



INTRODUCTION

I. WELCOME & OPENING DISCUSSION.

II. RESTATEMENT OF VALUES.

III. HOUSEKEEPING

IV. REVIEW.

Matthew 28: 19,20 is a great starting point. '**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded.'

1) Gospel. We've established that the gospel is the ground for everything. It is the one thing that can bear the weight of being the main, or most important thing in a local church.

2) Family. We've tried to establish both the pattern of growth in a disciple, and the importance of community in the process of disciple making.

3) Mission. If the gospel is the, 'power of God', (Romans 1:16), and the community of God is the vehicle for that power (1 Peter 2:9), the mission is the direction that this should go.

V. GOSPEL MEDITATION.



I. HOW DO WE THINK LIKE MISSIONARIES?

A. INSTRUCTION. #1

Too often, we use words as disciples that we don't always know the true definition or meaning of. One of those words is: mission. Ultimately, the mission has been laid out for us clearly by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20, where He is recorded as addressing His disciples before His ascension into heaven to await His second coming. 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' This is not only the mission given to Mission Hill, but to all churches who would call Jesus their Chief Overseer (1 Peter 5:4).

The word, 'go' is an important part of this mission statement, as it assumes that the primary direction of disciple making is an outward focused activity. It implies that disciples do not merely wait for those interested in who Jesus is to approach them, but they intentionally search for disciples. It essentially means that all disciples are, or at minimum, act like missionaries. This is the simplest way we can communicate how a disciple 'goes', is to, 'think like a missionary'. But how does one do this?

Discussion: If you were sent as a missionary to a foreign city, what are some things you would consider important?

B. EXERCISE.

To help us get into the mindset of a missionary, we want to watch a video and then have a debriefing discussion. You will have the opportunity to debrief as a small group, and then one as a large group as well.

Some additional information about this video may be helpful. This video is not a full episode but is a compilation of scenes from a particular episode called, 'Crackpots & These Women', from one of the most well written television shows of all time, the West Wing. It attempts to give viewers an inside look at the inner workings of a White House Staff, and concentrates primarily on those who typically would not receive attention from the normal public. It includes a press secretary (C.J. Cregg), 2 primary communications director's responsible for communicating the message of the president to the public (Toby Ziegler & Sam Seaborn), a Chief of Staff (Leo MaGarry) who leads the non-elected staff of the sitting president (President Josiah Bartlett) and his right-hand man the Deputy Chief of Staff (Josh Lyman), as well as a list of other support staff. It is a cleverly written series that has much fast paced conversation and sarcastic humour sprinkled throughout each episode. This particular episode is one of our favourites.



Questions we recommend having as you watch this abbreviated episode.

Q: What do you notice about the characters attitudes to the responsibilities that they are given?

Q: Do those attitudes evolve over the course of the episode? How so?

C. DEBRIEF.

1. What do you think Leo was trying to accomplish in the minds of the staff by having them do this exercise? To what degree do you think Leo's method was effective?

2. Why do you think the staff is so not interested in, 'Big Block of Cheese Day?' How can you relate to their frustration?

3. What did you notice about the evolution of emotions & actions of the staff as the episode progressed?

4. What was the general tone of response to presenters in these interest groups? What would you want to tell the interest groups to help them in their preparation for their meetings?

5. What did the White House staffers do well in their meetings? What would you encourage them to do differently?

6. How would you go about taking one of these meetings if you were one of Leo MaGarry's staffers?

7. Do you think our church is in touch with the people we serve? Why or why not? How do you think we could incorporate the spirit of, 'big block of cheese day'? What are some, 'meetings' we might want to take in order to help us understand the people we serve?

BREAK!

II. HOW WAS MISSIONARY WORK DONE?

A. INSTRUCTION #2: Contextualization.

We left off last month's session by encouraging you to develop question asking as a discipleship skill. This skill however, is not only helpful for discipling the family that you have been given responsibility for, but also for learning how best to communicate the gospel to your city. Any properly equipped missionary spends a considerable amount of time studying and learning the context they wish to



communicate the gospel to. This context will require more than anything else, eyes to see what is really available and happening.

