

Date: April 19

Passage: Acts 17

Story: David sharing some hard truth with me...

There are moments in life when you're confronted with truth...and once you see it, you can't unsee it:

In the moments we are confronted with truth, we have a choice: *What am I going to do with this?*

Because truth has a way of doing that—it doesn't just sit there. It presses in. It invites a response.

The gospel meets us where we are—but doesn't leave us there. It invites a response..

Define Gospel

Set up Acts 17

Paul travels to three different cities: Thessalonica, Berea and Athens. And in each place, he shares the same message about Jesus, but gets very different responses.

In Thessalonica, Paul reasons with people about Jesus being the Messiah and some are persuaded... but others are not.

In Berea, people hear the message and respond very differently. Many of them are open and examine the Scriptures and many believe.

Then in Athens, Paul speaks to a crowd of thinkers and philosophers. Some mock, Some say, "we'll think about it" and some believe

When the gospel shows up in our lives, it offers us an invitation.

When truth confronts you, it invites a response.

And the question is not *if* you'll respond...the question is *how*.

ASK: *What is it that causes us to resist something that is actually good?*

2. We resist what threatens our control.

In Thessalonica, Paul is preaching that Jesus is King. (vs. 7)

***"But the Jews became jealous, so they recruited some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob, and set the city in an uproar. They attacked Jason's house, looking to bring Paul and Silas out to the people."* - Acts 17:5**

The Jews became jealous because Paul and Silas's proclamation of the risen Christ rapidly drew God-fearing Gentiles and influential women away from the synagogue, threatening the leaders' religious authority, social honor, and economic support.

The gospel challenges our desire to be in control. If Jesus is King... then I'm not.

We like to be in control of our plans, our future, our decisions, our identity. When something threatens that we respond often in jealousy and anger.

***"For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every evil practice"-
James 3:16***

Ask: Where has jealousy or insecurity crept in? Where do we see disorder in our hearts and lives? Are we holding something back from Jesus?

Often we don't mind Jesus being present in our lives...we just struggle with Him being in charge of our lives.

That's why we see Jesus say in Luke 6:46 — "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"

The gospel isn't an addition to your life—it's a surrender of your life.

Jesus says in Luke 9:23, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself..."*

Sometimes our hesitancy or resistance toward the gospel is not because we think it is false, but **because it requires surrender.** And surrender is hard.

ASK: So when you look at your life in light of Gospel truth, where are you resisting because of a desire to remain in control?

Will you open yourself to enthroning God in every part of your heart and life?

"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. 12 Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength". - 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

The gospel isn't an addition to your life—it's a surrender of your life.

3. We resist what tears down our idols.

When Paul gets to Athens, he walks into a *city full of idols*. People in this city are spiritual and deep thinkers...but they're placing their hope in the wrong things.

And it's easy to read that and think, "That's not us."

But we may not bow to statues...we still build our lives on things other than God that we look to for security, identity, meaning, and fulfillment.

Things like:

- Success, finances, jobs, status
- Marriage, children, relationships, the hope of a future marriage
- Comfort, Rest, Being right, Being seen

We all worship something. Whatever you are unwilling to lose or give up...is what you worship.

And whatever we look to for life... begins to shape our lives.

Psalm 115:4-8 says "Their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak; they have eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear;...Those who make them become like them, as do all who trust in them."

And here's what that means for us: Whenever we give our ultimate allegiance to something other than God...whenever we look to it to give us security, significance or identity...**it begins to distort our humanity. (distort our created purpose)**

Because we're becoming like something that can't actually give life (only God is the author and sustainer of life), so...

- Control turns into anxiety
- Status turns into insecurity
- Success turns into pressure
- Comfort turns into fragility

Why? Because idols can't carry the weight of your identity.

What you look to for life will shape your life—but only God can sustain it.

"He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, [25](#)and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. [26](#)From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. "His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. [28](#)For in him we live and move and exist." Acts 17:24-28

Reminder: You were created in the image of God - Imago Dei

You were made to: Reflect Him, Be connected to Him, Find your life in Him...**to Worship Him.**

But when we replace Him with something else...our design gets distorted and our connection gets broken.

So when our idols are confronted with the gospel, we have a choice to make: will we resist and continue to bow down to things that can never sustain or fulfill us or will we surrender to the King of Kings and His way.

This is why Paul talks about the choice to repent.

An invitation. It's God saying: "Come back." Come back to what you were made for. Come back to what actually gives life.

The gospel doesn't just show us what's broken... it invites us into what Jesus has already restored and provides a hope for our future.

It leads us to true worship.

Worship is an attitude and expression of reverence and awe of God.

Worship through:

- Remembrance and Celebration -
- Gratitude and Contentment
- Honor and Joy

Today we have a chance to worship God and respond through Communion.

Communion is a reminder of what Jesus has done: His body broken for you. His blood poured out for you...so that what has been distorted... can be restored.

Invitation to Reflect

Ask God:

- Where have I been holding onto control? What have I been looking to for security?
- What have I been trusting more than You?
- What has been shaping my identity?

On the cross, Jesus did what we and our idols never could:

- He gave His life for you
- He secured your identity
- He made a way for you to be restored

Lead Communion

“The gospel meets you where you are—but it loves you too much to leave you there. It restores you to who you were always meant to be.”

Pray