

## Living to make disciples

### 1. Intro

- During December we're doing a Vision series looking at our plans here at C@P for the next five years
- Last week we saw
- Our new mission > why we exist
  - *At Church@thepeak we live to be and make disciples of Jesus*
- Our Vision (what we aim to be)
  - *By God's grace, and for His glory, we will be a growing and maturing church who know, love, serve, and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour*
  - *We want to see everyone in Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus*
  
- Last week we looked at the first part of that mission – Living to BE disciples
- This week I want to look at the second half of our mission – Living to MAKE disciples
- Why?
  - Jesus commanded his disciples just before his ascension back to heaven "go and make disciples of all nations"
  - As a church, therefore we share in that mission
  
- If you're Christian you might be thinking ... "I know I'm meant to be a disciple making disciple, but I don't find it easy"
  - The stats from last year's NCLS back that up
    - Only 26% feel at ease talking about and look for opportunities to share their
    - Only 50% are willing and actually invited someone to church in the last 12 months
  
- Today I want to remind us that even though you and I might find it challenging, none-the-less, being a disciple of Jesus means sharing in his mission to make disciples
  - And to help you feel at more ease and be more confident in sharing our faith and inviting people to church ... I want to look at some of the principles of how Apostle Paul did it in Athens
  - Then after we've done that ... we'll lay down some of the ways we're going to get on with applying those principles to our context here at C@P

- As we look at Acts 17 ... we'll see the principles that we can take and apply from Paul are ... Go > See > Feel > Do
  - Where does Paul go?
  - What does he see?
  - What does he feel?
  - What does he do?

## 2. Go

- Paul has arrived in Athens on his second missionary journey
- When he gets there he sees Athens has this blend of superstitious idolatry and enlightened philosophy
- In its day about 500 yrs before Paul arrived ... Athens was the great centre of culture – art, literature and philosophy<sup>1</sup>
- In Paul's time – Athens was on the decline, but was still influential city of Europe
  
- When Paul arrives not impressed by its culture ... but is irritated / distressed at its idolatry
  - Acts 17:16-17 *While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.*
  
- The reason Paul is distressed is because as soon as he arrived in Athens ... he went out to the people
- Paul GOES to people
  - He went to the synagogue AND he went to the market place
  - He went and spoke to BOTH Jew & Gentile ...
    - goes to all people > religious AND pagan
  
- Being a great cultural city it was ... the market place in Athens therefore was where everything happened
  - Because off the market place were temples, concert halls, theatres, galleries, law courts, shops, dance halls, and gymnasiums
- Who's there?
  - Everyone! It's THE public place to go > it was the centre of life

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<sup>1</sup> Socrates [469-399 BC], Plato [428-348 BC], Aristotle [384-322 BC]

- It wasn't just a shopping centre ... it was a market place for business, art, entertainment and pleasure
- Paul goes there
- He didn't just set up a booth and put a sign out the front and waited for people to come to him
- He's intentional ... he's proactive ... he GOES

### 3. See

- As he goes ... what does he see?
- He SEES is a city FULL of idols
- Idols everywhere
  - Aphrodite – goddess of beauty
  - Ares – goddess power and war
  - Apollo – god of music and art
- He SEES they're so religious ... they even have an altar to an UNKNOWN GOD!
- Key to being a Christina in the market place is see like Paul sees
- What Paul saw
  - underneath all the art
  - underneath all the business
  - underneath all the government
  - underneath all the philosophy
    - were idols
- Paul could well have been walking around Sydney and come to exactly the same conclusion ... he would see a city full of idols
- Sydney is very religious ... not just in relation to God, but in relation to their idols
- Now when the Bible talks about idols ... its talking about things that people worship other than God
  - You may not use the term worship ... but what do you 'live for'?
  - What is it that gives your life meaning?
  - What's the thing that makes you feel worthwhile?
    - That's your idol
- What do us Aussies worship?
- Just observe the culture around us and you'll see the idols we and other people worship
- Advertising – tells us what people are pursuing

