

## Sermon Study Guide (May 7, 2023)

**This Week:** Other People's Shoes

**Series:** Christ and Culture

**Passage:** Acts 17:16-34

**BIG IDEA:** If we want to engage another culture, we need to put ourselves in their shoes.



### APPETIZER

1. **How did last week's challenge go?** Did you get a chance to reflect on cultural values and beliefs that you need to die to in order to have a more Jesus-centred life? How did that go?
2. **This week:** In this week's sermon, Jeff talked about his experience stepping into another person's shoes. What kind of experiences have you had when it comes to stepping into another person's point of view or culture? What was that experience like?



### MAIN COURSE: LEARN TOGETHER

1. **Group discussion.** Read Acts 17:16-34. What stands out to you? What words grab you? What comes to mind when you think about Athens? What do you think some of the values of Greek culture would have been in Paul's day?
2. **Discussion.** Paul initiated conversation with people in Athens out of dismay over their idol worship. There are lots of things in Canadian culture that cause us dismay. **What can we learn from Paul's experience of how to engage with a culture that concerns us?**
3. **Question:** Not only does Paul engage in conversation with Greek philosophers in the marketplace, he gets an opportunity to speak at the centre of Greek culture: the areopolis. It's not necessarily a friendly place to express one's view; it's the place where Socrates was sentenced to drink Hemlock a few centuries earlier over many of the same accusations that Paul faced. When Paul had the opportunity to represent the Gospel in the middle of a different, even perhaps hostile culture, how did he go about doing it? What lessons can we learn from his methods that we can apply in our own context?



## DESSERT: LIVE FORWARD

**Challenge:** Paul obviously knows something about Greek culture and can hold his own when talking about it. He communicates in both a friendly and challenging way, using the language of the culture he is in. Katherine Hayhoe, a Climate Scientist who is also a Christian (and a Canadian!) often deals with conflicting cultures. In fact, the group that she has most tensions with are white evangelicals who have a problem with discussions on climate change. This surprised her, but she also realized that simply presenting facts from her position would not “win the day.” Rather, she found she could find common ground if she just did a personal inventory of the people she was engaging with. Her inventory included questions like:

- Where do they live?
- What do they love doing?
- Where are they from?
- Who do they love?
- What do they believe.

Take some time as a group or as individuals to write these questions down, then do two things with them:

1. Fill out the answers for yourself. Where do YOU live? And what do YOU love doing? Etc.
2. Think of an individual or culture that is different from your own cultural views. See if you can answer the

above questions about them. If not, thinking about going for coffee with someone with this individual or someone from that culture that you could chat through these questions with.

**In Prayer:** Reaching out to another culture in a Jesus-shaped way is very challenging. It takes some **knowledge** of the culture you are engaging with. It takes some **humility** when it comes to our own agendas and misgivings. It requires being **creative** in seeking the common good between the cultures. And it requires building **relationships**, even friendships with people of other cultures. None of these things are easy in the world we live in today. So pray for one another through these things, that God would grant us knowledge, humility, creativity and the opportunity for friendship amongst people who do not know the good news of Jesus.