One of the keys to any good missionary work is proper contextualization. This word is often misunderstood and needs to be rightly understood. Some think that to contextualize the gospel means to altar the message so it is more readily accepted. It is not that at all. Tim Keller explains well that,

‘Contextualization is not--as is often argued--“giving people what they want to hear.” Rather, it is giving people the Bible’s answers, which they may not at all want to hear, to questions about life that people in their particular time and place are asking, in language and forms they can comprehend, and though appeals and arguments with force they can feel, even if they reject them . . . The great missionary task is to express the gospel message to a new culture in a way that avoids making the message unnecessarily alien to that culture, yet without removing or obscuring the scandal and offense of biblical truth.’¹

Many people (and missionaries!) contextualize without realizing that they are doing it, and contextualize instinctively. However, that is not everyone’s experience, and if we want to make disciples who can contextualize the gospel, then it would be helpful to articulate what we are actually doing. In other words, we don’t just want to contextualize, we want to also learn how to teach it to the disciples who are learning from us. To do the work of contextualization, three skills working together help us work towards contextualization.

1. Learn what you can affirm. You’ll need to know the basic arguments, ideas, philosophies, values, loves, and ‘common graces’, that are in that particular place and time. You’ll also need to have a solid definition of, ‘affirm’, as definitions can often be liquid in our culture, and change without realizing.

The kinds of questions that are helpful in understanding this are: 1) What potentially happens when we don’t do this kind of work? 2) What is often the effect of communicating the gospel without doing this? 3) What happens when you fail to distinguish what we can affirm and what you can’t? For example: ‘What happens when you affirm everything in culture?’ Although the gospel is offensive to anyone who does not believe (1 Corinthians 1:18), sometimes, it is our tone, our attitude or our method that is unnecessarily offensive to those we are communicating it to.

2. Discern what you must confront and how. You’ll need to know what cultural ideologies and philosophies that you must rightly confront in order to be faithful to the gospel. Confronting anyone with something potentially offensive is a delicate matter. In order to do this well, it will be important to know how sensitive the subject of confrontation is, so that it may be done as gently and and timely as possible. It is not possible to share the gospel and not confront some sort of wrong belief, or lack of belief. The gospel is offensive to all of us at some point, and we can assume there is opposition to the

¹ Tim Keller, Center Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 89.



truth of the gospel. Even when there is agreement that the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news, our sinful natures are opposing that truth in our hearts and our enemy the adversary is constantly bombarding us with the impurity of our own motives and behaviours.

Questions that are important to discern what to confront are: 1) What potentially happens when we don't do this kind of work? 2) What is often the effect of communicating the gospel without doing this? 3) What happens when we fail to distinguish what we must confront and we don't? 4) How important is our tone in the way that we confront? Why?

3. Consider how the gospel supplies the solution to the problem. While we have never fully completed this aspect, and even if we had, we never fail to need the gospel to be applied to our own lives. That said, applying the gospel rightly, helpfully and in a timely manner is the ultimate goal of all mission, because this is the way disciples are made. We're clearly building on all that we've learned so far through this course, so a base understanding of what the gospel is, and the importance of its clarity and application, the God-given tool to apply and spread the gospel (community or what we call family) are necessary if we expect the mission of God to be accomplished faithfully.

Questions that are important for this kind of discovery are: 1) How is the gospel the ultimate solution to these issues? 2) How does the gospel give us the proper motivations to the problem we are facing?

B. EXERCISE #2: GROUP DISCUSSION.

Each group has been given a text to study and learn from. In these texts, we're aiming to discover the specific way in which one of the church's missionary apostles spread the gospel from city to city.

