

Title: **If Paul Came to the Bay: Learning to Reach Our City Like Paul Reached Athens (Part 1)**
Text: **Acts 17:16-23**

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Big Idea

In some ways, modern day Silicon Valley is like the ancient city of Athens. It's a cultural center filled with some of the world's brightest minds doing some of the most significant work. And yet it's also one of the most unchurched and biblically illiterate places in the country. Therefore, as we watch Paul attempting to reach Athens, we learn what it might look like for us to reach the Bay Area.

1. Open Our Schedules

With this, I'm simply thinking of the fact that, if we're going to have any impact on the people in this city around us at all—we've got to be with them, we've got to make time for them, we've got to be present in some way, we've got to open our schedules. You can't effectively open your eyes or your heart or your mouth to people if you're not first with them. This may sound a bit intuitive and unnecessary. But I do think it's worth accenting because of how hard it seems to be, especially for people in the Bay Area. We're always rushing off to the next thing—for our work, for our play, for our kids. And as a result, we don't really engage the city, we use it, we move through it. So it starts here with opening our schedules—making sure we're truly present in this place that God has put us with the people who are around us.

2. Open Our Eyes

We open our schedules, but then we've got to open our eyes. We've got to actually see and observe and learn about the people we're with and trying to reach.

If we desire to speak compellingly to the unbelievers in our spheres of influence we must first pass along and observe the objects of their worship. We must get to know them as people—their cravings, their fears, their philosophies, their religion, their god(s). Without this time spent observing, we will rarely be granted access inside their hearts.

For we will come instead with only a pre-packaged presentation of Christ that will not speak to the particulars of their own worldviews and personalities. It is this time spent by Paul that allows him to so skillfully and winsomely deconstruct the philosophies of this people, causing them to "despair of their basic principle" (as Francis Schaffer would say) that they might be reconstructed and lifted up in the hope of the gospel!

3. Open Our Hearts

Paul didn't just see the city and the culture, the idols and the people. He felt something deeply about it all—likely a mix of *indignation* and *compassion*. Indignation because the glory of the one true God was being diced up and attached to lesser things which are no gods. Compassion, because those things which are no gods cannot, therefore, truly save. The people in this city are in a perilous situation, and they don't even know it.

"When Dwight L. Moody was in London during one of his famous evangelistic tours, several British clergymen visited him. They wanted to know how and why this poorly educated American was so effective in winning throngs of people to Christ. Moody took the three men to the window of his hotel room and asked each in turn what he saw. One by one, the men described the people in the park below. Then Moody looked out the window with tears rolling down his cheeks. 'What do you see, Mr. Moody?' asked one of the men. 'I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior'"

Yes, we see Paul doing all these things in our text here; yes, every Christian in this room is called in some way to lean in and start doing some of this ourselves as we try to reach others in our lives; but, may we never forget, the reason we're called to do this for others is because Jesus has already done it for us!



Reflection Questions

- Which of the three "openings" identified in today's sermon do you most need to grow in and why? What's one step you can take this next week towards this end?
- Read the quote about D.L. Moody above. Is his the window you've been looking through lately? Why or why not?

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Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate presses our church *upwards* in love

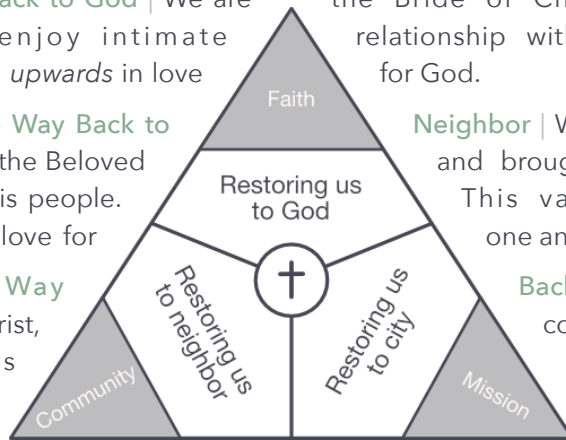
the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal This value presses our one another.

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our in love for the

Back to City | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.



Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

North County Home Group!

Our north county Home Group is up to new and exciting things, and we want you to know about it (and join in if you're able!):

- **New Team:** Bob Coffey will now be joined by Alex and Harmony Shyr who will help with some of the facilitating and shepherding.
- **New Location:** The group will start meeting at the Shyr's home in Mountain View.
- **New Study:** The Home Group will continue to meet on second and fourth Thursdays from 7:00-8:30pm. They will, however, be starting a new study through the book of Jude. They will progress slowly through the verses, reflecting on them both as a group during their meetings and privately through the week. You can expect: personal study segments to complete between 7 weeks of group sessions; verse-by-verse study for comprehension and application; 7 enriching teaching videos. (Note: there are no prep or materials are required to attend the first meeting.)

Scan the QR code below for more info and to find a link to sign up.

If you have any questions, please reach out to us
at info@mercyhillchurch.org.

Sunday Prayer Walk - Cancelled for Today

All Church Hangout - Next Sunday!

Scan the QR code below for more info!

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more announcements,



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our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub.