

“Journeys and Destinations – Jealous and Triggered”  
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“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.” (Acts 17:1-10a)

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Pastor Wally said that there two reasons for jealousy (we can also use the term “envy”): 1) I want (I envy) what you have, and 2) I don’t want you to have what I have and for the Jews it was their special status as God’s chosen. Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines jealousy to mean: “That passion of peculiar uneasiness which arises from the fear that a rival may rob us of the affection of one whom we love, or the suspicion that he has already done it; or it is the uneasiness which arises from the fear that another does or will enjoy some advantage which we desire for ourselves.” In Exodus 20:4-5 (“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...” we find a third form of jealousy, namely God’s jealousy as well as godly jealousy because Paul declared that he had a “divine jealousy” for the people of Corinth (“For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” – 2 Corinthians 11:2) **It is important to note that God is jealous when someone gives to another something that rightly belongs to Him.** In what way(s) does the fallen world around us confuse God’s jealousy with human jealousy? Explain.

Does the idea that we have a special status as “God’s chosen” exist in the church in some way(s)? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Have I ever given to another something that rightly belongs to God”? If so, how so? If not, why not?

So, Acts 17:5 tells me that “the Jews were jealous”. Of what, or of whom were they jealous and why?

In Deuteronomy 32:18-21 “You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth. “The LORD saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.’ And he said, ‘I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” (emphasis added) Moses told folks to stop taking God for granted...stop acting as if He’s not God and if you continue, God “will hide [His] face from them”. What does the idea of God hiding His face from someone (or me) evoke in me? Explain.

What God said He would do in Deuteronomy 32:21 (“...I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation”), He does in Acts 17:5. The Jews in Thessalonica are jealous of and angry at a “foolish nation” of Christ followers. Am I seeing this same scenario being played out in recent days? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Scripture tells me that the Jews of Thessalonica took “some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason.” Am I seeing this same scenario being played out in recent days? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Pastor Wally pointed out that emotional energy must be expended...that it must have a target. What am I passionate about and in what way(s) do I focus this passion? Explain.

Pastor Wally said that I am called to be different from the world around me, that if Jesus is in fact the King of kings and Lord of lords, then I need to act like it. How different am I to be?

Pastor Wally also said that the Jews and the mob “misunderstood the Gospel”. In last week’s Digging Deeper, we capsulized the Gospel message “by which you are being saved; that Christ died for our sins; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day; and that he appeared to others” in accordance with the Scriptures. John MacArthur, speaking at the 2017 Ligonier National Conference, pointed out that: “Everything but the gospel is just another form of the doctrines of demons from hell. There is no salvation apart from belief in the gospel; no gospel, no salvation. You would think we would have that fairly clear by now, but we are subject in this postmodern world to more contentment with a lack of clarity than any time in my life. We still have the old Roman Catholic idea of natural theology, that is to say man has natural reasoning powers that will bring him to God without the Bible or the gospel; that’s what the Catholic Church teaches. I quote the Pope’s interpretation of the second Vatican council, quote, ‘Those who live in accordance with the beatitudes and who bear lovingly the sufferings of life will enter the kingdom of God,’ that’s Roman Catholic theology. The Protestants have a kind of version of it called the wider mercy view, and that is that God saves people by Christ but through different religions...Raimon Panikkar, who wrote a book called ‘The Unknown Christ of Hinduism’ [said in] that book, “It is through the sacrament of Hinduism, through the message of morality and a good life; it is through Hinduism that Jesus Christ saves.” N.T. Wright has said ‘No one will be justified until he reaches heaven.’ One more painfully clear denial is in these words, ‘I must stress again that the doctrine of justification by faith is not what Paul means by the gospel. The gospel is not an account of how people get saved’ and Christianity Today identified him [N.T. Wright] as one of the five most significant Christian theologians of our day.” It would seem that there are those who do not want the Gospel message to “turn[ ] the world upside down”. Why?

How do I think I would respond if a “triggered” mob came and forcibly dragged me out of my house and made false allegations to me as they did to Jason?

On October 24, 2011, Dr. Bill Parker, a contributor to Ligonier.com said, “Our postmodern, pluralistic society is not far removed in essence from first-century Graeco-Roman society. Ungodliness is still here, immorality is still in evidence, and the life-is-cheap attitude still pervades. But society in the West does not really notice or take seriously the church. Why? Could it be because the reality of the living God is not being seen in the Western church? Could it be because there is no attention-grabbing evidence of the transforming power of the gospel? Could it be because, to some extent, the sign Ichabod (without glory, or “where is the glory?) is metaphorically hanging over the doors of many sanctuaries and around the necks of many Christians? And if all this is the case, why is it the case? Could it be because, generally speaking, Christians in the West are simply not as devoted to the Apostles’ teaching as we should be? I am increasingly convinced that this is the case... Think of it like this. Ephesians 2:4–5 makes it clear that before a person is saved by God’s grace, love, and mercy, that person is dead in trespasses. However, once a person is saved by God’s grace,

love, and mercy, that person is alive to God in Jesus Christ. Our Western society is made up, therefore, of a basic dichotomy of people: those who are spiritually dead, and those who are spiritually alive; those who follow the ways of a social value system that is opposed to the Lord, and those who follow the Lord; those enslaved to the Devil, and those who are new creations in Christ; those who gratify the desires of sinful nature, and those who can gratify the desires of the Holy Spirit; those who are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and those who are. Why is the difference in belief, lifestyle, and behavior between believers and unbelievers not startlingly noticeable? Why are Christians not impacting Western society for good and God's glory? Why are Christians not being accused of 'turning the world upside down'?" And???

Pastor Wally said that when it comes to persecution, I need to "be prepared to make a defense for that hope that is in me" (1 Peter 3:15b) because "extreme persecution...is not far-fetched" citing the Coptic pastor who was imprisoned and later beheaded. Pastor Wally went on to say that "we've been left out" of such persecution...that "we've been sitting pretty, enjoying everything"...or is it because our declaration of the Gospel message has been so far "below the radar" that nobody notices it nor are they being "triggered" by His message of salvation? Explain.