1 Peter 3:14-16 'But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame.'

You will be given a passage at the beginning by the group leader. Read the passage out loud as a group, and choose from the list below the truths you find in the passage. Each passage is essentially a sermon that the apostle Paul preached, or the story of how the gospel was communicated and sometimes, accompanying narrative on the result. Each passage also has a brief city description given, as a way of helping with the context. There is also a set of questions for each passage, that have a list of potential answers. Choose the answers that you think correctly assess the situation found in the passage. Keep in mind throughout the exercise that what we are not necessarily trying to obtain answers as much as learn the kinds of questions we may ask and learn some skills from Paul in regards to good missionary work.



If you finish early, you are welcome to move to the next passage and continue learning about Paul's missionary communication.

A. The gospel communicated in Antioch in Pisidia. (Acts 13:13-52)

i. CITY CONTEXT. Antioch in Pisidia was one of 16 cities that the Syrian king Seleucus had named for his father Antiochus. The city had a large Jewish population and the high status of being a Roman "colony." It is to be distinguished from Antioch in Syria, from which Paul and Barnabas had begun their journey (see v. 1). Excavations at Pisidian Antioch have revealed much from Paul's day: city walls, a theater, large streets, a temple to the Anatolian god Men Askaenos, and a large temple platform probably related to emperor worship.

ii. LOCATION CONTEXTS. Here is a brief summary of various locations of communication and what they might have meant to the local culture. These spaces may or may not be part of your text, but could help explain some of the activity in your passage.

1. Synagogue. This was the local meeting place of Jews in a given city, who would meet regularly for: a) Teaching of the Torah, b) Interfaith dialogue between Gentile and Jew, led by Jews. It was a place Gentiles could ask questions, meet Jews and receive instruction in Jewish life and practice, and c) A way of learning when the Temple was not nearby.

2. Marketplace. The marketplace was the centre of the city of the time, and would have had a number of shops where consumers could trade as well as a place for common discussion. It was also a place where city officials would gather for discussion. It was commonly held as a place to exchange ideas and well as meet people for communal purposes. Large and diverse audiences would have been found there.

3. Lecture halls. These were often private buildings, constructed by wealthy citizens that were designed for debate, education and instruction. They often held hours between 10am and 4pm. (seriously, they held banker's hours!).

4. Workshops. These were places where craftsmen would spend their days working on the products of their trade. Often, these workshops were attached to the homes of the craftsmen who worked in them, as it was common to work and live in very close proximity.

5. Private houses. Widely recognized as the primary base for missionary work in the early church period, homes were common gathering places for nearly every type of person. Many homes had large rooms attached that could have housed larger gatherings (between 30-40 people), similar to the lecture halls of the day.

ii. GROUP QUESTIONS.



Please choose from the list which statements match what you find in the story of gospel proclamation in your passage.

a. What are the ideas, philosophies or beliefs that Paul seems to affirm in the text?

- ★ All religions have some value.
- ★ The Bible prophecies that Jesus will raise from the dead.
- ★ Everything eventually leads to Jesus.
- ★ God has a Spirit.
- ★ As Jews, you know that the Jewish Messiah will provide salvation.
- ★ God cannot be contained by a temple made by humans.
- ★ Everyone needs to repent of their beliefs and turn to the true God.

b. What are the ideas, philosophies and beliefs that Paul appears to confront in this passage?

- ★ Your way of understanding God is wrong. No.
- ★ Your sexual ethics are not in line with the biblical morals laid out.
- ★ As Jews, you have rejected the message of salvation that is coming from Jesus.
- ★ You are in danger of being idol worshippers.
- ★ Only if you believe in Jesus will you be saved.
- ★ Salvation is available only through Jesus, which means Gentiles can now be included.
- ★ Your morals are below standard and should be raised up to a level more acceptable in society.
- ★ Only through Jesus can we be truly 'saved' and he proved this by His resurrection.

c. What are some of the responses that you see to this gospel presentation?

