

Main Series Idea:

What are the realities that the cross forces us to face, and how do we understand the reasons our life changes because of the cross.

Acts 17: 22-34

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.'

29 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. 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 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." 32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." 33 So Paul went out from their midst. 34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Questions That Need Answers:

1. How do we understand the nature of presenting to gospel
 2. If this theory of a Jewish man being Lord is true, what do we do?
 3. Who is now the gospel for?
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INTRO

Conspiracy Theory?

Do we ever actually think about how scandalous the story of the gospel sounds? If you heard it today, would it sound like a true story or a conspiracy theory?

Paul speaks in the center of the Roman world

Paul shows up to the Roman areopagus in Athens... Now if you don't know what this is, the areopagus was the not only the place where trials are held and justice was debated, but it was commonly the meeting place for all the high end philosophers and thinking of the day to discuss philosophy and theology, the world, the gods, and human existence and flourishing.

Acts 17: 16-21

A new God?

The one true God did not come in the way of the greeks showing his power and authority over everyone no... but rather he came to take pain, injustice, inequality, hate, sickness, mental health issues, and everything in between, by taking all those things on to himself. More then that, he came and took our sins, not just the things done to us, but our own mistakes, our own sins, mainly our own idolatry onto himself... So that he could reconcile himself as God, to his creation, to take the gap that we built with out own ignorance and breach that, so that we could live in union to him.

To make things crazier, not only did God come, but the hebrews killed there God, crucified him, and to add shock, he rose from the dead... declaring a new kingdom the kingdom of God on the whole world.

So if this is true, what do we do?

Or as Timothy Keller would say

“If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn’t rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said?”
- Timothy Keller

1. A New Kingdom is here and is coming

So if this story is true, it means that Gods, love, justice, peace, way of life, mercy, healing, and so on, comes through those who present it through the world.

Not simply by how we speak about it, but how we embody it.

Colossians 1: 26-27

2. A holistic change must happen

If christianity is true, if this story is true, and this is what we are being called into, it doesn't mean we are given a new set of morals...

Because that what christianity has become, is it not? Its a moral code now for how to behave?

But if Christianity is true, it must mean we reevaluate not or morals, but everything. How we see yes our morality, but also our sexuality, money,

justice, inequality, the poor, the marginalized, politics, freedom, and human flourishing.

It also means we must take a holistic approach to what is forming us... how we interact in culture, the sciences, technology and social media, the values of our lives and how we live them, and more importantly, what we build them around.

“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” - **C.S. Lewis**

“If Christianity is true, then it involves the whole man, including his intellect and culture.” - **Francis Schaeffer**

3. If this is true, its the greatest love story ever told.

If this scandalous story is real... that means that the creator of the universe who lives within a self-loving unity of the trinity, didn't have to make us... or be with us... but rather as an outflow of his love he created us, not for work, or simply to show his power, but to bring us into the circle of love that is the trinity and to create a world for us in which we flourish and find meaning and purpose.

“The essence of sin is we human beings substituting ourselves for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for us.” - John Scott

The gospel is not a story about Gods and monsters, its not a story meant to live strictly in our intellect... It is the redemptive story of a God of love, sacrificing himself for union with those in whom he loves.

CLOSING

I can't prove the gospel, but I can say from my life, that I have seen the work of God and know with everything inside of me, that this scandalous story that Paul tells the people of Athens is true.

The gospel is real and the gospel is for all of us in this room tonight.

Today the Good News, is still the Good News, from Athens 1,800 years ago to now, its still for us all.
