

## Very Religious, Yet Very Wrong



### Discipleship Groups

Sermon Dates:  
Nov. 19 & 20, 2022

Butch Gastfield

Scripture Text  
Acts 17: 10-34

As Paul arrived in each new city on his journey, he found a variety of ethnic backgrounds within the populations he encountered and the cultures of which they were a part. Accordingly, he adapted the delivery of his message and his responses to the reactions he received.

#### QUESTIONS:

*Read Acts 17:2-7, 10-12*

- Compared with the Thessalonians, how did the Bereans receive the Gospel?
- Paul states that the Bereans were “of more noble character than the Thessalonians.” What more positive trait does he indicate that they possessed?

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- In terms of attitude and intensity, how does your engagement with the Scripture compare with the Bereans?
- What specific things can you initiate this week to increase your study of God’s Word?

Since his conversion, Paul had been forced by persecution to leave an area or cease speaking his message on numerous occasions.

#### QUESTIONS:

- If that had happened to you, how might you be inclined to view your mission?
- What is the nature of any opposition you have faced in your efforts to share the Gospel with others or to be a faithful witness for our Lord in your community?

*Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6*

- What attitude does Paul adopt about the aggressive opposition he faced? How can you apply this to your personal situation?

Paul’s teachings in Athens, recorded in *Acts 17*, seem to spring spontaneously from his reactions to those things he views that are an integral part of the culture and activities of the city.

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- Is your spirit ever “provoked” by the things you hear and see in your surroundings (see *Acts 17:16*)?
- What do you do in response? Are you satisfied with your reactions and /or the results of your responses? Why or why not?

Butch’s first sermon point was that ***we must be prepared to speak the truth courageously and confidently.***

- What are the specific difficulties with doing that in our present reality?
- How can we—as a body of believers and fellow disciples—support one another in ways that increase our confidence and build our courage to face an increasingly hostile culture?

#### REFLECTION AND RESPONSE:

- Living life at this level is risky. What are you and I willing to lay aside, and how much are we willing to endure on behalf of the Gospel?
- As a group, offer a prayer for God’s Holy Spirit to build within us the necessary courage to speak truth into our world.

The second sermon point urged us to ***offer a compelling contrast*** between our God and the distorted and lifeless gods to which our neighbors look.

#### QUESTIONS:

*Read Acts 17:22-29*

- What does Paul emphasize about God in this passage?
- How does Paul use the culture and beliefs of his listeners to help them see the inadequacies in the way they view reality? Is this a principle we can use in our conversations with others about their belief systems?

Butch’s final point was that ***we can’t compromise the true message of coming judgment and the need for repentance.***

#### QUESTIONS:

*Read Acts 17:30-31*

- How do we present this message to our friends and neighbors in a way that is loving—not condemnatory?
- In what ways can our lives reflect a positive alternative to this truth that others can find attractive and potentially respond to?