



**RUN,
CHURCH,
RUN**

**COMRADES
IN SWEAT**

STEVE NORMAN

**The gift of Jesus is for:
everyone.**

Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ““In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see

visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Acts 2:13-21

**The gift of Jesus is for:
all people.**

The gift of Jesus is for:
Sons and daughters.
Students and elders.
Natives and expats.
Mystics and skeptics.
Farmers and financiers.

**The gift of Jesus is for:
rural mystics.**

In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called

Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these

worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them. Then some Jews came from

Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Acts 14:8-20

Paul and Barnabas' strategy for
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2. They expose idols as incompetent.
3. They establish common ground with villagers.

People in Lystra believe in
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2. Who provides crops to nourish the body?

People in Lystra believe in
creation, crops, contentment.

1. Who sends the rain to nourish the earth?
2. Who provides crops to nourish the body?
3. Who creates joy to nourish the soul?

Wherever St. Paul went, there was a riot.
Wherever I go, they serve tea.

N. T. Wright

**The gift of Jesus is for:
urban skeptics.**

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said

this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in

temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in

him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has

given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” At that, Paul left the Council. Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Acts 17:16–34

Paul and Barnabas' strategy for speaking to urban skeptics:

1. They begin by introducing a new concept.

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Paul and Barnabas' strategy for speaking to urban skeptics:

1. They begin by introducing a new concept.
2. They quote philosophers that they know.

Paul and Barnabas' strategy for speaking to urban skeptics:

1. They begin by introducing a new concept.
2. They quote philosophers that they know.
3. They identify their openness to a yet unknown God.

In Lystra, the
response is riot.

In Athens, the
response is ridicule.

In Lystra, the
response is riot.

In Athens, the
response is ridicule.

But...people respond to the gift in both cities.

**The gift is for all,
but only some are ready.**

**We're responsible for the relay,
not the response.**

The gospel always finds you
on its way to someone else.