

July 21, 2024

Lead Pastors

Unstoppable Kingdom
Globally: The Clear Gospel Message
Acts 17:1-21

*So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 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. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 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, 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, 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.’ Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.’ Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them. **Acts 17:22-34***

Main Idea: God’s message is too important for us not to deliver clearly.

3 parts to sharing the Gospel clearly, seen in Acts 17:22-34

I. Embrace the Opportunity (17:22-23)

He embraced the opportunity and took it very seriously!

He thought about WHO he was talking to and what it would take for them to really hear what he was about to say.

- Find Common Ground
- Affirm the Good
- Build Relationships
- Get to the Gospel!

II. Share Strategically (17:24-30)

– **Who God is:**

“The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though

*he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” **Acts 17:24-25***

God is the Creator - He made all things and is Lord over all.

*“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.” **Colossians 1:16***

God is Self-Sufficient - God cannot be contained and He is all-sustaining. The One True God doesn’t need us, we need him.

*“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” **John 6:33-35***

God is the Ruler of all Nations - He allows nations & kings to rise & fall.

*“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...” **Act 17:26***

*“He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings...” **Daniel 2:21***

And He is so much more!

– **Who We Are**

*“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...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, 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 17:26-28***

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” **Genesis 1:27***

*“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.” **Romans 1:19-20***

– **The Gospel**

“Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of

ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” **Acts 17:29-30**

How We Share the Gospel Matters!

The Bad News: We all are guilty of sinning against God and going our own way, and that separates us from God.

“Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man...” **Acts 17:29**

The Worse News: There is nothing you and I can do to change that on our own, and as a result we stand before God condemned.

“...because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness...” **Acts 17:31a**

The Good News: Jesus lived the life we couldn’t live and died the death that we deserved, and He rose again to life forevermore!

“because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” **Acts 17:31**

The Best News: Through repentance and faith in the work Jesus finished on the cross, we can be freely forgiven of our sins and adopted into the family of God.

“...but now he commands all people everywhere to repent...” **Acts 17: 30b**

III. Leave the Results to God

- Some will mock. (And still we’ll share the news!)

“...knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming?”” **2 Peter 3:3-4a**

“But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not

raised...If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead...”

1 Corinthians 15:13-15, 19-20a

- Some will be curious. (So continue the conversation!)

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” **2 Peter 3:9**

- Some will believe! (So celebrate!)

“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents...”

Luke 15:7a

God’s message is too important for us not to deliver clearly.

“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law...that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law...that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.” **1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

And it’s far too important for us not to deliver at all!

God calls us to faithfulness over fruitfulness. Embrace the opportunity to share His good news intentionally and strategically, and leave the results to Him!

What’s your response?

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities

- Sources and Further Reading Opportunities
- The Bible Exposition Commentary – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- ESV Study Bible – Crossway (2008)
- New American Commentary - Acts – John Polhill (1992)
- Acts: The Church Afire - R.K. Hughes (1996)
- The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church, & the World - John Stott (1994)
- Acts - K.O. Gangel (1998)
- The Acts of the Apostles - William Barclay (1976)
- Acts: Bible Study Commentary - F.F. Bruce (2017)
- Acts for Everyone Pt 2 - Chapters 13-28 - N.T. Wright (2008)
- Illustration story from Daniel L. Jacobs - <https://qr.ae/psfjvr>