

Putting Feet to Your Faith

Acts 17:18-34

- When reading the book of Acts you see not only a narrative of how the Apostle Paul traveled around and evangelized the lost, planted churches, disciplined young believers, and wrote two thirds of the New Testament, but also in the midst of all of this he modeled for us how a Christian is supposed to view the world and that's through the lenses of faith. Everything Paul did, he did for the purpose of glorifying God, serving others, and spreading the gospel, and in **Ch17** we see no better example of this than here, while in the midst of being beaten, bruised, hunted, and imprisoned, he travels from Thessalonica, to Berea, to Athens, offering hope.

V18-34

- After escaping the persecution in Berea and arriving in Athens Paul was overwhelmed by the rampant idolatry surrounding him, and it stirred his heart, so much so that he sends for Silas and Timothy to come join him as soon as possible because there was much work to do and he needed help. **V18-21** while Paul waited for his team to arrive he visited the Synagogue and the marketplace and there he shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with all who would listen.
- In doing this he encountered both the **religious** (synagogue) and the **worldly** (marketplace) that's like doing battle **within the church** and **outside the church**, and sometimes both are necessary. We're told that certain philosophers didn't take to Paul's message specifically those of the Epicureans and the stoic sects. Epicureans believed that the chief purpose in life was to pursue pleasure, and live a life free from pain and don't think about things like what happens when you die. The stoics thought differently, they were pantheists who believed everything was a god, from the trees to nature, and that he was impersonal unable to know only to appease.
- So when they hear that God is love and you can know Him their ears perk up and ask him to speak before their council at a place called "**mars hill**". Notice two things have grabbed their attention > Jesus and the resurrection, this is what separates Christianity from any other belief for it highlights to us both a Savior and Redeemer. **V21** says they were busy bodies always looking to hear the latest Gossip, trends, but God uses even that to open a window from which Paul could use to speak the life giving message of the gospel of Grace.
- **V22-23** he started with Jesus and the resurrection, now he's going to meet them where there at knowing they have a desire to worship something even if they don't know what that is. Although their pantheistic Paul says I am going to reveal to you why there is but One God, and show you how you can know Him. **V24-26** he tells them about the God who created everything and is bigger than any temple that man's hands can make, therefore He is not limited by what we can do for Him as he doesn't need us to exist for He is self sustaining. Remember the Greeks believed the gods were dependent upon man's worship-devotion to keep their power.

- He also tells them that we all descended from Adam through Noah, and One God created us all, they believed that certain men of power descended from the most powerful of gods and if you were of low estate well then you were just a man and not to be paid attention to. **V27-28** unlike what they've been told God is right here for them to have a personal relationship with, he is not far off living on Mt. Olympus or some made up place that these philosophers have told them, but because he is our Creator, Provider, Ruler, He is also our Father, from which we draw our sustenance from, this right here blows them away because they have temples for everything.
- **V29-31** now Paul expects a decision, he tells them we have a responsibility being the creation of God to have right ideas about God, and now that they've heard the truth the expectation is to now reject the wrong ideas even though it's what they've been taught or believed since they were children. It's time to repent and receive forgiveness for all the times they wrongly thought something or did something that wasn't acceptable to God even if they thought it was. For just as Jesus is Savior and Redeemer He is also Judge, and to escape His judgment you must repent.
- **V32-34** these are the three classic responses after hearing the Gospel > **1st some laughed**- they mocked and ridiculed any conviction away, **2nd Procrastinated**- I won't outright reject, but I won't commit either, no decision is a decision, **3rd Believed**- this is the only acceptable decision, this is what makes all the inconvenience, persecution, aggravation worth it. Even one of the council members believed "**Dionysius**", who would've thought that these so called great minds living in the intellectual capital of the world would believe a simple message that they were sinners who are in need of a Savior and the world wasn't just a playground for them to enjoy.
- In this gospel presentation we see Paul highlight **4** things about God that we should always make sure that anyone who does listen to us has a clear understanding of, and that's > **1st The Greatness of God**- He is Creator, **2nd The Goodness of God**- He is Provider, **3rd The Government of God**- He is Ruler, **4TH The Grace of God**- He is Savior.