

Making the Relatable, Relatable

Acts 17:22-34

Two Opening Qualifiers

1. We can't save anyone; only Jesus can
2. Our words can't save anyone; only the Word of God can

The gospel always has and always will be relatable to all people

❖ **Finding an Entry Point (vs. 22-23)**

Paul's entry point to presenting the gospel was the Athenian altar "To an Unknown God" (v. 23)

Another phrase that describes what Paul is doing and what we are talking about is 'contextualizing the gospel.' Contextualizing the gospel is simply recognizing the context in which we find ourselves and presenting the gospel in light of that context. One note of caution is that proper contextualization does not change the gospel message whatsoever.

As is the case with Paul and the Athenians, a context that frequently presents itself for us to speak into is in cases of evident void

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

❖ **Making Biblical Connections/Contrasts(vs.24-29)**

Paul appeals to secular writers to make biblical points and uses these points as an offensive against the idolatry that was all over Athens (28)

He makes a logical argument for how the true God cannot be of physical, manmade materials (29)

The appeals that Paul makes are those of general revelation. General revelation can be defined as the evidence found in everyday life that points to the existence of God but is insufficient for salvation.

❖ **Making the Gospel Presentation (vs.30-31)**

Though it is good and helpful to appeal to general revelation in our gospel conversations, we have to get to special revelation at some point. Special revelation can be defined as God's presentation of Himself in specific times and ways that is sufficient for salvation. In our present day and age, such revelation primarily occurs in the form of the written word of God: the Bible.

To put this another way, when we are trying to illustrate to our audience how the gospel applies to their specific situation, we have to actually share the gospel message with them at some point.

❖ **The Results (vs. 32-34)**

In the same way that you and I get different reactions to our gospel presentations, so did Paul. Some outright rejected the message, some wanted to hear more, and others accepted it.

❖ **Application**

Look for the situations and scenarios in life where we can clearly and easily contextualize the gospel

We only get good at contextualizing the gospel by doing it

Never waver from what the gospel is, even if it upsets people

If the gospel comes across as unrelatable in our presentations; the message isn't the problem, the messenger is

Give the results of our gospel conversations to God and don't worry about the rest. Remember, we cannot force or talk somebody into salvation. There is certainly the need to follow-up with individuals, but again, we do not cause any change. That is the Holy Spirit's job.