

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

19 – Telling True Stories in an Age of Outrage

Acts 7

Outrage is all the rage in our day

- People take up other people's offenses just so they can feel useful
- Outrage will (mis)use the law if it can't win the debate
 - Stephen ended his life as a martyr at the hands of a lynch mob

To Tell True Stories...

Be winsome (6.15)

- Winsome: winning with charm – not fake, but fun
 - Chris Pratt @ MTV Awards
- “Clear eyes burning with an inner light”
 - Meeting outrage with further outrage is popular but pathetic, meets no needs, hears no arguments or perspectives, and yields no Kingdom fruit

Start where they are (7.1)

- If they are mad or hurt, start there
- If they have a favorite topic, start there

Tell the truest story (7.2-50)

- God has already told the best story – you can't really improve on it
- Stephen emphasized the Person of God over the place – land / temple
- Stephen knew the temptation was to reject God in order to protect power (7.35)

Anticipate the confrontation (7.51-53)

- The more stubborn, the more straight talk
- The more hurt, the more compassion shown

Pay the price (7.54-60)

- This is not a small ask on behalf of Christ – but it's what He's asking
- You never know what God is up to in the background
 - Saul becomes Paul one chapter later
 - Does He still work that way? Platt @ SBC 2018 – Muslim story

Questions for Discussion

1. In what areas of our culture do you most often see outrage? In what areas of your life are you most prone to it yourself? Why do you think that is?
2. In the sermon, Trent defined winsome as “winning with charm.” Because we don’t want to be fake (as in the bad meaning of “charming”), how can we pursue a winsome approach to sharing the Good News of Jesus? What are two practical steps that you can personally take?
3. Think of the last spiritual conversation you had with someone. Where did they start (pain, hurt, success, purpose, etc.)? How did the conversation go from there? What are three ways we can offer our attention and show compassion for where people begin their journey to God or back to God?
4. Telling the “truest story” of God seeking and redeeming people inevitably leads to a moment of confrontation. Everyone has to own their own sin and let Jesus deal with them. What is an example from your life of seeing someone hurting and offering them compassion? What is an example from your life of seeing someone remain stubborn and having to confront more forcefully?
5. Stephen ultimately gave his life for the cause of Christ. God used that to show just how worthy Jesus is of following Him with all of who we are. He also used that to set the stage for Saul’s conversion. Think of a time when you saw someone make a sacrifice for Christ (big or small). How did it show Christ to be worthy of following? Did God use it for other ends also? What were those?

PRATT'S SPEECH

“We didn’t have a pot to piss in growing up, but we laughed our butts off every day—we still do. And a special mention to my son Jack, who will watch this one day. Kid, I love you. I love you more than anything in the world.

“And to the fans, I wouldn’t be here without you.

“This being the Generation Award, I’m going to cut to the chase and I’m going to speak to you—the next generation. I accept the responsibility as your elder, so listen up. This is what I call ‘9 Rules from Chris Pratt: Generation Award Winner.’

“Number one: Breathe. If you don’t you’ll suffocate.

“Number two: You have a soul. Be careful with it.

“Number three: Don’t be a turd. If you’re strong, be a protector and if you’re smart be a humble influencer. Strength and intelligence can be weapons, and do not wield them against the weak. That makes you a bully. Be bigger than that.

“Number four: When giving a dog medicine, put the medicine in a little piece of hamburger and they won’t even know they’re eating medicine.

“Number five: Doesn’t matter what it is, earn it. Reach out to someone in pain. Be of service, it feels good and it’s good for your soul.

“Number six: God is real. God loves you. God wants the best for you. Believe that. I do.

AND THEN ...

“Number seven: If you have to poop at a party, or you’re embarrassed because you’re going to stink up the bathroom, just do what I do: lock the door, sit down, get all the pee out first. And then, when all the pee’s done, poop, flush. Boom. You minimize the amount of time the poop is touching the air, because if you poop first it takes you longer to pee then you’re peeing on top of it and the poop particles create a cloud that goes out and then everyone at the party will know that you pooped. Just trust me! It’s science.

“Number eight: Learn to pray. It’s easy and it’s so good for your soul.

“And finally, number nine: Nobody is perfect. People are going to tell you you’re perfect just the way you are—you’re not! You are imperfect. You always will be. But, there is a powerful force that designed you that way. And if you’re willing to accept that, you will have grace. And grace is a gift. And like the freedom we enjoy in this country that grace was paid for with someone else’s blood. Do not forget it. Do not take it for granted.

“God bless you.”