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Sharing Jesus; Acts 17:16-34
GPBC
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Introduction – We’ve been spending the first part of 2020 taking a look at the fundamental basics of our faith. First, we looked at the Word of God and we set a goal for our church to read through the Scripture and to memorize 26 verses together this year. Second, we looked at prayer. Daily Bible reading and daily prayer are essential to our growth in the faith and one of the primary means God uses to strengthen us and sustain us throughout this life. After taking a week for the sanctity of life, we then examined baptism and found that although it does not make you a follower of Christ, it does identify you as a follower of Christ.

As we move through the month of February, we’re going to study evangelism, church membership, we’ll have men’s day, and then we’ll wrap this series up by studying and observing the Lord’s Supper together on Feb 23. The plan then is to jump back into our study of Matthew in March. So that’s where we’ve been and where we’re going.

So today we want to be encouraged and equipped in the area of evangelism. Evangelism is simply telling others about Jesus. Sharing Jesus. One beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. One sinner telling another sinner where to find forgiveness of sin, meaning in life, and life everlasting. As followers of Christ, we are all called to share our faith with those around us. If we indeed have found the greatest treasure in the universe, then we cannot help but share this joy and share this treasure and share this life with others who need it too.

Simply put - people need the Lord. If they realize they are missing something in their lives or if they believe they have it all together in their lives, if they don’t have Christ, they are not living but rather perishing. The call for evangelism is the reminder to us all about what is the most important thing in life, and that is, being ready for the life to come. Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. In John 14:6 Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me.” People need the Lord. And because people need the Lord, people also need someone to tell them about the Lord. People need to see the gospel lived out before them, and they need to hear the gospel explained to them. Just as baptism loses its meaning without the

explanation of the gospel, so too our lives lived as believers requires the explanation of the gospel. If we live differently in this world, if we have a peace that surpasses understanding, if our circumstances do not diminish our joy, if we are ready to be welcomed into the presence of God, people need to know how and why! People need the Lord, and people need someone to tell them about the Lord. Romans 10:14 asks, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?”

One of the greatest privileges of the believer is to be able to speak the words of life to that loved one or that friend or neighbor who desperately needs the new life that only Christ can give. So we’re going to make some quick observations from today’s text that I pray will equip and encourage us to be gospel witnesses.

- I. Context of Sharing Jesus (vv16-21)
 - a. V16 – Paul’s spirit was provoked. He was bothered. He was burdened. He was not able to overlook or ignore the situation before him that the people of this city did not know the Lord. They worshipped all kinds of gods. They had all kinds of idols. They did not have salvation and life.
 - i. We have our own set of idols here in Gaffney and Cherokee County. We worship all kinds of things and gods – money, popularity, sports, travel, possessions, achievements, sex, entertainment, etc. etc. The question is not do we have idols. The question is are we as believers bothered that our family and friends and neighbors are lost without Christ? Are we provoked in our spirit?
 - b. V17 – He went to where the people were and talked to them, reasoned with them, about the faith. He intentionally struck up conversations with religious people and non-religious people about the only true religion. He started a conversation that forced people to think about eternity.
 - i. We don’t usually think about eternity unless someone intentionally brings it up.
 - ii. He went to where the people were and conversed with them. He didn’t invite them to church. He was inviting them to Jesus, and then he would bring them to church.

- c. Vv18-21 – As Paul went to the people to share Jesus, God was at work to open doors for the gospel. They brought him to Areopagus and said we wish to know what these things mean.
 - i. If we will be faithful to share our faith, God will be faithful to open doors that we could not have imagined or opened. Paul didn't set out to gather with this group. Paul set out to talk to people. God then put him right in the middle of an open door.
 - ii. Col 4:3 – Paul says, “pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ”
- d. Paul was bothered that people were lost. Paul intentionally went to where the people were and conversed with them about Jesus. God opened a door for Paul to share the gospel. That's how evangelism works.

II. Critical Points of Sharing Jesus (vv22-31)

- a. Vv22-23 - He established a point of contact, what they called the unknown god. Paul met them where they were and drew them into the gospel. Let me tell you about this unknown God.
 - i. There are all kinds of points of contact we can make with people and then point them to the gospel if we just take the time to listen and observe.
 - 1. I've tried everything and my life still seems to be empty and out of control. Response: I used to feel the same way. I knew something was missing in my life. Let me tell you about the day I found out what life is all about.
 - 2. I made so many mistakes growing up. I want to make sure my children have a better life. Response: Yes I made mistakes too. Let me tell you about the day I became a new person.
- b. Vv24-28 – Paul begins his presentation of the gospel with God. God is the starting point. And not so much what God can do for you as who God is.
 - i. God is Creator – He made everything and He made you.
 - ii. God is the giver of life
 - iii. God is sovereign

- iv. God is holy. He is unlike all other gods and all of His creation. He is transcendent. He is far above all, and yet He is right here with you.
- v. He created you to know Him and glorify Him.
- c. Vv29-30 – Paul’s second point is man and sin.
 - i. We were created to worship God but we don’t worship God. We worship idols.
 - ii. We must repent and turn from worshipping ourselves and confess.
- d. V31 – Paul’s third point is the coming judgment. We will all stand before God.
- e. V31 – Paul’s final point is Jesus. The One who was raised from the dead will judge the world, and yet at the same time, the One who was raised from the dead is the One who rescues us, saves us, from judgment and in Him we find forgiveness and life eternal.
- f. God, man, sin, the consequences of sin, the Savior. You see the purpose of evangelism is for people to see their need of a Savior and then to share the good news that there is One!
- g. 1 Thess 1:10

III. Results of Sharing Jesus (vv32-34)

- a. Some will mock – the Bible says the cross is foolishness to those who do not believe. One of the greatest hindrances to evangelism is our fear of being rejected, mocked, ridiculed. We’ve got to get over ourselves. It’s always been that way, and it will always be that way. Some people will reject their only means of life.
- b. Some will waver – some will ride the fence – some will take longer to consider and question – some will never come to a decision and thus will be making a decision.
- c. Some, however, some will believe. Some will believe. Some will be transformed from death to life. Some will be born again. Some will be given new life and life eternal. Yes, some will reject, some will waver, but some will believe.

Conclusion – If we will just be faithful to share Jesus, God will be faithful to open doors and He will be gracious to open hearts!