



Acts 17:10-34



Overview

Acts gives us practical examples of living for Jesus, and how our faith can work out in our daily lives. Last week Steve spoke about part of Paul's second missionary journey where he and those with him received a hostile and jealous response to their message. Tim continued where Paul and Silas were preaching in Berea and then Paul went on to preach in Athens.



Getting to Know You

We read in Acts 17:11, *'Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.'*

We live in a world where we hear conflicting messages about almost anything. There's been some talk about various cults operating around Auckland as well. To be able to evaluate anything we hear against scripture, as the Bereans did, we need to know the Bible.

Q – How well do you know the Bible?

Q – What is your favourite Bible passage? Why?

Below are some of the many Bible verses about reading the Word of God.

John 1:1	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Psalms 1:2	But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.
Joshua 1:8	This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.
Nehemiah 8:3	And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.
Romans 10:17	So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
1 Timothy 4:13	Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.
Hebrews 4:12	For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
2 Timothy 3:16-17	All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Psalm 119:11	I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
Psalm 119:105	Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Job 23:12	I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.
Matthew 4:4	But he answered, "It is written, "“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”"
Romans 15:4	For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.



Digging Deeper

Read Acts 17:10-34

Q – What are the things that stand out for you in this passage?

Paul was passionate about telling people about God. In these passages we see two things,

1. he did it in a way that was contextual and relevant to their culture without compromising his values and
2. he did not ridicule them.

One of our own missionaries, Chris J, makes a good statement, "No one ever became a Christian because they lost in argument."

Q – Have you ever tried to talk about God to someone, hoping it would have a positive impact, but it had the opposite effect to what you hoped for? Why do you think that was?

When Paul spoke to the Jews, he represented the gospel with a Jewish emphasis.

But when Paul preached in Athens, when he spoke to the scholars, he spoke to them in a language they can understand. Ideas and philosophy. He didn't ridicule them, but use the knowledge of their culture to his advantage Like the altar dedicated to 'an unknown god', to present to them the One True God. (v22, 23)

Q - How can we do this in Auckland, a city that represents about 220 different ethnicities?

Q – What would be the challenges to effectively talk about God in a way that is culturally relevant in a city like Auckland?

Apart from Auckland being a multi-cultural city, our own church is home to over 20 different ethnicities. Although we all believe in the same God we do have different opinions about some things for example, music style or the way we present the gospel. We even differ on some secondary theological issues.

Tim said on Sunday, "Over the years that I've spent in and around church life, I've noticed that many of the conflicts or division amongst believers, are about the *way* we do things, rather than about deep theological differences.

But the reality is, this world is changing faster than ever. And if the Gospel is to stay relevant we too must change with it – embracing the culture, but without compromising our values.”

Q – How do keep respecting each other in our different opinions in an ever changing culture, while reaching out to people who don't know God?



Taking it home

Jesus told his disciples, “Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves.” ~ Matthew 10:16

Q – What do you think this means?

Q – How would you apply this in the way you reach out to different cultures?

Here is a great interpretation of this passage: ‘When Jesus told the Twelve to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves, He laid down a general principle about the technique of kingdom work. As we take the gospel to a hostile world, we must be wise (avoiding the snares set for us), and we must be innocent (serving the Lord blamelessly). Jesus was not suggesting that we stoop to deception but that we should model some of the serpent’s famous shrewdness in a positive way. Wisdom does not equal dishonesty, and innocence does not equal gullibility.’



Prayer

Spend some time praying for our missionaries. Pray specifically for them to be able to witness in a way that is culturally relevant.

Pray also for our church, that we will be respectful of each other’s difference, specially during this time of transition.