

A Gentle Witness

Read: Acts 17:16-34

A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient. —2 Timothy 2:24

In our Bible reading today, we see how followers of Christ can be tolerant of people of diverse religious beliefs without compromising their Christian convictions.

When the apostle Paul came to Athens, he was distressed by the idolatry he saw. Yet he spoke respectfully to his pagan audience, even affirming the words of some of their poets (Acts 17:28). He didn't denounce his hearers, nor criticize their beliefs, but began by declaring truths they would not find offensive. He spoke of God's greatness as our Creator (vv.24-25). He said that God is actively involved with mankind so that people might seek Him and find Him (vv.26-28).

Paul didn't compromise the truth. He showed the folly of worshiping idols and boldly declared that God commanded people everywhere to repent. He further stated that God had appointed a Man to judge the world and proved this by raising Him from the dead (vv.29-31).

In a global society we will come in contact with more and more people of different religious beliefs and practices. Our witness will be most effective when we avoid quarrels and arguments, and share our faith with respect, kindness, and gentleness. The Holy Spirit will bring conviction and enlightenment as people see the truth lived out in us.

—Herb Vander Lugt

温和的见证人

读经: 使徒行传 17 章 16-34 节

金句: 「然而主的仆人不可争竞, 只要温温和和地待众人, 善于教导, 存心忍耐。」
(提摩太后书 2 章 24 节)

今天的读经内容里, 我们看见跟随基督的人如何在不改变自己信仰的情况下, 包容各种持不同信仰的人。

使徒保罗到雅典时, 他为所见的偶像崇拜而痛心, 但是对于这些信仰异教的听众, 他用尊敬的态度和他们谈道, 他甚至肯定他们的诗人所说的一些话 (使徒行传 17 章 28 节)。他没有责备他的听众, 他也没有批评他们的信仰, 而是从宣告一些不冒犯他们的真理开始。比如说: 他谈到上帝的伟大, 他是我们的创造主 (24-25 节)。他还说到上帝住在全地, 所以人可以寻找他, 并且可以揣摩而得 (26-28 节)。

与此同时, 保罗在自己的信仰上丝毫没有妥协。他指出崇拜偶像的愚昧, 并且勇敢地宣告, 上帝吩咐全地各处的人都要悔改。他进一步说: 上帝已经设立一个人来审判世界, 「并且叫他从死里复活给万民作可信的凭据。」 (29-31 节)。

在如今这个全球化的社会里, 我们会遇到越来越多和我们信仰不同、用不同仪式崇拜的人。我们若能用尊重、仁慈及温和的态度来分享我们的信仰, 并避免争竞和辩论, 我们的见证会更为有效, 当人们看见我们的行动中体现出真理时, 圣灵就会给我们启迪并使人信服。