- Cars, new homes, fashion, new technology
- Magazines – look at the covers of magazines in newsagent
  - These are false gosspeles
  - On the cover is someone's view of heaven – cat, dog, car, holiday, home, garden, fitness, music, fishing etc
  - These are people's idols
- If your idol is home ... your view of heaven is a paved courtyard, landscaped back yard and a pool
- If your idol is your appearance – heaven is having a sculpted body, a tan and wearing designer clothes
- If your idol is technology – heaven is having the latest flat screen TV & surround sound, iPhone in your pocket and SatNav in the car
- People go to the newsagent to buy their idol bibles, go home and read them and then tithe generously to them
  
- Just like in Athens ... here Sydney
  - Under ever personality are idols
  - Under ever psychological problem are idols
  - Under ever culture are idols
  - Under every moral problem are idols
  - Under every social problem are idols
  - Under every intellectual problem are idols
  
- Tim Keller says below all those near idols are deep idols of the heart
  - Cravings and desires of the heart we're seeking to satisfy through those other things
  - Idols like
    - Power > comfort > approval > security
  
- One of the idols of many modern Aussies is comfort
- We'll do stuff ... to make us comfortable
  - I'll go to church ... when I comfortable
  - I'll eat that chocolate, buy those clothes, watch that porn ... to make me feel comfortable
  - I won't get to know my neighbour ... because that's uncomfortable
  - I'll give money to church ... as long as it doesn't impinge on my comfort
  - I won't give **all** my life to follow Jesus ... because that's uncomfortable
  
- So friends ... GO and SEE

- And when you SEE what is happening in the community and culture around you ... you should be provoked to FEEL something

#### 4. Feel

- What happened to Paul when he checks out Athens and SEES all this idolatry
  - He's distressed at what he saw
  - v16 – *While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.*
  - Literally – his spirit was provoked
- The same word is used in the Greek OT to describe how God feels when he sees people worshipping idols
- Why? ... because he's a jealous God
  - Not selfish jealousy ... but a healthy jealousy ... a pure jealousy
  - Like the jealousy you feel when you see someone you love hurting themselves or been wooed in the wrong direction
  - You don't just go "Ohh" ... you get angry ... you get indignant
  - That's an outworking of your love for them
- Same is true of God for us when worship idols
- Same is true of Paul when he sees a city of people who are lost and led astray worshipping false gods
- And so Paul has a mixture of
  - indignation and compassion
  - righteous anger and love
- Why?
  - He wants to see God's name honoured
  - He wants to see people worshipping the true and living God, not idols
  - He's pained by the fact that people are facing God's judgment unless they repent and turn to God
- Therefore he FEELS this indignation for God, and love for the people
  - He knows the gospel is the best news ever
  - He knows the truth about Jesus is the only way to right with God
  - Paul has this fire in his belly ... this zeal to
    - uphold God's name
    - hold out the good news of salvation to a people who are lost

#### • Application

- You must have the feelings Paul had if you're to be effective in the market place
- If don't have indignation ...
  - of seeing God ignored and his name dishonoured ...
  - then you won't have the courage to do what Paul did
- If only have indignation, then you
  - won't have the love and compassion for those who are lost and searching for fulfillment in all the wrong places ...
  - won't have the gentleness you need share the gospel
    - You won't be able to give people the impression you care
    - You won't be able to answer their questions
    - You won't be able to understand them
    - They won't feel respected ... and you'll turn people right off
- You must have the feelings Paul has ... this indignation and love ... if you're going to want to go into market place
  
- If you're a Christian and you follow you're natural temperament, you'll struggle to get this right ... and as a result you'll be ineffective in the market place
  - Most of what Christians say in the market place about Jesus is obnoxious or cowardly
  - Paul was neither because he was filled with jealousy for God and love for people
- If we're not, then ...
  - We're either too afraid to open our mouths and too cowardly
  - Or else we when we do, we're obnoxious
  
- How do we overcome this?
- When Paul went to the Corinthians he said **1 Corinthians 2:2** *I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*
  - Paul looked to the cross
  - He burned it into his heart
- Why?
  - Because the cross is the place where God simultaneously showed us his jealousy and love
  - He **had** to be indignant at our sin and worship of the idols of our heart
  - But at the same time he shows us he's SO gracious, merciful, and loving ... that he would allow his judgment and wrath to be poured out on his own son instead of on us
- If you don't

