

Apologetics 101

Acts 14:8-23

Welcome

- Hello and welcome to Mission Sent
- Tonight we are starting Acts 14, specifically in verse 8
- So as you start clicking or flipping there I will jump in
- We start with our big question tonight and that is Do you have what it takes to be an apologist?
- I know most people are afraid to answer questions to defend their faith, or at the very least feel like they can't
- But let's see if that is true

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- Alright what we are seeing here is what most of us think when we think apologetics
- Most of us see people like atheist, agnostics, post-modernist as the people we will be engaging with
- I mean Paul does this miracle and gives the lame man the ability to walk and look what happens, the people come and think they are Zeus and Hermes
- This is what most people think when we look at apologetics, however look what happened here

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- Yes, the people thought they were roman gods, but they just offered sacrifices to them
- In other words, they were not hostile towards the message they were giving
- However, what we see here is the Jews come from Antioch and Iconium to stone Paul
- What we really need to understand, especially here in our context of America, is you really will not be dealign with people who have never heard of Jesus
- The chances of you running into someone here that has never heard of Jesus of God or church are very slim

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- However, it is usually the people who have been church hurt, or have had bad experiences with christians that are the most hateful to begin with
- They are the ones who usually are yelling, they are the ones who usually are the most defiant
- Not the ones who do not believe, but the ones who once claimed to believe
- Listen to what Hebrews 6:4-6 says about this, “For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.”

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- Understand this, when I first started seminary the first book you read is how to remain a christian in seminary
- There were plenty of people in all my classes who had deconstructed their faith and were simply trying to understand their enemy better
- So the first thing we need to take away is this, most of the people you will engage with in apologetics are people who have some kind of background knowledge
- They have heard of Jesus, even been to church, but they may have heard of a different Jesus, or they were hurt by sinful people

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- So how then do we engage with them?
- Look no further than 1 Peter 3:15, “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”
- With gentleness and respect that is how

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- Alright, now we have looked at who we most likely engage with, and how our attitude should be, but what about how we engage
- See this is where most of us get fearful, we think we do not know enough or what if they ask a question I cannot answer
- Look at how Paul engaged when he was being treated like a god
- Acts 14:15-17, "15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

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- Paul doesn't go super deep, it isn't because he can't, look at what Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:15-16, "15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures."
- But even though Paul could go deep, he didn't
- Most people will not try to engage you in a discussion about predestination, or the identity of melkelzdek,

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- Most people are looking for answers to their own hurt
- Like why does God not allow me to have a child
- Or how can you hate gay people, don't you know my child is gay
- Maybe they are trying to understand how a loving god would allow their loved one to pass away
- All of these are not scenarios where one needs to dive deep into theology, although those conversations will come, these are scenarios where we just need to understand, to weep with those who weep

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- Which brings me to my last point, we may not have all the answers
- Understand, it is not our job to try and figure out what God is doing
- In Isaiah 55:8-9, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
- Sometimes the best defense we can have for a person is this, I am so sorry to hear that

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- We cannot begin to understand what God is doing in the eternal, and we shouldn't try to explain it
- Now, before we close out I want to take some time and just talk with one another, but because I know this isn't something that is considered normal in church I have prepared some guided questions
- 1. What is your personal biggest hurdle to engaging in apologetics?
- 2. Who should you be engaging in apologetics with?
- 3. What do I do if I get too deep of a question?

Closing

- So as Josh comes up and we close tonight's service out ask yourself
- Do I have what it takes to be an apologist?
- I am telling you right now, the world is open to hear answers, in fact most of the anger in the world is people trying to figure this out
- We as disciples of Christ have the way, the truth and the life, we just have to share it with others