

With warmer weather coming up & since we are evangelistic in everything we do, our events will have an altar call.

So, its important to identify a theme that will help you make a connection with people, and help your altar call.

In ROC we had a play that we took out of town for 3 years... & there were times I cringed during a lot of the altar calls. Other times I thought: its scary the confusion that occurs during altar calls...

Its important to learn how to pull an effective altar call... *even if you've never seen a play or video or outreach...*

In the scripture we are going to look at, Paul is evangelizing in Athens, and a group winds up bringing him to an Athenian temple where he is asked to preach. Paul immediately finds a connection & theme, and preaches Jesus.

## I WHAT IS A THEME

**A-** First we need to establish WHAT the word THEME means: **Q: What is a THEME?**

1. Theme: *the subject of a talk, a piece of writing, a person's thoughts,*
  - a. *Theme* synonyms: *subject, topic, subject matter, thesis, argument, message;*
2. So, in an altar call: The theme is HOW we apply whatever is going on around us to the Gospel.
  - a. Text: Paul is in Athens, in a temple, surrounded by people who have never heard of Jesus...
    - i. He see's idols & altars, and a heading: *To the unknown god...* Thats his theme- The unknown god... JESUS
3. So, The theme is a launching point, it sparks interest & keeps the *message* (of Jesus) applicable to the audience.
  - a. *What have you seen/How can I apply it to you/How does it apply to the Gospel?*

**B-** Lets think of some examples of Themes in Outreaches:

1. Antique Car Show: Restoration/Patriotic Event; Celebrate America: Sacrifice (God & Country:PM)
  - a. The point: PULL 1 THEME... And then Apply it! *Keep it narrow & focused*
2. If you preach after a movie/play- Find a theme... *even if you've never seen it!*
  - a. When I was Concert Director: Darkness to Light: The fronts & truths of a life... This is what I portray, but this is really WHO I am... we had MANY saved that night-
3. See, Your JOB as the altar call preacher is to find a theme & make a connection so that you can deliver the Gospel.
  - a. You don't have to preach Genesis to Revelation... But you do need to **APPLY** it to people.

## II THEMES & LINEAR THINKING

**A-** Once you identify a theme, it will actually help you deliver an altar call that makes **linear sense**.

1. The theme helps you capture the audience, so that you can present the Gospel in a way that they can follow/track w you-
  - a. I appreciated P. Jerry Sarabia (Pittsburgh PA): SFT: he made an application with the character *types*: Joker messed up broken family, to Princess on the right side of the tracks... That was so applicable! *something people could track with...* It gets your attention & you could identify yourself in it!
2. Linear helps you message make sense: Theme... This is how it applies...
  - a. Then you can bring the Gospel: Sin issue/Sin examples/consequences of sin/Hope of Jesus/The cross & resurrection/ Forgiveness & new Life...
3. See; Linear preaching brings people CLEARLY to a point of decision.
  - a. They have followed you & understand their need for Jesus: **Acts 17:32** *Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this."*
    - i. So, Connections were made, b/c the Gospel was clear... they tracked beginning with a theme.
4. Thats what needs to be at work in you- A Message of Clarity
  - a. Themes will help get you from a beginning to an end- **W/o confusion.**
  - b. Now; Keeping your theme throughout your altar call is helpful (A repeated word or phrase... *where your bringing them back to that reference/application*)

**B-** I've sat through altar calls that *sadly* made no sense... (You might be a good man/saved/clean)

1. No connection with the audience, no clarity in the Gospel, and *guess what: no hands raised.*
2. You can have a great heart & spirit, but destroy that by not delivering a message that has a linear thought process
  - a. Text: Paul connects, & keeps their interest all the way to decision point...
  - b. I've seen men have no ones attention or LOSE everyones attention... simply b/c they're missing a theme and a linear process...
    - i. **2 Tim 4:2** *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*

## III THEMES & RESULTS

**A-** This method (*In connection to the Mechanics PG has taught- Preaching volumes/time efficiency/pulling for hands*) will encourage the results you desire to see

1. **Acts 17:33-34** *So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.*
  - a. A group of people were won... They tracked with his message & There was a response to salvation!
2. So, Finding a theme is *part of the key* to an effective altar call.
  - a. But; This is actually a training ground for preaching: Prepared altar calls have themes/Sermons have themes/Series have themes/Sunday schools have themes....
3. So, If you can have this in your understanding now, it will be to your benefit later in ministry!
  - a. B/c your learning to fashion an arrow & drive home a point that applies to people.
    - i. A snipers bullet is MUCH more precise than a shot gun...