- ★ Violent opposition
- ★ A desire for further discussion. Yes.
- ★ Many believed and were baptized.
- ★ Some tried to argue against him and gave him contradictory arguments. Yes.
- ★ Overwhelming acceptance of Paul's message.
- ★ A church was started.
- ★ A percentage of the audience shows interest and curiosity and gives Paul permission to speak further about these issues.
- ★ Minimal belief and followership to the way of Jesus.

d. What would Paul have had to know or do in order to accomplish this kind of communication?

- ★ He would have had to have a basic understanding of Epicurean & Stoic philosophy. Likely had to talk to philosophers, and read materials and listened to speeches in the marketplace.
- ★ He had to know the basic story of God.



- ★ He would have had to walk around the city and read the inscriptions to the various gods and ask questions about which 'god' did what.
- ★ He would have had to be fluent in the gospel in order to make his case.
- ★ He would have had to know what jobs the average citizen had at the time.
- ★ He would have needed to know where Jews gathered for teaching, instruction and debate.
- ★ He would have needed to know where people gathered for instruction, worship, education and trade.
- ★ He would have needed to have 'gospel tracts' with him at all times.

e. Choose 3-4 key principles that you would pull from this example in Scripture.

Further Questions for discussion:

- **What seems to be the primary audience in the text?**

- **What appear to be some of their values?**

- **Where did the primary activity take place? Why?**

- **What do you wish you could ask Paul about this story?**

- **What are the ideas, philosophies or beliefs that Paul seems to affirm in the text?**



B. The gospel communicated in Athens. (Acts 17:16-34)

i. CITY CONTEXT: Athens was filled with examples of artistic beauty, particularly its statues of the Greek gods and the architectural magnificence of its temples. Paul would probably have been speaking in the Roman Forum (used as a marketplace; cf. Acts 17:17) and in the Greek Agora (largely filled with civic structures). These were surrounded by great stoas, one of which (the Stoa of Attalos) has been reconstructed for modern viewers. In Paul's day Athens boasted a stadium, a large theater, and an odeion known as the Agrippeion. Some of Athens's most prominent features were its numerous pagan temples. The great temple to Athena (the Parthenon), the Erechtheion (dedicated to multiple deities), and the temple to the goddess Roma and the emperor Augustus stood atop the acropolis overlooking the city. Many other pagan sacred sites have also been found, confirming Petronius's satirical assertion that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens. Multiple inscriptions also indicate a Jewish presence in Athens, and Herod the Great was honored by the Athenians for his generosity to the city.

ii. LOCATION CONTEXTS. Here is a brief summary of various locations of communication and what they might have meant to the local culture. These spaces may or may not be part of your text, but could help explain some of the activity in your passage.

1. Synagogue. This was the local meeting place of Jews in a given city, who would meet regularly for: a) Teaching of the Torah, b) Interfaith dialogue between Gentile and Jew, led by Jews. It was a place Gentiles could ask questions, meet Jews and receive instruction in Jewish life and practice, and c) A way of learning when the Temple was not nearby.

2. Marketplace. The marketplace was the centre of the city of the time, and would have had a number of shops where consumers could trade as well as a place for common discussion. It was also a place where city officials would gather for discussion. It was commonly held as a place to exchange ideas and well as meet people for communal purposes. Large and diverse audiences would have been found there.

3. Lecture halls. These were often private buildings, constructed by wealthy citizens that were designed for debate, education and instruction. They often held hours between 10am and 4pm. (seriously, they held banker's hours!).

4. Workshops. These were places where craftsmen would spend their days working on the products of their trade. Often, these workshops were attached to the homes of the craftsmen who worked in them, as it was common to work and live in very close proximity.

5. Private houses. Widely recognized as the primary base for missionary work in the early church period, homes were common gathering places for nearly every type of person. Many



homes had large rooms attached that could have housed larger gatherings (between 30-40 people), similar to the lecture halls of the day.

ii. GROUP QUESTIONS.

a. What are the ideas, philosophies or beliefs that Paul seems to affirm in the text?

