

w/b 12th June 2016 Discussion questions for small groups

THEME: Just walk across the room/allotment/park/ aisle in Budgens (delete as applicable!)

INTRODUCTION

One thing that struck me forcibly on at our Fun Day on Sunday was the number and variety of guests. (By the way a huge thank you to Kathryn for organising this, to Doug & Belinda for a great gospel message and to everyone that worked so hard to make the day such a success (despite a few weather problems). As a church we have a great opportunity to advance the gospel amongst a wide variety of people from differing social and cultural backgrounds.

As Paul travels to Athens in Acts 17, there might be a few tips we can learn from him.

PASSAGE: Acts 17:16-34

LAUNCH

If someone made a statue of you, what pose would you like to be carved in?

Think of a few people from differing ethnic, cultural or social backgrounds. In what ways are they similar to you and in what ways are they different?

DISCOVERY & UNDERSTANDING

What distressed Paul in Athens and why? What godless aspects of our society distress you?

As a result Paul witnesses in the synagogue and the marketplace. What are the best common gathering places in our society that you go to?

Why was the message of Jesus and the resurrection so strange to the Athenians. How is the Christian message becoming increasingly strange to people in our society?

As Paul begins to share Christ he finds some common ground with his audience. What common ground does he find? Why is this so important?

What examples of common ground can we use in communicating Christ to the world around us? (eg films, sport, books etc)

Paul does not begin by condemning the idolatry of the Athenians (despite the distress that this causes him). Indeed he compliments them on their religious observance. Why does he do this?

At some point sin does need to be confronted? What are examples of sin in our society that may need confronting? How can we go about doing this in a non judgemental way?

When was the last time you shared Christ. How did you adjust the message to accommodate the needs of your listener without compromising the essential message?

Read this quote from the late great John Stott:

"We do not speak like Paul because we do not feel like Paul because we do not see like Paul. That was the order: he saw, he felt, he spoke. It all began with his eyes. When Paul walked around Athens, he did not just 'notice' the idols. The Greek verb used three times (16, 22, 23)...means to 'consider.' So, he looked and looked and thought until the fires...were kindled within." - John Stott

What do you need to see? What do you need to feel? And what do you need to set on fire?

APPLICATION

Pray for existing and new marketplaces to open up

Pray for opportunities to share Christ in those places in a thoughtful way (don't forget the internet as one possible forum)

Pray for any guests that you recognised or met at the Funday, that they would find Christ and that he would find them.