

ACTS 17– Paul at the Areopagus

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Acts 17

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Reflection & Discussion Questions

Paul connected with different people in different ways, for the sake of the gospel

The way he delivered that message changed depending on who he was talking to.

*How have you seen Paul do this throughout Acts?

*Who is someone you know who does this especially well? How have you done this?

The Athenians were passionate about worshipping ALL the gods

Read and discuss Acts 17:16-21 (ESV)

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

*What was Paul’s response to seeing the idol worship?

*What things in our own culture might actually reflect people searching for God?

*What can we learn from Paul about engaging with them?

Paul speaks to the Athenians in a way that was relevant to them

Read and discuss Acts 17:22-31 (ESV)

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ 29 Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

*What do we see in this passage about Paul's approach? What elements are a part of his sermon?

*What does this look like in your life? Are there ways you could be more respectful, relevant and loving when sharing?

*What about our approach encourages deep conversations where we can share spiritual truths? What approaches shuts the door on them?

The way people responded to Paul may be the way people respond to us

When you share the gospel, some will mock you, some will want to hear more...but some will believe.

*How does knowing this free us to share?

*What is the Spirit saying to you about the ways you might be able to connect with people that is relevant to them?

*Does someone come to mind that is 'feeling their way toward God'? How can you share with them that 'He is actually not far from' them?