- ★ All religions have some value.
- ★ Everything eventually leads to Jesus.
- ★ God has a Spirit.
- ★ The God the Athenians are seeking is providential, and the gods are working for the good of humanity.
- ★ God cannot be contained by a temple made by humans.
- ★ Everyone needs to repent of their beliefs and turn to the true God.

b. What are the ideas, philosophies and beliefs that Paul appears to confront in this passage?

- ★ Your way of understanding God is wrong.
- ★ Your understanding of the 'unknown god' is faulty and ill-informed.
- ★ Being religious is a bad thing.
- ★ Jesus is the name of the 'unknown god' you recognize as legitimate.
- ★ Your morals are below standard and should be raised up to a level more acceptable in society.
- ★ Only through Jesus can we be truly 'saved' and he proved this by His resurrection.

c. What are some of the responses that you see to this gospel presentation?

- ★ Violent opposition
- ★ Mocking, thinking Paul discussing a nonsensical new religion that isn't welcome.
- ★ Overwhelming acceptance of Paul's message.
- ★ A percentage of the audience shows interest and curiosity and gives Paul permission to speak further about these issues.
- ★ Minimal belief and followership to the way of Jesus.

d. What would Paul have had to know or do in order to accomplish this kind of communication?

- ★ He would have had to have a basic understanding of Epicurean & Stoic philosophy. Likely had to talk to philosophers, and read materials and listened to speeches in the marketplace.
- ★ He would have had to walk around the city and read the inscriptions to the various gods and ask questions about which 'god' did what.
- ★ He would have had to be fluent in the gospel in order to make a connection from what the Athenians were worshipping to Jesus and resurrection.
- ★ He would have had to know what jobs the average citizen had at the time.



- ★ He would have needed to know where people gathered for instruction, worship, education and trade.
- ★ He would have needed to understand the basics of Greco-Roman debate and discussion methods currently used in the culture and the city.
- ★ He would have needed to have 'gospel tracts' with him at all times.

e. Choose 3-4 key principles that you would pull from this example in Scripture.

- ★ It is helpful to know and understand the basic philosophies of the dominant religions in a context, and where they are spoken of in the story of God.
- ★ Understanding where people gather and how a city functions and what different kinds of belief systems are part of the culture is an asset to contextualization.
- ★ It is impossible to do this without gospel fluency.
- ★ Contextualization of the gospel still requires courage to confront the contradictions that we see in beliefs and philosophies of our culture.
- ★ Conversion to discipleship requires decisions to trust Jesus but may be a process of many attempts at persuasion and discussion.

f. What seems to be the primary audience in the text?

g. What appear to be some of their values?

h. Where did the primary activity take place? Why?

i. What are the primary principles about missionary communication that you can gather from the text? (Choose 1 or two main ones that you noticed).

j. What do you wish you could ask Paul about this story?



C. The gospel communicated in Iconium & Lystra. (Acts 14:1-23)

i. CITY CONTEXT: The Ancient City of Iconium & Lystra

Lystra was 20 miles (32 km) southwest of Iconium and Derbe another 58 miles (93 km) southeast. Both were in the district of Lycaonia within the Galatian province. This verse likely implies that Iconium was not a city of Lycaonia (but rather of Phrygia and/or of the province of Galatia); this claim is supported by inscriptions from Iconium in the Phrygian language.

Iconium was a large and rich city, 120 miles north from the Mediterranean Sea, at the foot of the Taurus mountains, and on the great line of communication between Ephesus and the western coast of the peninsula on one side, and Tarsus, Antioch and the Euphrates on the other.

ii. **LOCATION CONTEXTS.** Here is a brief summary of various locations of communication and what they might have meant to the local culture. These spaces may or may not be part of your text, but could help explain some of the activity in your passage.

1. Synagogue. This was the local meeting place of Jews in a given city, who would meet regularly for: a) Teaching of the Torah, b) Interfaith dialogue between Gentile and Jew, led by Jews. It was a place Gentiles could ask questions, meet Jews and receive instruction in Jewish life and practice, and c) A way of learning when the Temple was not nearby.

