

Unstoppable
Doing What We Should Do While God Does What Only He Can Do
“Finding Ways to Communicate”
Acts 17:16-34
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Sept. 18, 2016

What do we need to understand from **Acts 17:16-34** that could help us get in on what God is doing in our world today?

I. Don't Leave Your Faith at the Church or Back at the House

Acts 17:17 “Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the Gentile worshippers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.”

God never intended for the Church to just wait for lost people to come to us and say, “What must I do to be saved?” He intended for us to be out in the marketplace with real people.

When you understand the Gospel and start living consistently by it, it shapes and changes everything about you. You take it with you wherever you go because Jesus lives inside you.

II. Don't Let Your Feelings Just Rage Against Unbelievers

Acts 17:16 “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

The word ‘provoked’ in this passage isn’t simple rage. It’s the complex word ‘paroxyno’ which means to be ripped with strong contradictory feelings. Paul was seized with indignation and compassion. We must be gripped by the holiness of God, the hatred of sin, and with compassion for broken, lost sinners.

Eight times the Gospel writers tells us that Jesus was moved with compassion when He looked at the multitude.

Matthew 9:36 “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” (See also – Mt. 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mk. 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; Lk. 7:13; 10:33)

III. Don't Ever Forget What the Real Problem is for Unbelievers

It’s the same problem you and I still have except the resurrected power of Jesus living in us ENABLES us to see it and fight it whereas before we were BLIND and SLAVES to it. That problem is idolatry or the sin beneath the sin- those sinful motives and desires that drive us.

Acts 17:16 “... his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

The real problem in our world that keeps unbelievers trapped and cut off from Jesus are GOOD things that have become GOD things. Because we are created in the image of God, we are worshippers by design. Everybody is worshipping something.

Acts 17:28 “For in Him we live and move and have our being...”

You cannot effectively live life without God!

IV. Don't Think You Have to Start by Attacking Unbelievers

Acts 17:17 “Therefore he reasoned with them...”

Paul ‘reasoned’ with them. He began the conversation civilly and respectfully and so should we. He looked for any common ground that he could use in getting their attention or peeking their interest.

Paul knew enough about their culture that he could draw in some of their own culture that he could make reference to it in his argument. An interest in and understanding of some of these things can be a place to step into their life and then pivot or bridge towards the Gospel.

V. Don't Fail to Offer the Only Hope of Jesus to Unbelievers

The conversation may be about any number of different things in this world, but don't spend all your energy debating dozens of issues without bringing it around to Jesus.

Make sure you move it to Jesus and the Gospel. You'll probably be the one that has to do that.

VI. Don't Be Surprised by How Differently People Respond to Our Message of Hope

Some Mocked
Some wanted to hear more
Some Believed