



+ **YOU**

Spring 2024
It's All About Jesus

Sermon Title: Sharing a Simple Gospel

To be used with Session 6: The Mission of Jesus Shared

The Point: The truth about Jesus is too big to keep to ourselves.

Scripture: Acts 17:22-32

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study “The Mission of Jesus,” this sermon examines the account of the apostle Paul as He shared his faith on Mars Hill. Paul used evangelism techniques that we can implement ourselves: to relate to others, find out what it is they care about, and use that as an avenue to share the truth of the gospel. Paul’s delivery also proves that the gospel can be shared quickly and simply. It does not need to be a long, drawn-out theological discourse, but a simple telling of the basic truths that set us free to live in Christ. The truth of Jesus is simple, yet too big not to share!

Introduction: Americans are by and large a religious people. From our beginnings through the late twentieth century, religious faith, and church attendance in Christian denominations has been a solid and reliable part of American life. Yet many are turning away from God. According to the most recent census on religion, the share of Americans who associate with religion dropped by eleven points. That’s over a tenth of an already dwindling flock; we are dwindling even further. Those who are leaving the church are not leaving religious thinking altogether.¹ They are turning to other religions, to politics, to secularism, to social media, and to anything else that we as humans use to try and fill the gap only filled by a relationship with Christ Himself. As we speak to a religious people, we can point them to the one who offers more than religion. Jesus offers a relationship with the creator of us all and a life lived to the fullest.

1. People are drawn to worship something (Acts 17:22-23).

This passage finds the great apostle preaching the gospel at the Areopagus. The name comes from the Greek words *Areios Pagos*, meaning “Hill of Ares” or Mar’s Hill. It was well known in the Greek world as a place where ideas were exchanged, and discussions of new concepts were common. Paul was in the presence of people who were used to thinking and were used to religious “things.” He planned to give them more than an idea, but the very truth of Christ.

Paul started his gospel presentation on this hill, named for a Greek god, by noting that they were a religious people. The city of Athens was filled with altars to many gods, and one in particular caught Paul’s attention: an altar to an unknown god. Paul used this as His launching point to connect with them and lead them to understanding that He knew this “unknown god,”

¹ <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/05/14/democrats-religion-census-secular-00095858>

and in fact this is the only God worth knowing. This true God does not dwell in altars or statues but is living, active, and dwells among us, calling us to Himself so that each of us may readily find and know him. Paul knew His audience well and found important connection points to get their attention and make His case.

2. The reality of God is obvious (Acts 17:24-29).

We also live among religious people. They may not be worshipping God as revealed in Scripture, but they are devoting their life to *something*. We build idols out of celebrities, sports, careers, places, and events to the point that we become worshipful of these things. There is nothing wrong with working hard, or pursuing an interest, but when that thing takes the place that only God can fill, we become empty and lost. This is how Paul saw the people of Athens. Altars to gods were everywhere, but they had no knowledge of the one true God. They had religion, not faith. Knowledge, not wisdom. They honored gods that they designed out of “gold or silver or stone” and ignored the eternal God who existed long before humans were carving idols.

Paul used a fascinating approach; he even quoted their own poets as a way to point these men to God. Paul was well aware that “the earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the LORD” (Ps. 24:1). He would use everything at His disposal to capture the attention of His listeners and point them to Christ.

3. The gospel is simple to share (Acts 17:30-32).

Here Paul reached the point of His speech. In a single sentence He summarized the commandments of God, our need for repentance, the coming judgement, and the resurrection of Christ. It often seems so difficult to share the gospel of Jesus. We worry that we don’t have all the answers, we might offend those listening, or that theology is just too complex for us to try to explain. But the truth of God, as shown by Paul here, is simple and straightforward. Any believer can do this. In fact, Jesus calls us to do so! It is our mission to share the good news of Jesus wherever we may have opportunity. We don’t have to know everything, but we can tell others that Jesus has risen, He offers us forgiveness, and we can live a life of blessing here in the present and an eternal life with Him in the hereafter. It is a simple, beautiful story, and it is ours to share.

Conclusion: As we see in verse 32, some refused to believe Paul’s account. Some ridiculed Paul for telling it. It seemed silly to them, and they rejected Paul and the gospel he shared. Yet there are others who believed. For those new believers, how were their lives changed? With whom did they share this good news? How was God glorified in and through them? We may never know the details, but we know that the resurrection of Christ is the most central event in human history, and we are called to share this beautiful truth. We will be blessed in sharing it regardless of the response.

Jason Soroski is a pastor, teacher, and holds degrees in Church Music and Education from Missouri Baptist University. His best known writing is [Drop the Blanket: the Moment you Never](#)

Noticed in a Charlie Brown Christmas.