- Understand the cross
- Believe the cross
- Have the cross burned into your heart and the centre of your existence
  - Then you'll either be obnoxious or cowardly when it comes to speaking about Jesus and Christianity
- But as you look to the cross ... you can overcome this
- The cross will help you ... because you like Paul ... it will fill you with
  - compassion and jealousy
  - indignation and love
- It'll turn you into someone who
  - Thinks so highly of God and so highly of people that you want them to reconciled, restored and united
  - Yet at the same time ... you'll be outraged and brokenhearted until it happens
- That's what you gotta do
  
- So ... those who GO and SEE will FEEL
- Those who FEEL will DO

## 5. Do

- Because Paul FELT something ... because he was provoked by what he SAW ... this led him to DO something
- What did he do?
- He went out and looked for opportunities to talk to people about Jesus
- Went to the synagogue to talk to the Jews AND to the market place to talk to the Greeks
- He sought out all people ...
- There was
  - no discrimination ...
  - no favouritism ...
  - no sticking to his own type ...
- He went to anyone and everywhere where he had an opportunity to let people know of the life changing message about Jesus
  
- A couple of things to notice here
- Firstly, he was really clear on the gospel
- He says in v30-31
  - There's going to come a day when everyone's going to have to stand before God in judgment

- And the only way you are going to survive that judgment is to repent and turn back to God
- He contended for the truth of the gospel
  - Didn't shy away from teaching the truth
  - He didn't wuss out on telling them the hard truth about God ... where they stand before him and how they need to respond to Jesus
- Secondly, Paul was really clear on the objectivity of the gospel
  - He said God has given proof of this by raising Jesus from the dead
  - Paul was willing to stand up and point to the resurrection
  - He had the confidence to be clear about the gospel because it's based on an historical event > death and resurrection of Jesus
  - The reason he knew it was true is because
    - not only did Paul see it with his own eyes ...
    - but 100's of other people saw JC physically raised from the dead ...
      - who were still alive ... so it could be publicly verified
- Paul was willing to stand up and share that good news
- He was willing to say
  - Christianity isn't true because its relevant ... its relevant because its true
  - Christianity isn't true because it changes your life ... it changes your life because its reality
- Thirdly, Paul worked hard at building bridges to the gospel
  - Paul didn't just walk into the Market Place or the Areopagus and tell people to repent and believe
  - He built bridges to the gospel
  - He found common ground
- How?
  - 22-23 – *"Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar to an unknown God*
- The Athenians were so fearful of offending the gods ... they created an altar just in case there's a god they're not aware of they can sacrifice to and keep it appeased<sup>2</sup>
  - Paul says ... let me tell you about this God you don't know
- Building bridges!

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<sup>2</sup> Driscoll's sheep explanation, see also New Bible Commentary

- He uses their idolatry and altar to the Unknown God as a bridge to introduce the gospel
- He didn't say ...
  - "Men of Athens, I see that in every way you're pagan, empty-headed idolaters"
  - He starts off acknowledging where they are at ... but then goes on to talk about Jesus
- **Application**
- What Paul's doing here is contextualizing the gospel
- That is, he spoke to them where they were at
  - He found a point of commonality ...
  - Recognised their spirituality
  - Started from the Unknown God ... moved to Jesus
- Here's the thing ...
- If you want to speak the truth about Jesus to people ... then you need to do it in a way that's relevant and meaningful
- You need to start where people are at
  - If they're into spiritual things ... start talking about spiritual things
  - If they're passionate about something ... share what it is you're passionate about [Jesus 😊]
  - If they used to go to church as a kid ... ask them why they stopped / what would it take to think about Jesus again?
- **Illustration – M25**
- Speaking people about Jesus in this way ... is like getting on the M25 to go to London
- M25 ... motorway that circles London ... over 30 junctions you can get on and off
- There are often lots of places to get the conversation started ...
  - lots of opportunities for 'God-talk' ...
  - you may go around the outside a bit ...
  - but there will be a road that will start heading to Jesus
- That is ... you start at the periphery and then build bridges that allow you to move to Jesus at the centre
- Paul was passionate about seeing cities come to be disciples of Jesus
- And to do this Paul would Go, See, Feel, Do

- How are we going apply those principles to our context here at C@P?
- How are we going to live to make disciples of Jesus
- Two approaches
  - Engaging the community – connecting with unbelievers
  - Evangelise our contacts – reaching the lost
  
