**Unstoppable - wk 30 – Your Mars Hill**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, (near us, like us) and in all Judea (not near, like us) and Samaria, (near us, not like us) and to the ends of the earth.” (not near, not like us)**

**20yrs since Jesus - rose from the Dead. Paul & the A team (Luke, Timothy, Silas) led to Europe by the HS to preach.**

**Driven out of Phillip, Thess, Berea - Paul sales to Athens.**

**(Map) Acts 17:** **14 Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. 15 Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.**

**Athens – Capital of Greece**

* **Best known for its philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Know over the Roman Empire for its schools of thought and academy’s. Home of the Parthenon = Greek gods - Athens & Zeus.**
* **Statues were on every corner, not just at the temples. Pliny said there were over 30,000 god and goddess statues in the city. Some record there are more statues there than all the rest of Greece.**

**Acts 17:16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed (his spirit was provoked, troubled) to see that the city was full of idols.**

**17 So he reasoned (dialoged about Jesus) in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, (know the scriptures – but don’t know Jesus) as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. (don’t know the scriptures - and don’t know Jesus) 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. (He started witnessing)**

**Epicureans – seek pleasure as only purpose YOLO**

**Stoic philosophers - seek moral duty / understanding - all is God.**

**Represents two types of people in our world – explain.**

**Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” (mocked) Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” (weird) They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.**

**19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, (Invited to a place called Mars Hill – 370 ft rocky hill – the debate place) where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)**

**22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.**

**They made sacrifices at every single statue. 30,000 statues. And, just in case we missed one… They were correct in knowing that there is a God they did not know.**

**23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So, you are ignorant of the very thing you worship – and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. (You don’t even know what you believe. You’re searching.)**

**You don’t know what you’re missing, but I know…**

**I am going to tell you about the God you do not know.**

**I know the unknown God – His name is Jesus!**

**Then he stood up and proclaimed Jesus - 24 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.**

**The Mars Hill Sermon: There is a creator the one God who is…**

**- God is omnipotent – the one creator of the universe. He is the Lord of heaven and earth! Long before these statues.**

**- God is omnipresent – buildings & statues cannot contain him.**

**- God is immutability – perfect, in needs nothing – ever**

**- God is the sustainer of life – he alone gives life and breath. The giver and sustainer of life.**

**26 From one man he made all the nations, (Adam is real) that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.**

**- God sovereign and in control – of all things, ruler of the nations**

**(Lit God determines where people will live) no matter where they are born – God determined it – we are bound by his will.**

**27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. (Omnipresence and manifest presence – God who is close! God is able to be found no matter where you are – if you will seek him) 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.**

**Paul quotes 2 Greek poets because they reflect a Biblical truth. It was meant o build a bridge to a biblical truth.**

**29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, (meaning we are the result of God’s purpose – we are not his babies as LDS says) we should not think that the Divine Being is like gold or silver or stone – an image made by human design and skill. (God is not a statute or in a statue) 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. (Explain Romans 3-4 connection)**

**- God rightly deserves your life and allegiance**

**And calls us to sincerely seek him**

**- God will righteously judge all people and is calling everyone to repentance (you need to turn to Him)**

**31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”**

**- Jesus (the appointed one) will judge the world**

**Jesus’ authority was proven by death and resurrection.**

**Ancient cultures were obsessed with living again.**

**Neither of the groups believed in life after death.**

**The wonder of the resurrection amazed everyone!**

**This is surprisingly the end of the sermon, rather it’s more like an introduction. Those the HS was moving in – would ask about more.**

**17:32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.**

**We see the discussion continued by the fruit of salvation among the listeners. “Some of the people became followers…”**

**There were two groups of people at Mars Hill.**

1. **Believer - The disciple of Jesus Paul**
2. **Unbeliever - The interested listener (Epicureans / Stoics)**

**Lets’ step back and take a look at this from these 2 perspectives.**

**Out world is similar to Athens – the world is full of idols.**

**What can we learn from Paul about - Reaching the Hard to Reach**

**Paul’s perspective**

**\*\* He cared –v.16 “He was distress”**

**He saw a city full of false pursuits and was moved with pity and distress. The word is a combination of anger and sadness.**

