get PDA out plan the day – check appointments

D) Most of you prepared to come here today – got out of bed – clothes –

shower – hair – make up.

1) GRATIFUL -

E)But the most important question is did you prepare your heart?

What does it mean to prepare your heart to seek the word.

A)For me that often translates into finding a quiet place, where I can quiet my heart to have a quiet time with Jesus.

B)My world is often so distracting, so I need to put away the cell phone, turn off all the others distractions to prepare my heart to sit with Jesus.

C)Coming to Church {me conf} – give some time not rushed – pray in the car.

1)Worship is huge part of that.

D)If I miss worship – it can take me a while to have my heart in the right place – to hear the word.

1)Satan is good at distracting { Call – a friend – a meaningless conversation – a need.

E)Don't get robbed – Turn off the cell phone – you are not that important – Pastor Chuck would say: -

#2 Ezra prepared his heart to SEEK the Law of the LORD, and TO DO IT

A)Not only did Ezra prepare his heart to seek the Lord,

B)but part of that preparation involved preparing his heart to do whatever the Lord SPOKE to him.

1))In other words Ezra approached the word of God not from the standpoint of only gaining information,

Bb)but from the standpoint of applying that information to his life.

1)That is always an effective approach for studying the God's word .

C)In fact I think that sometimes the Lord is reluctant to give us new instruction because we haven't responded to His past instruction.

God's promise to Joshua: " if you observe to do according to all that is written in it, then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." Joshua 1:8

James 1:22

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

James 1:23-25

23 Those who hear God's teaching and do nothing are like people who look at themselves in a mirror. 24 They see their faces and then go away and quickly forget what they looked like. 25 But the truly happy people are those who carefully study God's perfect law that makes people free, and they continue to study it. They do not forget what they heard, but they obey what God's teaching says. Those who do this will be made happy.

NCV

So Ezra prepared his heart **to respond** to God's instruction.

#3 Ezra prepared his heart to SEEK the Law of the LORD, and TO DO IT , and to TEACH statutes and ordinances in Israel.

A)After receiving from the Lord – his desire was to **teach others.**

B)That really is one of the key ways to grow is to give it away.

C)You take what the Lord has spoken to you and taught you and teach it to your kids

1) or share it with your spouse or a co worker

D) you will be a man or woman growing mightily in the Word and in the Lord.

E) AND your appetite for God's word will Grow!

One of the ways that a doctor finds out how you are doing is by your appetite.

A) If you are not feeling well – he will ask you how is your appetite doing?

B) Because he knows that a healthy person is a hungry person.

C) The thing about the Bible – more you feast on it the more hungry you get. –

1) Lost your appetite – what have you been feasting on instead of it.

D) Learn to prepare your heart – Seek it – do it – teach it – **You will prosper and have good success.**

**Wrap this up by noticing what Happened in Berea
The affect of God's word.**

V.12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

Little words are important when you are studying the Bible and one of the most important is the word **Therefore – it is Hinging two thoughts together.**

A) The response to their approach to the word that was preached was that many believed.

B) Believed = to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, place confidence in

C) Rest your weight fully upon something

D) So many believed and continued on in Christ!

Where God's word is working Satan always seeks to oppose.

V.13 But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds.

A) Satan hates the simple preaching of the Word of God!

B) THAT is why he unleashes FURIOUS attacks against those INDIVIDUALS and MINISTRIES that are DEDICATED to that very ministry.

**C) Your life – he will seek to hinder you – Press on
Dig in -**

14 Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. 15 So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

A) Out of a desire to see the Word continue on and be effective in another city they sent Paul away.

**B) Old miner – 50 yrs Colorado mts – recluse –
Family who barely knew him came to get his stuff**

C) Friend – they should have got to know him better

God wants us to get to know him better – many treasures – found in his word

Closing: Haven't started yet

Perhaps you are hear today and you haven't trusted Christ – The gospel is really a simple thing –

For God so loved you – that He gave his only son – Jesus was send to die on the cross for your sins

3 days later He rose

Whosoever Believes – will have everlasting life

Quality of life – forgiveness – cleansed from guilt

Purpose and meaning in life – you are searching for

Longevity of life – Eternity – Hell is real – Escape that