



360 DISCUSSION 11.27.16

A TRUTHFUL CHURCH | ACTS 17:16-34

**GOSPEL
SHAPED
CHURCH**



OPENING DISCUSSION

When have you ever had a hard time telling someone the truth? What about the situation made it so difficult? How did it go?

Read Acts 17:16-34 and discuss the following questions.

EMOTIONAL MISSION V. 16

Upon entering Athens, Paul is deeply burdened by the idolatry he finds.

1. What are some of the ways idolatry displays itself in our culture?
2. Why is Paul's reaction merited? What is the idolatry of the city saying to God?
3. Paul is obviously very distraught about the lack of worship being given to God in Athens. Why is it so difficult for many of us to feel the same about our present situation in Williamson County?
4. What would repentance and belief look like in your life regarding your lack of emotion about the lost in your life?

INTENTIONAL MISSION VV. 17-21

Being deeply burdened for the gospel needs of the city, Paul sets off to intentionally engage those around him.

1. What are some of the common misconceptions we have in the Church about mission?
2. If it is true that statistically more than 60% of Williamson County residents have 0% interest in walking through the doors of a church: what about our / your groups missional strategy needs to change?
3. Who are some of the specific people in your life that you know you need to be more intentional with about the gospel?
4. Pause and pray as a group (or in smaller groups) for these people by name.

BIBLICAL MISSION VV. 22-31

Given an opportunity to share his faith, Paul unpacks the true biblical message to his audience.

1. Read Paul's message to the Areopagus. As a group, unpack the main elements of his message. Was it Biblical?
2. As secularism rises, what elements of the Biblical message do you see being most offensive to our cultures ears? What is most "out of step" with the thoughts & beliefs of modern man?
3. What would happen if we were to "soften" some of the offensive aspects of the Biblical message? What is gained? What is lost?

FAITHFUL MISSION VV. 32-34

After sharing the Biblical message, Paul's audience responds in a variety of ways.

1. What were the responses Paul encountered after sharing the gospel? How does this give you hope for the times you share the gospel?
2. It is common to think that when we share the gospel, we need to "close the deal". How does this way of thinking differ from what you see in the life of Paul?
3. Being on mission will be discouraging. What about the faithfulness of Jesus can be of comfort when people are not responding to your intentional efforts in the way you desire?

QUOTES FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

We live in a world that has lost it's story. A world in which the humanity has been reduced to a series of cosmic chemical accidents: a humanity with no intentional origin, no noble destiny, and thus no path to take through history.
-Robert Jensen, Lutheran Theologian

What is an idol? An idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure." There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship.

– Tim Keller, Counterfeit Gods

Mission is about living ordinary life with gospel intentionality. It is about doing what we already do with other people and with a commitment to speak of Jesus, whether to encourage believers or evangelize unbelievers. Suppose you go for a walk with a family from church and one of their unbelieving friends. Or suppose you share a meal with a colleague and a single person from church. Or suppose you help someone with his garden and get chatting with the neighbors. Is this family time or leisure time or church time or mission time? The answer, of course, is all of them.

-Steve Timmis & Tim Chester, Everyday Church