

# Compelled To Tell

## (Acts 17:16-34)

### Introduction.

Have you ever been heart broken over the circumstance or situation of another person – a friend, a co-worker, a family member.

Your heart is broken over the situation. You feel helpless.

**Contextualize this section of Scripture.** Phillipi, Thessalonica, and Berea were now memories. Paul slipped quietly into the thriving, noisy metropolis of Athens. The scene he faced was completely unlike anything he had ever experienced. An oppressive atmosphere enveloped him. Being alone, the apostle strolled through the city. Amazing sights surely caught his eye: the music hall, Odeion of Pericles; the 60,000-seat stadium; the impressive structures like the Temple of Zeus, the splendid Parthenon, Erecthleum, and the Winless Victory temple; and of course the 512-foot-high hill called Areopagus. Among the endless statues dedicated to their innumerable gods was another special alter marked TO AN UNKNOWN GOD, to which Paul referred in his talk on Mars Hill. He was moved deeply in his spirit as he felt the spiritual darkness and saw the results of human depravity.

**Contextualize this sermon series.**

**Today's timeless truth:** *Until you are stirred in your spirit for the lost, you will not live on mission with the passion for people that God desires in you.*

### **I. Moved By The Needs Of The People (17:15-21)**

*As the apostle got off the ship and began strolling through Athens, he saw the many idols that lined the streets. "His spirit was troubled within him" because of the spiritual needs of Athens (17:16).*

### **A) In The Synagogue (17:17)**

Following his usual custom, Paul made his way to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. There he reasoned with the religious Jews and their religious proselytes.

### **B) In The Marketplace (17:17-18)**

In the marketplace, He came in contact with people from various socioeconomic classes. Yet, he was just one more among many popular lecturers who presented his "philosophy" to the populace.

He gained an audience with two particular groups – the Epicureans and the Stoics.

**The Epicureans believed** that (1) everything happened by chance; (2) there was no life after death; (3) gods were distant and remote (may Epicureans were atheists), and (4) the primary purpose in life was pleasure.

**The Stoics believed** (1) that gods were everywhere in all things, (2) that although the gods were represented everywhere, they really didn't care; (3) in fatalism; and (4) in individual independence.

### **C) Before the Court (17:19-21)**

The Areopagus Council functioned as the Supreme Court of Athens. That revered body of intellectuals passed judgment on the most serious of criminal cases and debated the most solemn questions connected with religion. Paul stood before them, not on trial, but to deliver a discourse concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **II. Moved By The Ignorance of The People** **(17:6-8)**

**A) Acknowledging the Unknown God (17:22-23a)**

**B) Identifying the Unknown God (17:23b-24) –  
the Living God**

**C) Describing the Unknown God (16:8)**

1) He is the creator (17:25)

2) He is sovereign (17:26)

3) He has come to man (17:27)

4) He is the sustainer (17:28-29)

5) He requires repentance (17:30-31)

## **III. Moved By The Responses of The People** **(17:32-34)**

**A) Rejection (17:32a)**

**B) Curiosity (17:32b)**

**C) Acceptance (17:33-34)**

## **Conclusion**