



Power From on High

Series: Power From On High
Title: The Unknown God, Part 2
Lesson: 91

Text: Acts 17:16-24
Date: Dec 29, 2024

Acts 17:16–24 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. 17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. 18 And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, “What would this idle babbler wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,” —because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? 20 “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.” 21 (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)

22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23 “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 “The God who made the

world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

John 17:14–16 “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

“ambassadors”

1 Corinthians 5:9–11 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;

10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.

11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

“so-called believers”

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.

Two possible reasons we do not evangelize:

1. Is it possible that we are blind to what is going on around us because we are not paying attention?
2. Maybe we are not angry enough at sin.

“reasoning”

18 And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, “What would this idle babbler wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,” — because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

“conversing”

“idle babbler” - [spermologos]

Two groups of philosophers

1. Their world views were vastly different.
2. They had one thing in common, they did not believe in the one true God.

19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? 20 “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.” 21 (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)

“Areopagus”

Verse 19 they took him “to” the Areopagus (hill)

Verse 22) - Paul stood in the **“midst”** of the Areopagus (court officials)

NIV “a meeting of the Areopagus”

22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus (**council**) and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23 “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

Paul gives us a model for evangelism:

1. Avoid _____ at the start.

“very religious”

“ignorance”

2. Find _____ ground to build on.

“To an unknown god”

28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’

John 4:7–10 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.”

8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

3. _____ **our approach.**

24 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

Defintion

Contextualization is the strategy of modifying our _____ of evangelism in a specific context without compromising the gospel itself.

There are two extremes

1. Some believe that any contextualizing is wrong.
2. Some modify their approach to such a degree that they water down the truth.

1 Corinthians 9:19–23 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.

20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law;

21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

“the law of Christ”

22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak;

“the weak”

I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. 23 I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

Implications

1. Our witnessing cannot be _____, mechanical, and inflexible.
2. When witnessing to those who have had no exposure to the Bible, it is best to start with _____.

Discussion Guide

1. What does it mean to be ambassadors for Christ and why is it important?
2. Discuss and share what it means to be “in the world but not of it.”
3. What did you find most interesting about Paul’s approach to evangelism?
4. Explain the meaning of “contextualization” and why is it important?
5. What did you find was the most important idea from today’s sermon?

ANSWERS: criticism, common, Contextualize, approach, rigid, creation

10 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

3. _____ **our approach.**

24 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

Definition

Contextualization is the strategy of modifying our _____ of evangelism in a specific context without compromising the gospel itself.

There are two extremes

1. Some believe that any contextualizing is wrong.
2. Some modify their approach to such a degree that they water down the truth.