

Build Your Church

9-4-22

BREAKING THE ICE

- How did you feel after last week's message? Challenged? Inspired? Excited? Overwhelmed?

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH

Read the Passage (Acts 17:16-34)

When we pick up the story in Acts 17:16, we see that Paul is waiting. Paul had been sent to Athens ahead of Silas and Timothy for his own safety, but in this passage, we see that he doesn't just lay low and bide his time. Paul recognized that he was on mission even in his downtime. He took the opportunity to learn more about the people in Athens so that he could share the gospel with them.

1. Why was Paul so distressed about what he saw?
2. What did he decide to do about it? To whom did he go?
3. Why do you think Paul started his speech to the Areopagus by talking about what he had seen in the city? What about when he quotes their poetry?
4. Did Paul's use of cultural references muddy his message, or was it clear?
5. After sharing who God is, did Paul let his hearers sit and ponder it on their own or did he require a response? (Hint: See verses 30-31).
6. How did Paul's audience respond?

SEEING JESUS CHRIST

During his time in Athens, Paul was intentional about learning the culture so that he could speak to the people on a personal level. Similarly, Jesus didn't just watch us from afar but pursued us by becoming like us and taking on human flesh. He doesn't just know you theoretically, but he has experienced the same kinds of struggles you have.

1. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. Does Jesus's experience on earth help you relate to him more closely?
2. Read Philippians 2:5-8. Jesus left the comfort of heaven to enter into humanity, and rather than demanding honor as God, he served us while we were his enemies. What does this say about His love for you?

MAKING IT MATTER

Throughout the book of Acts, we've seen the gospel spreading out into the world and the church on mission to make disciples. We want to see similar things happening here, and so over the next few weeks we want to be intentional about engaging with people so that they can meet, know, and follow Jesus. Don't feel like you need to present the gospel in every conversation, even a simple discussion is a win so long as you're building a relationship. These next few questions will have everyone in your group participating, so make sure everyone has a chance to share.

1. Often, we think of missionaries as only those people who go overseas to share the gospel. But Paul reminded us in Acts 17 that God has placed you exactly where you are to accomplish his mission. Think about your different social circles (family, friends, work, hobbies, etc.). Go around as a group and identify one person in your life you can pursue and share Jesus with over the next few weeks.
2. Paul observed the people in Athens so that he could share the gospel with them. What are some things you've observed about the person you've identified? What are their likes and dislikes? How can you use these things as a way to bless them with something like an act of service, a gift, a note of encouragement, or as a bridge into a spiritual conversation?
3. Brainstorm ideas in your group about how you can build a relationship with the person you've identified (coffee, lunch, a night out, etc.). Commit to taking a step towards them this week and come prepared to share the opportunities God is giving you with the group next week.
4. Consider what you can do over the next few months as a group to reach out together. Is there someone in your neighborhood you can serve? With a few major holidays coming up, can you throw a block party or group dinner that you can use to invite some of the people your group has identified?

PRAYING FOR GOD'S POWER

"This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of him." 1 John 5:14-15

When we pray according to God's will it engages the power and guidance of God to bring about our transformation. If we apply these things in our own strength, then it is just legalistic obedience. But, when we humbly ask God to change us and empower us according to His will and by His Spirit, it becomes transformational AND it glorifies God.

1. Ask people to share one key, specific application from today's lesson that they want God to bring about in their life. Take time to pray for each of these requests and the people that God is calling you to share Jesus with.