

LESSON FOUR: CAPTURE OUR COMMUNITIES

Acts 17:22,23

*“Then Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: ‘Men of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. ²³ For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: **TO AN UNKNOWN GOD**. Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.’”*

Would Paul’s message to America today be the same as or different from the message he shared in Athens? Why or why not? What should our message be to the cities of our nation?

◆ Personal equipping

Ephesians 4:11,12

“And He [Jesus Christ] personally gave some [believers] to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ.”

Q: According to this passage of Scripture, how did God gift some believers?

Q: How does this principle apply to personal evangelism?

◆ Community Engagement.

Matthew 25:34-36

*“Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was **hungry** and you gave Me something to eat; I was **thirsty** and you gave Me something to drink; I was a **stranger** and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was **naked** and you clothed Me; I was **sick** and you took care of Me; I was in **prison** and you visited Me.”*

Q: What activities did the Lord commend?

Q: Do you think that the Lord still blesses people and churches engaged in these activities today? Why or why not?

Q: If someone were to ask you why Cross Church is involved in meeting the physical needs of the members of our communities, what would you tell them

◆ **Churches must change their cultures.**

Q: In order to become “Great Commission” churches, some things need to change in churches. From your experience of being members of other churches, what do you think needs to change in some churches that will enable them to become “Great Commission” churches?

Q: What do you think our church is intentionally doing to become a “Great Commission” church?

- Our attitude towards what a church is needs to change. We are not a spiritual country club or a refuge from the world. The church is a lighthouse warning men of spiritual danger and a spiritual rescue mission mobilizing believers to go out and pull the wounded from the wreckage of a fallen culture.
- Our churches need to elevate evangelism and missions to the top of our list of priorities. We need to organize around evangelism and the sharing of the gospel locally, regionally, nationally, and world-wide.
- All churches need to take inventory of their God-given resources that will help them become a “Great Commission” church:
 - **Means.** We have the indwelling Christ within us.
 - **Message.** We have the word of God, as sharp as any two-edged sword.
 - **Market.** We are surrounded by people who need our message.
 - **Method.** We have spiritual gifts that together make us the body of Christ.

◆ **Prepare Yourself Personally and Practically.**

Questions For Discussion

If we are going to be effective in sharing the gospel we must prepare ourselves personally and practically. **What are some ways that we prepare ourselves personally and practically to share the Gospel effectively?** (*personally walk with God on a daily basis, pray for opportunities to share the gospel, pray for specific individuals to be saved, learn how to share the gospel from the Scriptures, read books on personal evangelism, ask mature believers to teach you how to lead another person to Christ, develop your personal testimony and practice sharing it with a friend, etc.*)

◆ **Prime Your Relationships.**

John1:40-42

“Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Him. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and told him, ‘We have found the Messiah!’ (which means “Anointed One”), ⁴² and he brought Simon to Jesus.” (John 1:40-42)

Q: In this passage of Scripture, how did the Gospel spread on the basis of relationships? that we establish and cultivate meaningful relationships with the unsaved around us. A recent Gallup poll said that 86% of people won to Christ in America are won through personal relationships with Christians.

◆ **Present the Gospel.**

I Corinthians 3:6-9

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸ Now the one planting and the one watering are one [in purpose], and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God’s coworkers”

What spiritual principle of personal evangelism does Paul refer to in this passage of Scripture?

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. ¹⁴ But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:13,14).