

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (October 8, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Before I turned 16, I was given a car. More precisely it was a 1966 VW Squareback with a broken engine and transmission. My first task was to rebuild the engine. I was given little instruction. I pulled the engine out, tore it apart, read the repair manual, and put it back together. When I turned the key, it only popped, banged, and wheezed. After several hours of trying to get it to run, someone who knew VW's asked me, "when you put the engine together did you put the dot on the camshaft (the internal part that operates the valves) in-between the two dots on the crankshaft (the internal part that moves the pistons up and down)? I had overlooked that detail! I took the engine out again, tore it apart again, lined up the dots, put it back together again, put it in again. It fired right up.

Details are important. For the past three Sundays we've talked about an uncomfortable subject: Christian evangelism. I've stressed the importance of trusting the Holy Spirit, listening to Him, waiting until He provides an opportunity, and then taking a little risk (walking across a room literally or figuratively), entering into a conversation, and being ready to share why you're a Christian when the person asks. When we do that evangelism is easy, natural, fun. We do not need to force the conversation. We simply listen and then follow, confident the Holy Spirit is present, already preparing them for what we will say.

This Sunday is the last in our evangelism series. Today it's about the details: 1) What should I say?, 2) How should I say what I should say?, and 3) What happens next? I hope what's provided this morning is practical and helpful as we pray, listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings, and walk across rooms as He prompts us to, walking with courage, excitement, and genuine compassion.

Walking together, Curt

Walk Across the Room: Details (Acts 17:16-28)

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them (his friends) 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 babbling 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.

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.'" Acts 17:16-28 (ESV)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What do we know about the people living in the city of Athens? About Paul's approach to those he met in Athens?
2. What does this passage tell us about Paul's main message?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. What does it mean, "his spirit was provoked within him"? v.16
4. What does it mean, "the city was full of idols"? v. 16
5. What did Paul mean when he said, "I perceive that in every way you are very religious"? v.22

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

6. What are the things that provoke you "within" when you drive the streets of Yakima? Selah? Zillah? Seattle? Discuss.
7. What would you have done, and said, if you had been asked by the Athenians to tell them what you believe?
8. Who in your life do you need to pray for, asking the Holy Spirit to provide an opportunity to share your Christian faith with?

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God for greater confidence in Him, and a growing compassion for others. Ask God to help you know how to share what you believe as you walk across rooms. God will prompt you, and go with you, me too, because He loves us.