**Let Us Reason Together**

We see a great example of reasoning with those who need to hear the gospel in **Acts chapter 17**. Paul reasoned with the Jews in Thessalonica in the synagogue for three Sabbaths in a row (**Acts 17:1-9**). This was obviously a potentially hostile environment. It eventually resulted in some violence toward Jason and some of the brethren. But the violence was not a result of Paul’s demeanor, but rather the result of the hard heartedness of those Jews (**Acts 17:5**). He explained and demonstrated that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead. He preached Christ to them.

Paul reasoned with the people of Athens as recorded later in **Acts chapter 17: 16-17**. His spirit was provoked at the site of how the city was full of idols. In Athens he again reasoned with the Jews and the Gentile worshippers in the synagogue. He also reasoned with those who happened to be in the marketplace. He preached to them about Jesus and the resurrection (**Acts 17:18**). He was mocked, but not because of his demeanor but rather because of the mindset of the Athenians (**Acts 17:19-21**). He then proceeded to find common ground and then taught about judgment and the resurrection (**Acts 17:22-34**).

In both cases Paul had an attitude of reasoning with these folks. Reasoning with them so that they would realize they needed to become disciples of Jesus Christ. There was violence in Thessalonica and there was mocking in Athens. However I want us to be impressed with Paul’s demeanor. He did not neglect to teach these folks. However, he did not debate with them either. He reasoned with them about important things related to their salvation. And in both cases some believed and some did not (**Acts 17:4 and 17:34**).

Today we may see a tendency in some Christians, when they see a hint of a hostile environment or a situation where folks may mock or make fun, that they and we become passive. We are tempted to not make waves by telling folks what they need to hear so they can be saved from their sins. In other times we might be tempted to go into debate mode, where we become more interested in winning an argument rather than winning souls to Jesus.

I believe Paul shows us how to find a proper balance in teaching. He gives us an example of one who is not passive and is not combative. I am not saying that there might be some occasions where we need to be passive for the moment and I realize that at times we do need to defend the gospel and where our heart and hope is. But I believe brethren, that the majority of the time it is most effective to have the attitude of Paul; that is “**Let us reason together**.” Beth and I have been trying to follow this approach with the Lord’s help in a study (three different times so far) with some very nice and respective Mormon young men. They would like us to be totally passive and simply accept what they are teaching. And at the other end of the spectrum, if we went into debate mode with them they would not have been willing to study with us. Hopefully we have planted some seeds of the gospel in their hearts.

Let us now look at a couple more passages that relate to this type of reasoning:

* Let us reason together (**Isaiah 1:16-20**)
* Our reasoning needs to include the truth that those we are teaching need to hear (**Mark 10:21-22, John 4:17-18**)

The secret is finding the proper balance that is not too passive and not too harsh or combative. There may be times where it is best to be passive and other times when we need to stand firm in the defense of Jesus. But Paul’s example shows us that most of the time the best approach in reaching out to those around us is to reason together. Simply point out what Jesus says and back that up with His Word. Then allow the hearer to make a choice whether or not to follow Jesus.

Maybe this morning the reasoning of the gospel has touched your heart? We encourage you to have the attitude of those who submitted to God’s will on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:36-42**). Please respond to the gospel call now, before it is too late!

For those of us who are disciples of Jesus, let us look into the mirror of the Bible and ask ourselves a couple of questions.

1. Have I been too passive in my teaching efforts?

2. Have I been too combative in reaching out to others?

For the most part, let us reason together with our friends and neighbors who are lost (**Isaiah 1:18**).

If we can help you now, please come forward while we stand and sing!