

Bible Summary- Acts 17

The Agora

Paul's second missionary journey takes him to the capital of western thought in Athens. While there, he goes down to the Agora or the marketplace of ideas. It is in the Agora of Athens that he encounters the two big philosophies of the day - Epicureanism and Stoicism. Paul's answer to those philosophies was to talk about Jesus and the resurrection. He would have countered the Epicurean idea of pleasure as god and the Stoic ideal of duty by describing the biblical worldview that paradise is broken but the Savior has come to redeem it and death is no longer the executioner but now the gardener because of Jesus' resurrection.

Scriptures: Acts 17:16-34; Ecclesiastes 2:1-20; 1 Kings 4:22-23; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 4:13; Acts 26:26; Philippians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 4:17

Bible Questions & Application

(These are meant to aid in facilitating conversation.

There is no obligation to run through **every** listed question.)

1. How did Sunday's teaching challenge your thinking?
2. If Grants Pass had an Agora (a marketplace of ideas), where do you think it would be located?
3. What types of things bring you pleasure?
 - a. Are pursuing these things bad? Why or why not?
 - b. How can we know if we're idolizing pleasure?
4. Is God ok with us pursuing pleasure?
5. Matt described 4 lies that can bring tragedy, even the tragedy of suicide. 1.) things will not get better, 2.) I can't take it anymore, 3.) the world will be better off without me, and 4.) it will end the pain)
 - a. Which of those 4 lies are you most prone to believe?
 - b. In what way does God's unconditional love and acceptance negate the lie?
6. Matt used the word "Americanism" in his message? What's your definition of Americanism?
 - a. Do you agree or disagree with Matt's statement that Americanism equals Epicureanism?
7. Why would Matt say that "death is no longer the executioner but the gardener"?