- Let me share what that might look like for us here at C@P
  
- ***Engaging the Community***
- NCLS highlighted some areas for us to focus on here
- So we've set ourselves some goals in this area to keep us focused and seeking to grow and get better at this
- Goals ...
  - Increase the number of our members engaging the community through the activities of church from 51% (NCLS 2016) to 70% by 2022
  - Increase the number of our members participating in wider community groups from 59% (NCLS 2016) to 70% by 2022
- See what that's saying?
  - We want to be actively engaging with the community as a church AND as individuals
  - We want to be doing what Paul was doing ... going to the market place
  
- What's our market place ...
  - As per our vision, its Peakhurst and beyond
  - That obviously includes PSPS that we're so closely linked to
  - But also the communities and groups that God has put you in
- That could include
  - Work
  - Street
  - Sporting group
  - Mothers group
  - Scouts / Guide group
  - School community
  - Family & friendship network
  
- Our aim ... is for all of us to be actively going to and involved in a marketplace you're connected to
  - Because it's as you **go** into those communities ... then you will **see, feel and do** ... like Paul

- We want to do that individually but also as a church
- Over the next 5 years we want to keep doing things like
  - Toys n Tucker
  - Mainly music
  - Serving at PSPS Carols and PSPS Open Day
  - Teacher morning tea
  - Connecting with Altitude Youth parents (like we did on Fri night)
- But also explore other ways we can engage the community
  - Foodies market ...
  - Community Fun Days or Nights ...
- Imagine what God could do through a church like this where 70% or more are actively involved in things like this ...
- Imagine the reach and the impact that could have ... and how God might use that to create gospel opportunities!

[SLIDE x2]

- **Evangelising our Contacts – reaching the lost**

- Having connected with the communities around us, then the we want to follow in the footsteps of Paul and build bridges in order to share the good news of Jesus
  - We want to reach the lost by evnagelising our contacts
- The Bible teaches us that it is God who brings people to faith
- All of us must be born again
  - It's the HS who opens eyes and hearts to the truth of the message
- So it's not right to set goals around what we cannot do ... but we do want to set goals for what we **can** do
- Goals
  - Increase the number of our members feeling at ease talking about their faith and look for opportunities from 26% (NCLS 2016) to 65% by 2022
  - Increase the number of our members who are willing and invited someone to church in the last 12 months from 50% (NCLS 2016) to 80% by 2022
- So you see what we're aiming at there?
  - Teaching, training, modelling, discipling one another so we are more confident to share our faith and invite others to church
- How are we going to do that?
  - Sermon series in Acts to help equip you to do mission
  - Running training in our GG on sharing your faith

- Provide invitations (like Christmas) to make it easier for you to invite
- Use GG to regularly pray for those you're seeking to reach
  
- In addition you going out like Paul did ...
- C@P will continue to provide opportunities to share the gospel with those you invite
  - Sunday services clearly present the gospel
  - Christianity Explored / Life of Jesus (each term)
  - Special services (Easter, Christmas plus 1-2 others)
  - 10 Year Anniversary
    - Fun day
    - Invite everyone who's ever been to C@P in the last 10yrs
    - Invite the community
  - Altitude Youth & outings
  - Scripture at PSPS > inviting them to church and Altitude Youth
  
- Of course, next year we have the great blessing of having John Delezio joining us 3 days a week as mission pastor
  - John's role is to motivate, mobilize and mature you and I with all this
  
- **Illustration – Scott & Cam**
- Scott > training at Police Academy this year > graduated on Friday!
- Guys in and out of Scott's
- Police Bible > conversations >
  - "you read the Bible"
  - "Not that one, this one" shows his Bible
- Gets chatting with a guy > shares he used to go church younger
  - Scott and Cam go to the gym (marketplace) > work out / talk
  - Scott suggest Cam read Mark's gospel > he did
  - Go to the gym, ask questions, read some more, ask questions ...
  - The guy became Christian!
- Why ... because Scotty was like Paul ... he went out to the market place, and found an opportunity > shared his faith > God did the rest

## 6. Conclusion

- At Church@thepeak we live to BE and MAKE disciples of Jesus
- How are you going to do that?
- You need to

- feel the way Paul felt
- see the way Paul saw
- do what Paul did
  
- As you do ... continue to look to the cross
  - Because as you look to the cross that will give you both the motivation and the message
  - *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. <sup>31</sup> 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 all men by raising him from the dead."*

**PRAY**