



TLC Study Guide for May 21, 2017

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: As Paul spent time in the synagogue and the marketplace, he looked for opportunities to tell people about Jesus. When the men of the *Areopagus* invited Paul to speak to them, it was a chance for Paul to speak about the hope we have in Christ and the Good News of Jesus' resurrection. Some responded to the message with sarcasm and disbelief. Others said, "We want to hear more about this." How is this similar to the ways people respond to the Gospel today?

Getting Started:

1. What topics interest you that you like to read about or listen to? Or, stated differently, what topics make you want to hear more about them?
2. As we think about the people God places in our lives, talk about the last time you met someone completely new. Where and how did you start talking with them, and how much did you share with them?

In the Word: Read Acts 17:16-21

3. Paul was greatly distressed because the city was full of idols. What do you see as the idols of American society? If Paul were to walk around Lansing and its suburbs, what might he be troubled by?
4. Paul has two key areas for ministry in Athens – the synagogue and the marketplace. He spends his time there speaking with "those who happened to be there." If the synagogue roughly corresponds to your church today, what would you consider to be your "marketplace"?
5. Epicureanism was a philosophy about life that sought pleasure and enjoyment. "Eat, drink and be merry." Stoicism was a philosophy about reason, order, rules, and fate. One was more frivolous, the other more serious. What philosophies pervade our society today? What are the different views on life that people have – just give a few examples, since this discussion could take days!
6. What was Paul talking about in verse 18 that got the attention of these philosophical thinkers?

Read Acts 17:22-31

7. The *Areopagus* means “Mars Hill,” and is a place in Athens that still exists today where the philosophers would meet and discuss. What are the places today where people are open to listening, discussing, debating, and talking about important issues and new ideas?
8. Paul did not begin by citing Moses and the Torah. He doesn’t mention Abraham and the people of Israel. He is not preaching to Jews with a knowledge of the Old Testament. What does Paul use in his speech to link the message of Jesus with the Athenians? (vs 23 & 28)

Read Acts 17:32-34

9. As Paul concludes his speech, what was the number one thing Paul said that troubled, disturbed, or turned many listeners? Why do you think that is, and what is that like today?
10. The response was fairly typical of Paul’s missionary encounters. Many scoffed and walked away. Some hear the message and believed. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, who softens people’s hearts so they can receive the message with faith and trust. We rejoice when people come to faith in Jesus! But how we are to treat those who scoff and walk away from the message?
11. As Paul linked the Christian message to aspects of Athenian culture, can you think of anything in our present day – any song, movie, movement, phenomenon, or idea that you could point to and say – “Look at this, and let me tell you about how it points to Jesus”? How might we encourage each other or train ourselves to use culture and current events to share the Gospel?

Prayer: Ask Jesus to show us the people He is placing in our path. Ask Him to open our eyes to their needs, their way of life, and to respond with compassion and gentleness. Ask Jesus to show us ways to bring the Good News into the lives of others, so that they would want to hear more about our amazing Savior.

Next Week: Ascension Sunday is when we commemorate that Jesus left his disciples only to be closer to them. Jesus returned to heaven as the victorious Savior who had conquered sin and death and won! So we crown Him with many crowns, and rejoice in our living and reigning Lord.