2. Marketplace. The marketplace was the centre of the city of the time, and would have had a number of shops where consumers could trade as well as a place for common discussion. It was also a place where city officials would gather for discussion. It was commonly held as a place to exchange ideas and well as meet people for communal purposes. Large and diverse audiences would have been found there.

3. Lecture halls. These were often private buildings, constructed by wealthy citizens that were designed for debate, education and instruction. They often held hours between 10am and 4pm. (seriously, they held banker's hours!).

4. Workshops. These were places where craftsmen would spend their days working on the products of their trade. Often, these workshops were attached to the homes of the craftsmen who worked in them, as it was common to work and live in very close proximity.

5. Private houses. Widely recognized as the primary base for missionary work in the early church period, homes were common gathering places for nearly every type of person. Many homes had large rooms attached that could have housed larger gatherings (between 30-40 people), similar to the lecture halls of the day.

ii. GROUP QUESTIONS.



a. What are the ideas, philosophies or beliefs that Paul seems to affirm in the text?

- ★ All religions have some value.
- ★ Everything eventually leads to Jesus.
- ★ God is a living god.
- ★ The God the Athenians are seeking is providential, and the gods are working for the good of humanity.
- ★ Signs and wonders accompany the gospel message.
- ★ God cannot be contained by a temple made by humans.
- ★ God's grace comes in the form of fruitful harvests to all people, even those who don't believe.
- ★ Everyone needs to repent of their beliefs and turn to the true God.

b. What are the ideas, philosophies and beliefs that Paul appears to confront in this passage?

- ★ Your way of understanding God is wrong.
- ★ Your understanding of the 'unknown god' is faulty and ill-informed.
- ★ I am not to be worshipped like a god.
- ★ Jesus is the name of the 'unknown god' you recognize as legitimate.
- ★ You are worshipping a dead god, worship one who is living.
- ★ Your morals are below standard and should be raised up to a level more acceptable in society.
- ★ Only through Jesus can we be truly 'saved' and he proved this by His resurrection.

c. What are some of the responses that you see to this gospel presentation?

- ★ Violent opposition
- ★ Mocking, thinking Paul discussing a nonsensical new religion that isn't welcome.
- ★ Planting of a church with new disciples, including elders to govern.
- ★ Overwhelming acceptance of Paul's message.
- ★ A percentage of the audience shows interest and curiosity and gives Paul permission to speak further about these issues.
- ★ About half the people are on Paul's side, and the other half on the Jews side.

d. What would Paul have had to know or do in order to accomplish this kind of communication?

- ★ He would have had to have a basic understanding of Epicurean & Stoic philosophy. Likely had to talk to philosophers, and read materials and listened to speeches in the marketplace. No.
- ★ He would have had to walk around the city and read the inscriptions to the various gods and ask questions about which 'god' did what. No.
- ★ He would have had to express courage to refute the pushback from Jews.
- ★ He would have had to be fluent in the gospel in order to make a connection from what the Lystran's were worshipping to Jesus.



- ★ He would have had to know what jobs the average citizen had at the time.
- ★ He would have needed to know where people gathered for instruction, worship, education and trade.
- ★ He would have needed to understand the basics of Greco-Roman debate and discussion methods currently used in the culture and the city.
- ★ He would have needed to have 'gospel tracts' with him at all times.

e. Choose 3-4 key principles that you would pull from this example in Scripture.

f. What seems to be the primary audience in the text?

g. What appear to be some of their values?

h. Where did the primary activity take place? Why?

i. What are the primary principles about missionary communication that you can gather from the text? (Choose 1 or two main ones that you noticed).

j. What do you wish you could ask Paul about this story?

V. CONCLUSION.

In your groups, discuss the biggest take away from session 5? Why? If you're comfortable, be prepared to share with the large group.