

PAUL: PERSECUTOR TO PREACHER

Athens

On mission in Athens...

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. (Acts 17:16-17)

- **The perspective on mission: Am I seeing things spiritually?** – “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.” (2 Corinthians 5:16)

A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, ‘What is this babbler trying to say?’ Others remarked, ‘He seems to be advocating foreign gods.’ They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. (Acts 17:18)

- **The approach on mission: Do I engage with versatility?** – “Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.’” (Acts 17: 22-23)
- **The message on mission: Am I accurate theologically?** – “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him, we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’” (Acts 17: 24-28)

Self-sufficiency: surely God needs my...

- Obedience?
- Service?
- Generosity?
- Faith?

“Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’” (Mark 9:24)

The heart of the gospel: God cannot be served but loves to serve...

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)