



Sermon Discussion Guide

05.28.23 Message | David Beuttel | Acts 17:16-34

Key Scriptures:

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring.'

Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." 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.

- Acts 17:16-34



Message Highlights:

- Jesus is not the means to another dopamine hit; he himself is the means and the end, and time in his presence is all we need.
- The Gospel, the story of Jesus, finds common ground in all places for all people.
- God put you on this earth to know Jesus, the Gospel in the flesh, who has come to set us free.
- Jesus belongs in each and every space in our lives, whether it's our marriages, families, work or play.

Conversation Starter:

Can you recall a time where you learned a fun fact, tricky concept or lesson in the classroom that sounded absolutely crazy to you? How did you process that information?

Discuss the Message:

1. How did Paul and the Athenians differ in Acts 17:16-34?
 - a. In this passage, how did sharing the Gospel establish common ground despite the cultural differences between Paul and the Athenians?
 - b. In what ways have you seen the power of the Gospel unify people in your life?
 - c. How can you use the Gospel to create a sense of shared mission in your spheres of influence?
2. How are the Athenians chasing their next 'dopamine hit' in verse 21?
 - a. Why is relying on an emotional high to sustain our faith ultimately unsustainable?
 - b. How does the Word assert that Jesus is the means and the end in our lives?
 - c. When your heart doesn't feel 'in it', how can you use what you know is true about God to continually focus on and prioritize him?
3. How do the men who "joined Paul and believed" model what it looks like to invite Jesus into every aspect of our lives?
 - a. Do you feel that you are holding God at arms length in any area of your life?
 - b. How have you seen aspects of your life change or flourish once you invited God into them?

Pray:

Jesus, we're grateful that you've drawn each of us closer to you through the Holy Spirit. Spirit, thank you for putting us in positions to help show others the love of Christ and the ways you can change their life forever. This week, may we eliminate our idols and distractions so we can continue to find common ground with you. We pray that we remember the beauty and freedom that the Gospel offers us, and draw our strength from your eternal truth. We love you Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.