

I Have Many in This City Who Are My People-2 (Acts 17:10-18:22)

1. The Return of Jesus is the next big event on the calendar of redemptive history.
 - A. When he comes again, he will judge.
 1. Paul tells the Epicureans they are accountable to the one true God.
 2. To the Stoics who believed in fate, Paul says, “Your destiny is not determined by fate. You can repent and face the coming day of judgment without fear.
 - B. Paul preached the resurrection of the dead.
 1. Some mocked. Others said, “We will hear you again about this.” Some joined him and believed— Dyonysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them (17:32-34).
 2. What began as a day with an interest in hearing what Paul had to say continued with mocking him as being a scavenger bird searching for bits of insight. But then they heard the message of Jesus as the coming judge and resurrected Lord, and some of them put their hope in Jesus as the one true Lord.
2. Pauls message to the Corinthians: Jesus is the Sovereign Savior.
 - A. Corinth was the capital city of Achaia, modern day Greece. (18 months)
 1. It was a city of commerce, celebrity, sexual license, and religious diversity. The stadium of Corinth was within the city and was home to the Isthmian games held during the “off” years of the Olympic games. Overlooking the city was the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of sexual love and beauty.
 2. There was a conflict between Christian and non-Christian Jews, which was upsetting the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome.
 3. Paul found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome (2). Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers by trade, just like Paul. Paul worked with them and stayed with them while he was in Corinth.
 - B. And of course he went to the synagogue every Sabbath.
 1. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself to preaching the word. Many of the Jews resisted and blasphemed him.
 2. Paul “shook out his garments,” and said to them, “Your blood is on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” (6)
 3. Paul’s words sound harsh but it could be that he was simply making clear that while he was responsible to present the gospel to them, he was not responsible for their response.
 4. Paul left the synagogue but didn’t go far. He went to the home of Titius Justus, a worshipper of God. Titus lived next door to the synagogue (7).
 5. It is somewhat humorous that Crispus, “the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord together with his entire household.” And because Crispus believed many other Jews believed and were baptized.

C. Moving on to the pagans of Corinth!

Verses 18:9 “And the Lord said to Paul by a vision at night, “Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent;”

1. “Do not be afraid.” Paul was not a superhero, in fact he would later describe himself as to the Corinthians by saying, “I was also with you in fear, and in great trembling.” (1 Corinthians 2:3)

2. Paul was weak and fearful. In a vision God assured him of his presence and filled him with a sense of his purpose. (presence and purpose)

Verses 10-11 “for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people in this city.” 11 And he settled there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”

3. We may be overwhelmed as we look at places and people. But how does Jesus see places and people?

4. Jesus sees people who do not yet know his great love for them. He says to them, “before you were born, God knew you.” People don’t know there is so much more.

1 Corinthians 2:2 “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

3. Think about “incarnation.”

A. Our lives are to be defined by Jesus. Our lives are to be about him. We are in-dwelt by the Holy Spirit of God who has called us to live in such a way that others see Jesus in us.

1. Keith Green wrote: “The world is sleeping in the dark but the church just can’t fight, 1 because it’s asleep in the light.”

2. Jon Foreman of Switchfoot wrote: We were meant to live for so much more.”

B. What defines you? Are you defined by the things of this world or are you defined by Jesus? Is Jesus the center, the focus of your life?

Jim Wallis writes in “The Call to Conversion”, “When I was a university student, I was unsuccessfully evangelized by almost every Christian group on campus. My basic response to their preaching was, ‘How can I believe when I look at the way the church lives?’” They answered, “Don’t look at the church; look at Jesus.”

I now believe that statement is one of the saddest in the history of the church. It puts Jesus on a pedestal apart from the people identified by his name. Belief in him becomes an abstraction removed from any demonstration of it’s meaning in the world. Such thinking is a denial of what is most basic to the gospel; incarnation. People should be able to look at the way we live and begin to understand what the gospel is about. Our lives must tell them who Jesus is and what he cares about.”

Who we are and how we live matters, as most people see Jesus through us.