

**I. Introduction and review.**

**II. What principles for evangelizing a pagan culture does Paul exemplify? v. 16-23**

- A. Paul is deeply burdened for the lost. v. 16 Ps. 69:9 II Pe. 2:8
  - 1. Paul is disturbed by their idolatry. v. 16 Is. 42:8
  - 2. Is your heart troubled by the false religion which is all around us? Ps. 119:136
  
- B. He connects with his audience without compromising his message. v. 22-23 I Co. 9:19f
  - 1. He fits his evangelistic approach to the background of his hearers.
  - 2. He finds points of contact with their belief system and culture. v. 23,28-29
  - 3. He is not claiming common ground with them or commending their religious gropings, but rather engages their false worldview.
  - 4. How can we connect with our culture? Is. 44:14-16
  
- C. Paul boldly proclaims the gospel. v. 17-21
  - 1. He is unashamed to bring the gospel to the marketplace of ideas. v. 17-18 Ro. 1:16
  - 2. He proclaims absolute truth which excludes all other world views.
  - 3. His focus is positive. 19:27
  - 4. He preaches doctrine!

**III. What message does Paul proclaim to a pagan culture?**

- A. He tells them the truth about God: Your Creator is not like your idols.
  - 1. There is One Personal God. v. 24a Gen. 1:1a Deut. 6:4-5
  - 2. God is the Creator and Owner of all things. v. 24b, 26a Gen. 1:1ff Is. 42:5
  - 3. God is immense, infinite, and spiritual. v. 24c, 29 7:48-50 John 4:24 I Tim.1:17 I Ki. 8:27 Isa. 66:1
  - 4. He is self-sufficient. He does not need you. v. 25a Ps. 50:10-12 Is. 46:5-7 40:28
  - 5. You need Him, for He sustains all life. v. 25b, 28a 14:17 Mk. 5:45 Ge. 2:7 Isa. 42:5 Ps. 136:25 145:9,15-16
  - 6. He is sovereign over the nations. v. 26b 2:23 Ps. 115:3 Pr. 21:1 Is. 46:8-11 Rom. 9:14-21 Dt. 32:8 Eph. 1:11 Dan. 2:36-45 4:35
  - 7. He is nearby and knowable. v. 27-28
  - 8. He is patient. v. 30a Ex. 34:6 Rom. 2:4 9:22 I Pe. 3:20 II Pe. 3:15
  - 9. He is just. v. 31 Ps. 33:5 96:13 Heb. 9:27 Isa. 45:21
  
- B. Paul tells them the truth about mankind: You are a sinful creature. v. 26
  - 1. God created you in His own image. v. 26,28b Gen. 1:27
  - 2. God continues to sustain you. v. 25b Col. 1:17
  - 3. You have been created to seek and to serve Him. v. 27-28 Isa. 55:6-7
  - 4. You have sinfully distorted the truth about God through your idolatry. v. 29
  
- C. Turn to God before it is too late.
  - 1. Your idolatry offends God. v. 29 Deut. 5:8 Rom. 1:19,32 2:14-15 Ps. 14:2 Pr. 8:17
  - 2. God's patience with your rebellion is nearly at an end. v. 30a
  - 3. God commands all people to repent. v. 30b 2:38 3:19 8:22 Mt. 3:2 4:17 I Th. 1:9-10
  - 4. The day of judgment is coming: universal, definite, and righteous. v. 31a He. 9:27 II Pe. 3:3-13 Ps. 9:8 Ro. 3:23

**D. Look to the risen Christ. v. 31b, 18**

1. Jesus Christ has been appointed to judge the world. John 5:27 Acts 10:40-42
2. Jesus' authority is authenticated by His resurrection. 2:24,34-36
3. Why doesn't Paul speak here of Jesus' death and its meaning? v. 18
4. He who will judge you offers to pardon you, taking away your guilt and providing the righteousness God requires. 16:31 II Cor. 5:21 I Pe. 3:18 I Jo. 2:1-2 Ro. 3:23f

**IV. What was the response to Paul's evangelism? v. 32-34**

**A. Most rejected Paul's message as unsophisticated and ridiculous. v. 23a I Co. 1:18**

**B. Some were curious and wanted to hear more. v. 32b, 21**

**C. A few believed. v. 34 Isa. 55:11 John 6:37,44 Acts 16:14 I Cor. 1:26**

**D. We should expect the same responses.**

1. Our Christian beliefs are subject to ridicule by the worldly elite. I Cor. 1:26
2. Some will dabble with Christianity without making a commitment. II Ti. 3.
3. God will always save His remnant. Acts 18:9-10 I Cor. 1:24 Isa. 55:11

**V. Concluding applications.**

**A. Was Paul's ministry in Athens a failure?**

1. Some suggest that after things went badly in Athens, Paul changed his strategy .
2. Some go so far as to use Paul's "failure" in Athens to justify their deviation from his message and method to a more seeker-sensitive approach. I Cor. 9:19f
3. Paul makes it clear his methodology and message never change. I Co. 1:18f 2:2

**B. Paul's approach is very different from the message and methods many are using as they attempt to bring the gospel to our culture. I Cor. 1:22-24**

**C. How should we seek to reach our post-Christian culture?**

1. We need a passion for God's glory and a burden for lost souls.
2. We need to speak to them in language they can understand.
3. We need to boldly tell them what they need to know about God and themselves.

**D. We can boldly proclaim the truth because it is God who saves. Acts 18:9-10 Isa. 55:11**

**Discussion questions**

1. Why was Paul so disturbed by what he found in Athens?
2. What disturbs you about the religion found in our city?
3. How did Paul's method change when he was preaching to pagans (as opposed to the Jews)?
4. What can we do to better connect the gospel message to our culture?
5. How does Paul's methodology differ from popular evangelistic approaches today?
6. Where do we need to begin when preaching the gospel to a post-Christian world?
7. Why is the concept of creation important in evangelism?
8. What response does God demand from lost humanity?
9. What response did Paul get?
10. What response should we expect?