




A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. *—Psalm 145:11*  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. *—Joshua 22:5*

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Tell us about the person in whom you've seen the most profound transformation as a result of their conversion to Christ. How was he before he believed? What changed as a result of his faith?

Tell us about someone you know (*no names, please!*) who claims faith in Christ, yet is unchanged.

What do you think explains the difference in degrees of transformation?

- Note the response rates of these three sermons: **[1]** Acts 4:1-4, **[2]** Acts 7:54-60, **[3]** Acts 17:32-34. What do you think explains the different response rates?

Was #1 a bust because Stephen was a light-weight? (Read Acts 6:8-10)

Did Peter get it all right (#2), while Paul was a mixed bag (#3)? What explains the differences?

What light do 2 Timothy 2:24-26, 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 and Romans 10:1 shed on the subject?

- Who do you know and love who needs a Savior? Tell us a bit about him/her.

Review the three steps Paul took when he evangelized in Athens (see Sermon Summary). Which of those steps have you taken with your loved one?

What was her response?

What's your next step with him?

**Need help responding to the resurrected Lord?**  
For free hope and help, write to:  
[counseling@tcc.org](mailto:counseling@tcc.org)

## Application-Challenge

- If you've not already done so, **trust Christ as Savior**. (Go to: [tcc.org/KnowJesus](http://tcc.org/KnowJesus))
- If you are a Christian, **share the transforming message of Jesus Christ** with your family, friends and neighbors. Establish a connecting point for a spiritual discussion. Lovingly challenge false views of God. Encourage others to explore the claims of Christ (*More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell, *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel). **Be ready to share your own story** (tell them how your life has changed; how God has answered prayer, guided you through the Scriptures, helped you forgive, enabled you to be a better spouse/parent, has delivered you from a destructive lifestyle).

# Sermon Summary

Had there been no resurrection, we—and nearly 2 billion others around the world—would not be gathered to worship the risen Christ. And this world would be very different than it is. The Christian faith has had a dramatic influence for good, and its influence has been passed down to us, one transformed life at a time. Today I want to take a look at just one man whose life was radically transformed by the resurrection: the great Apostle Paul (formerly “Saul”). You may not know that Paul wasn't always a friend of the church; in fact, he was its avowed enemy! He saw Christianity as a perversion of, and threat to, his beloved Judaism. His first recorded target was a powerful Christian preacher named Stephen. After one of his messages, a mob dragged him off and stoned him to death. “I guess they didn't like his sermon!” (see Acts 7:54—8:3).

Now at the time, no one would have looked at Saul, and said, “Now there is a future Sunday School teacher! Let's put him in charge of outreach for our church!”—and yet in the providence of God he became the church's greatest advocate, teacher, and missionary. What in the world happened? How does one go from “Saul the persecutor”, to “Paul the missionary?” I'll tell you how. He had a personal encounter with the resurrected Jesus, and that changed everything! (Acts 26: 12-18). Paul became a Christian. From that point on, it became his burning passion to convince others that Jesus of Nazareth was the focal point of biblical prophecy, the unique Son of God, the promised Savior of all mankind. If you're a Christian, you should be following Paul's example and looking for opportunities to tell others about the love and forgiveness that God offers us in Christ.

In **Acts 17:16-34**, Paul gives us a model for engaging our culture. He didn't initially target the hardened skeptic, but rather the open-minded inquirer—those who already believed in a personal creator God, who revered the Old Testament, who shared his morality and hope in a coming Messiah. You too should begin with those who believe that there is a God and who have a generally favorable disposition toward Jesus. Soon enough Paul came across some philosophy professors who were more than happy to debate him (kind of like today!). Paul familiarized himself with their views, so that he could intelligently counter them. Paul's views generated a lot of interest and he was asked to appear before the most distinguished and venerable academic institution in Athens. Paul gave us a model to follow:

**[1] Establish a connecting point for spiritual discussion.** Paul understood that this altar was an admission by the Athenians that their knowledge of the supernatural was incomplete (v. 22-23). Paul then lovingly challenged their views where they differed from the truth.

**[2] Lovingly challenge false views of God** (v. 24-26). A person's view of God is foundational to everything else, influencing our moral values, perceptions of reality, political views, and ultimately our eternal destiny. Any meaningful discussion about spiritual things has to begin with God as Creator, sustainer, determiner of good and evil, true and false, moral and immoral—and lovingly involved in humanity (v. 27). God has so designed us, that we instinctively know that he exists (but we suppress that knowledge). Oftentimes the real blockage is not intellectual, but moral. Others find the evidence of God's existence is too overwhelming, so they fashion a god that's less demanding—but that's idolatry.

**[3] Call people to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior**, since one day he will return as Judge (v. 30-31). We are to repent—to have a change of mind: Jesus is Savior and resurrected Lord. Repentance is to be followed by placing our trust or faith in Jesus. Whenever we witness, some will reject the message, others will think about it further, but some will believe. (v. 32-34). Whatever we decide, there are eternal implications to our response to Jesus.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study"** (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage.  
Let's use it to learn about the transformation of John, a "Son of Thunder"...

**Monday**— Mark 3:16-19

**Tuesday**— Mark 9:38-42

**Wednesday**— Luke 9:51-56

**Thursday**— Matthew 20:20-28

**Friday**— 1 John 2:9-11; 3:10, 16-18; 4:18-21

**Saturday**— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study 1 Peter 1.

Need blank copies for doing more

"Five Question Bible Study"?

e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?