**He was concerned and frustrated. Some see art, Paul saw idols.**

**He had great concern for them.**

**\*\* He spoke up - He did not just think about it – v17 so he reasoned…**

**He did not just sit in a corner and pray and read his bible, he decided to open his mouth and say something to those around him.**

**The door opened and he stepped in. He took the opportunities.**

**\*\* He never watered down the message - No matter who he talked to**

**17:18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” (mocked) Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” (weird) They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.**

**Different audiences – but same message**

**Paul did not change the message of the Gospel.**

**That is our primary message – The gospel – DDRF.**

**\*\* He understood their underlying spiritual interest and need**

**17:21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) 22 … I see that in every way you are very religious.**

**They were hungry for spiritual answers and understanding He knew this and addressed this.**

**Our world’s hungry for spiritual answers, looking for someone to help them, touch them, tell them… what are we waiting for?**

**The need is greater than our comfort.**

**Side bar – Two thoughts:**

1. **We are all wired to worship - v16. the city was full of idols.**

**All of us are worshippers – of something.**

**I see a lot of people worship every day. Sadly, many waste their worship on empty pursuits, objects, and achievements.**

**Worship is intrinsic and encompassing and played out on a competitive court. All of us know idols vying for our worship.**

1. **Being Spiritual is not the name as knowing God**

**22 I see that in every way you are very religious.**

**Athens was considered the most religious city in the empire**

**Read motivational / spiritual books, follow physics, read horoscope, think spiritual things, take nature walks, go to church, think about God, have a personal fatih... but are you born again?**

**\*\* He was prepared to engage on their playing field**

**17:23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.**

**Paul took the time to study the culture… he was not afraid of it**

**Missionaries overseas learn the culture, dress, language, superstitions – yet do not compromise God’s word – we can do the same here, as a point of contact to point to the truth.**

**God distinguishes biblical principles from cultural methods**

**Paul addresses Jewish people differently than gentiles… I Corinthians 9:22b-23 “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”**

**God as a missionary, engaged our world, our culture, adapted this form, and became a man - so that we might know Him and attract us to him. We are encouraged to do the same.**

**We are to take to an ever-changing culture the unchanging gospel. Our methods change and should - the gospel never.**

**\*\* He did not argue, He simply shared the Gospel**

**No one can be argued into heaven.**

**Keep in mind they did not know the OT - he approached them from scripture but appealed to what they could see – the evidence of a creator. It was not simply reason.**

**You cannot reason someone to the God**

**Only the word of God empowered by the HS can do that. All that Paul says is scripture.**

**\*\* He was clear about who Jesus is and what Jesus asks**

**Death & resurrection of Jesus were central of every message –the foundation of all Paul preached and the proof of his message**

**Though the 2 groups had diff approaches to life – the resurrection was a stumbling block for both.**

**And the invitation was always clear.**

**God calls us to repent - turn to him thru Jesus.**

**We must get to that moment – God is inviting you to turn to him (Repent) and serve him as rightful Lord.**

**At the end of the day – follower of Christ when sharing your faith**

**Remember this… when you finally talk to your family, friends, etc.**

**1. Some will sneer and reject - v32 “some of them sneered…”**

**Realize… not everyone will follow Jesus**

**2. Some will ask to know more – v32 “But others said…” (asked questions)**

 **Some may not believe – but they will hang and ask questions**

**3. Some will receive v33 “Some of the people became followers…”**

**Some by the power of HS will believe and follow Jesus.**

**4. We can’t save anyone – our role is simply to share the truth**

**It is not your job – to argue and convince – you give the truth and the evidence and let the HS do the rest.**

Christian where is your Mars Hill? (Work, gym, etc)

* **Start where you are – take a look around at the need**
* **Start with what you know – you don’t have to know all the answers (John 1:45-46)**
* **Start with who will listen – those around you**
* **Step out as God leads to talk to others**

**Paul says something I want to end with today - Acts 17:27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.**

**I mentioned earlier we are wired for Worship - There is a search engine in our spirit and we are going to seek and try to find that person, place or thing to worship until it’s filled.**

**We are trying to get this desire quenched.**

**There is only one thing that will truly answer your worship need…**

**when you bow the knee before Jesus and turn to him.**