

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer ways for you to grow personally as well as in community through Personal Growth Guides and Summer School @ The Gathering. Personal Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and will be available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online. You may sign up for Summer School any Sunday between now and June 9.

THE SPRING QUARTER OF COMMUNITY GROUPS WILL END ON MAY 31ST.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

This week's Big Idea – the Gospel does the work – means that we don't have to feel the pressure of making people respond to its message. However, we do need to understand four important points about the Gospel, and each one is seen in the Acts 17 recounting of Paul's time spent in Athens at a place called Mars Hill. Phil pointed out the following:

1. **The truth of the Gospel is universal:** The Gospel is for everyone and is powerful enough to change anyone at any time. Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews AND the Greeks, in the synagogues AND in the marketplace. He also didn't wait until he was comfortable in a relationship. Instead, he shared the good news immediately.
2. **The presentation of the Gospel is contextual:** Paul was so good about using common topics to help people understand Jesus and the Gospel. With Jews, he used a lot of the Old Testament, but with the Greeks he used a lot of their culture – poetry, imagery, etc. Our job as believers is to help people see that the Gospel already IS relevant, and our presentation helps us do that.
3. **The message of the Gospel is confrontational:** We've seen this truth played out over and over again in Acts. When we start telling people that there is only ONE God and only ONE way to him – through Jesus – we can expect it to go over poorly at times. Don't feel the pressure to apologize for God when it does.
4. **The reception of the Gospel is variable:** We can't dictate the response others have to Jesus. We can only be faithful to give them something to respond to.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- Phil made the statement that "the Gospel is for everyone and powerful enough to change anyone at any time." How does that encourage you? How does it challenge you?
- What are some forms of "relational evangelism" (ways of sharing your faith without ever talking) that are currently popular among church people (wearing Christian tee shirts comes to mind...)?
- Why do you think this method has become so popular? As Phil pointed out in the message, how does it make our comfort an idol (an idol is anything we give more importance to than Jesus)?
- Discuss the difference between "relational evangelism" and "relevant evangelism." (For starters, one approach is about us while the other approach is about the person in need of the Gospel.)
- Most people don't verbalize their faith in Jesus because they are fearful or unprepared. Take the time to read 2 Timothy 1:7 and also to brainstorm ways to turn everyday conversations to Jesus.