



CHAPTER SEVEN & CONCLUSION

Sharing the Story as a Way of Life

ACTS 17:16-34
ACTS 28:16-31

Chapter 7 & Conclusion: Sharing the Story as a Way of Life

Acts 17:16-25, 32-34 (NRSVue)

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, “What does this pretentious babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.” (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) ¹⁹So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.” ²¹Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new. ²²Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ³²When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed, but others said, “We will hear you again about this.” ³³At that point Paul left them. ³⁴But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Acts 28:30-31 (NRSVue)

³⁰He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Discussion Questions from the Biblical Text:

1. How would you describe the attitude of Paul’s audience in Athens?
2. How does their attitude shape Paul’s approach to conversation and ministry?
3. What do you notice in this story? What wonderings are stirred for you?

Discussion Questions from *Bearing Witness in Acts and Today* by Troy M. Troftgruben:

1. Who are the people with whom you interact regularly? (page 125)
2. After reading this book (or participating in this study), what do you think about the language “bearing witness”? (page 139)

Discussion Questions from *Opening Space: A vision for Fresh Expressions of Church and Creative Mission* by Shannon Kiser:

1. Fresh Expressions move from listening, love, and service to building community and exploring discipleship. “The exploring discipleship part of the journey is one of the hardest aspects of the fresh expression journey to imagine” (page 53). What connections do you see between bearing witness and the stages of Fresh Expressions we have discussed over the past seven weeks?