

Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word
Engaging the Culture Around Us, Part 2

Acts 17:16-34

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Nov. 24, 2019

I. Don't Think that You Have to Do All the Talking

Acts 17:17 "Therefore he reasoned with them..."

The word in this verse "reasoned" in Greek = "dialegomai" which is where we get our English word "dialogue" – meaning to talk back and forth.

Ask questions, find out what the other person is thinking, and listen carefully to what they are saying—instead of just preparing your next statement.

Paul knew enough about their culture that he references two of their own Greek poets Epimenides and Aratus (v 28 and 29) in his discussion with them.

While we should not be swallowed up by our culture, we also shouldn't live so cut off from everything in it that we don't know what's going on around us.

We can use our culture and interests to more effectively connect and communicate with unbelievers.

II. Don't Fail to Get to the Heart of Our Message

As much as possible, see if you can bring it back to Jesus and the resurrection.

Acts 17:18 "...he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection."

Acts 17:31 "...He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Paul brought it back to Jesus and the resurrection because that's the heart of our message that is unlike any other religion.

We have a Savior, not a system. And we have the *only* religion whose leader has ever conquered death!

Paul points to the resurrection as proof or assurance of everything else he's been saying about God.

Acts 17:31 “Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

NIV “...He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

New American Standard “...having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

III. Don't Let Them Think that Jesus is Just One of Many Options

Acts 17:30-31 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man who He has ordained...”

Paul is setting Jesus apart as the *only* option, not one of many options.

Other religions say “this is the way to life” while Jesus says “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

What a lot of people pretend are intellectual objections to Christianity are actually no more than a smoke-screen and a moral means of preserving and protecting their right to live any way they want.

IV. Don't Be Surprised by the Different Reactions

A. Some Mocked

Acts 17:32 “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked...”

B. Some Wanted to Hear More

Acts 17:32 “...We will hear you again on this matter”

Very few people come to faith in Christ the first time they hear the Good News of the Gospel.

There is not one right way of doing evangelism.

“I'm often asked what form of evangelism I believe to be most effective...but God used a variety of forms in my life. He used a teacher loving and tutoring a kid, a guy sharing one-on-one in a cafeteria, a guy speaking up for the name of Christ on the basketball court, an invitation to an evangelistic event, and the preaching of the Gospel in a church service. I believe in each of these forms of evangelism because God used each one of them in my own life.” -Pastor Afshin Ziafat

We don't all have to be doing the *same* thing, but we all should be doing *something* to point people to Christ! Ask God to show you what you could prayerfully start doing in the lives of people around you.

C. Some Believed

Acts 17:34 "However, some men joined him and believed..."