

Sermon Reflections

Preaching the Gospel in a Pagan World Acts 17:16-34

Summary: Be moved to gospel action in different contexts when you see worship going to that which is not the true and living God.

1. Understand Your Audience (v. 16)

- Paul understood his audience no matter where he was. His spirit was moved to action/provoked to share truth. How is our audience in Midlothian, VA similar to the audience that Paul was reaching in Athens? How is our audience different?
- What were some Gospel distractions that Paul faced in Athens? What are people today distracted by? What are you easily distracted by that takes your focus off of loving people with the Gospel proclamation?

2. Adapt to Context without Changing the Gospel Message (vv.17-31)

- Don't change the Gospel message while trying to put the message into context. There's a right way and a wrong way to contextualize, give an example of each.
- What aspects of Paul's message to the Athenians seemed strange to them? What might you say to someone today who thinks the Gospel is strange? Is there a scripture you might use to bring clarity?
- It sounded like the Greek philosophers held Paul in rather low regard: they called him a seed picker or "one who makes his living by picking up scraps." Paul knew in whom he had believed, and he didn't care what they thought of him. When do others thoughts about you stifle your Gospel witness?
- The Greeks were living a life of 'novelty.' How do people do that today?
- What did Paul say and how did he relate the Gospel to the men of Athens on Mars Hill? Where did he begin and what truths did he explain and proclaim?
- Paul did not shrink back in the face of derision, but wrapped up his Gospel proclamation in vv. 30-31 with a bold call, what was it?
- How could you start a gospel centered conversation with someone? What could you say?

3. Trust God for the Results (vv. 32-34)

- What was it about Paul's conversation that caused offense?
- What does "we fail to witness when we fail to witness" mean?
- If you share your faith with someone and they reject you and the message, how should you respond?
- What was encouraging about Paul's interactions in Athens? What was the last encouraging conversation you had with someone about the Gospel?