

Life Group Questions - *Building Bridges to Jesus and the Gospel* – Acts 17:16-34

UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE

1. *Main Idea of the Passage:* Paul's understanding of culture allowed him to identify a starting point from which to build a bridge to the gospel.

Outline

1. Philosophy and the problem of image
2. Six Observations of Paul in Athens
3. A Model for Cultural Engagement

Gospel Centrality

1. The Father sent His Son to be the ultimate bridge to Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Warming Up

1. In what ways have you experienced the Christian *voice*, *conscience*, and *imagination* being muted in our culture today?

Letting the Text Shape our Framework

1. Consider six observations of Paul at Athens:
 - A. #1 - We worship that which is considered ultimate in our lives (17:22-23)
 - i. What does say about mankind? How is this applied to our Christian culture and modern idols?
 - B. #2 - He was a student of the culture he sought to reach with the gospel (17:22-23)
 - i. What do we need to be students of living here in the Triangle?
 - C. #3 - Paul affirms what he can affirm in the Athenian culture (17:22-23)
 - i. How have you found common ground to begin building a bridge to the gospel?
 - D. #4 - Paul outflanks their thinking (17:24-28)
 - i. What did Paul use to outflank his opposition?
 - E. #5 - Paul confronted rank idolatry in their midst (17:29-31)
 - i. How does Paul get to the heart of the issue, not only with the Athenians but also with mankind? How did this lead to the ultimate question, *What are you to make of Jesus Christ?*
 - F. #6 - Paul's speech had mixed responses (17:32-34)
 - i. How does this shape your experience with evangelism? Does this create fear of sharing?

Traveling Through the Cross

1. What are the steps you can take to considering the “whole way of perceiving, thinking, and living” that we would today call “modern Western culture,” so that we can build bridges for the gospel?

Applying This Passage to our Lives

1. Peter Kreeft speaks of three longings of the human soul — for truth, goodness, and beauty — and three prophets of the human soul — reason, conscience, and imagination — that can be usefully employed to point to Jesus and the truth, beauty, and goodness of the gospel.
 - A. First, we must consider our own hearts:
 - i. Do we see Jesus as brilliant and beautiful?
 - B. Second, we must view (and defend) Christianity as a public truth.
 - i. Are we leaving like Christianity is objective truth or subjective?
2. Which one of the three longings do you naturally strive for most? How can you use that longing for the kingdom, and how can you take steps in cultivating longing for the other two?
3. Which one of the three prophets of the human soul is the mostly exercised in your life? How can you likewise use it to build bridges for the gospel? Are the lack of the other “prophets” a hindrance to your own spiritual growth and therefore witness?