

TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE MARKETPLACE

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All quotes are from class speaker unless otherwise noted.

God is the one who saves, it's not our words that do it.

Acts 17

It was easier to find a god in Athens than it was a man (god of...sun, moon, beach, etc.)

Vs 16:

provoked: to be stirred up

We stir each other up because God is the One who stirs us up.

Paul is aware of how good God is, he is moved to love.

Provoking is not seeing people as projects.

In step with the spirit - He will provoke you.

If we find ourselves coming in contact with people who are lost and we're unmoved, something is out of alignment.

Vs. 17:

Paul was patient to get to know the people.

Paul ministered in two main places in Athens: the synagogue and the marketplace.

And wherever our marketplace is, where we find ourselves many hours of our days, we should find ways to minister there too.

The workplace is probably the most underutilized mission field that Christians occupy daily.

Vs. 18:

Two groups of philosophers -

epicurean: "new age" guided by feelings, emotions, pleasure, happiness

Stoic philosophers: intellectual, "it is what it is" (atheist or agnostic)

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Vs. 17:19-21:

Despite the philosophical differences between the two groups, both groups were very open-minded about learning new things and wanted to hear Paul's message.

Most people are open-minded to "spiritual" conversations.

Vs. 22:

Paul begins by focusing on the positive and what they have in common: "I see that you are very religious." When you are beginning spiritual conversations with those who do not know the Lord, be quick to be kind.

Start with where they are.

Learn a lot by asking.

Think about the idols that exist and compete with Christ for affection.

You have to feed and serve the idol to make it work for you, in hopes that they will serve you.

Paul is starting with where they are he's expanding their belief of who God actually is.

Vs. 23:

Instead of judging them for worshiping idols, Paul took what they already believed and helped them see God as the answer.

Vs. 24-25:

Paul took what they had already experienced of God in creation and aimed to enlarge their vision of who God is.

Paul makes a distinction "He does not live in temples made by men"

Vs. 26-27:

Knowing his audience is vastly different in their beliefs on intellect and emotion, Paul speaks to both groups. "They should seek God" emphasizes intellect and "feel their way toward Him and find Him" hints toward the emotion of hope that there is a God to find and it's not hard to find Him.

Vs. 28:

The two quotes we see here are not quotes from the Old Testament, but quotes from their own poets and mythology. Paul is not condoning these beliefs, but rather, he's aiming to show them that some of their current beliefs are already hints toward faith.

Vs. 29:

As Paul gently moves toward the errors in their current beliefs, he uses "we" language, acknowledging himself as a sinful human, rather than simply pointing fingers at people of Athens.

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Paul uses “we” “us” recognizing that the gospel is what saved him, not pointing the finger.

Every time you share the gospel, it’s a reminder of what Jesus saved you from, not just a hope He will save someone else.

Vs. 30-31:

Paul does not separate the call to repentance from the hope of Christ. Because Jesus entered the world and conquered sin and death, we are called to repent and believe in Him. The proof that we will be able to have eternal life through Jesus is because of Christ’s resurrection.

When you share the gospel, we do have to recognize our own sin and that there’s no way we could get to heaven on our own merit, but we also get to rest in the hope that Christ’s work on the cross is final, forever and finished.

Dwell on the hope that we have in Jesus more than the sin that separates because you know how the story ends.

Half of the gospel isn’t just half of the gospel, it’s a completely different gospel.

Full hope and person and work of Jesus.

Vs. 32-34:

There were three responses from the crowd in Athens that are still the responses we can expect when we share the gospel today:

- 1) Some mocked.
- 2) Some wanted to know more.
- 3) Some believed.

Remember that your job is obedience to share, not how others respond to God’s message. God is the one who moves in and changes hearts. Be bold when He calls you to share, and trust Him to do the rest.

Anytime you engage in evangelism, this is what you can expect.

Unwilling to chance #2 and #3 because of the chance of #1.

***Personal reflection question: what provokes your spirit?**

Breakout Questions:

1. What are the cultural norms and beliefs where you are?
2. How do you see God in what they already believe?
3. How does Jesus fill the gaps in what they already believe?