

Title: **If Paul Came to the Bay: Learning to Reach Our City Like Paul Reached Athens (Part 2)**
Text: **Acts 17:16-34**

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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.

After we've opened our *schedules*, and our *eyes*, and our *hearts* to the people in the culture around us, we're finally ready to open our *mouths* . . .

Three Opening Observations

Observation #1: Paul Went to the "Marketplace" (v. 17)

The "marketplace" (Gk. *agora*) was really the center of urban and public life in Greek cities. It served as the hub for all social, political, and commercial activities. And Paul goes there with the gospel. This tells us at least two things: first, he wasn't private with his faith; and, second: he knows that the biblical worldview can hold its own over and against all the philosophies of the world.

Observation #2: Paul "Reasoned" with Those Who Happened to Be There (v. 17)

In the Greek, this word translated as "reasoned" is the word *dialogemai*. It's related to our English word "dialogue." Our evangelism should begin with dialogue. We're not just talking and talking, but asking and listening. Only then can we bring the gospel to a person in a way that seems both intelligible and relevant to them.

Observation #3: Paul Was Brought to the "Areopagus" (v. 19)

The Areopagus here is the world-renowned supreme council of Athens. This is the upper crust of society in the ancient world.

Three Basic Steps

Step #1: Affirm

Because all men have been created in God's image and live in God's world, they will keep bumping into God's truth, both from within and from without (Rom. 1:18ff.). Our job is to find the *rumblings of God* in the *ramblings of man*. It will be, in some ways, suppressed and twisted, that is for sure. But it will be there nevertheless—something still rooted in biblical reality, something in the heart that's tethered off indelibly to the God in whose image they've been made. They can suppress it. But they can't escape it.

Step #2: Challenge

Even in their own system of thought and ways of worship there are things they must admit they don't understand. They can feel it. They're still missing something. There are inconsistencies and incongruities. Deep down they know. And this altar to an unknown god bears witness to that fact (v. 23).

Step #3: Invite

We affirm some things in their worldview, challenge the inconsistency of it, and then show how everything actually comes into a wonderful coherence inside the biblical framework—everything they were ultimately after with their idolatry is found in a full and lasting way only in Jesus.

One Bay Area Example

When you open your schedule and you open your eyes and you open your heart to take in what's happening here in the Bay Area, one of the "objects of . . . worship" (v. 23) we can identify quite easily is this idea of technology—technological innovation. Here is an idol that's really captured the soul of Silicon Valley.



Reflection Questions

- Think about the people in your life, those in your own spheres of influence. How can you do with them what Paul does here in Athens? What would it look like to open your schedule, open your eyes, open your heart, and open your mouth? God wants to use you to reach them!

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Our Mission & Values

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

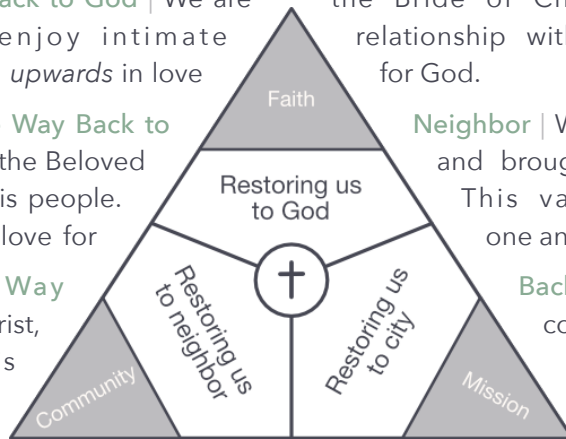
COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

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

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

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

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

Pumpkin Carving Party!

Mark your calendars for our 4th annual Pumpkin Carving Party. This year's party will take place on Saturday, October 25th from 3:00-5:00pm at Allen at Steinbeck.

This event is for children ages 2-18. Over the years we've had families from the neighborhood and school and friends of Mercy Hill folks join. It's been a great event for us to bless our neighborhood as well as provide a space for folks to get to know our church!

If you're planning to attend, please RSVP by Wednesday (10/22) to guarantee a pumpkin for your child(ren).

If you're interested in volunteering to help or attending this event (or both!), please scan the QR code below to find more info.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Joey at joey@mercyhillchurch.org.

Philippines Missions Trip - Two Ways to Support!

North County Home Group Update!

Scan the QR code below for more info!

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

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