

061718 Growth Group Study

Acts 17:16-34



1. Discussion around most recent sermon

- a. **Date:** 06/17/18
- b. **Series:** Acts: Life Unleashed
- c. **Title:** Paul Among The Philosophers
- d. **Text:** Acts 17:16-34
- e. **Preacher:** Brian Morgan

f. **Scripture Reading: Adaptation from Psalm 115:1-9**

1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!

2 Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"

3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

5 They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.

6 They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell.

7 They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat.

8 Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

9 But we trust in the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

g. **Sermon Text with Outline: Acts 17:16-34 (ESV)**

I. Reasoning in the Synagogue and Marketplace (16-18)

16 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. 17 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. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbling wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

II. Speaking Before the Areopagus (19-31)

19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 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. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26 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, 27 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, 28 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.’

29 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. 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 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.”

III. The Response to the Gospel (32-34)

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, ^ssome mocked. But others said, ^t“We will hear you again about this.” 33 So Paul went out from their midst. 34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius ^uthe Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

h. Specific discussion questions from sermon

Note: Our questions this week revolve around being missional (sharing our faith) through finding touchpoints in the culture, just as Paul did in Athens.

1. Where and how have you been given a stage in a ‘secular’ space to share your faith? Tell the story.
2. Do you view your Monday through Saturday spaces as ‘ministry’? If yes, explain how that mindset impacts those spaces. If not, explain why not.
3. Brian made the point that in Athens there were more gods than men. He also made the point that as Christians, we need to be attentive to our culture in order to share our faith well. In our culture today, the old gods are still with us, they’ve just changed clothes. Name the gods of our culture today

and explain how they are anti-Gospel. Try to give the parts of the Gospel which counteract these counterfeit gods.

4. Brian made the point that our God is both transcendent and personal. Explain how this truth impacts your life.
5. Brian made the point that we are to “sow seeds, not plant trees”. Name specific ways you can sow seeds this week.
6. Extra credit discussion (☺): Brian finished his sermon explaining what makes a good ‘philosophy’. A good philosophy must:
 - a. Provide ideals through explaining our origins (roots us into history)
 - b. Be realistic (deals with evil and suffering)
 - c. Have a purpose (brings healing to suffering)
 - d. Integration into life (does not isolate me or fragment me from relationships)
 - e. Provide hope (deal with death)
 - Do you agree that Christianity provides the most comprehensive philosophy to life? Explain.

i. Reference Texts / Books