

(Acts 17:15-34)

God's Kingdom was always meant for the entire world, and Paul continues to carry out God's mission to restore the world to himself by taking this message to far-away places and to different cultures. The way Paul interacts with people may change, but the message itself doesn't—Jesus has been given all authority by God, and it's through him that we can be restored to God.

Introduction

Paul continues to travel and teach the Good News about God's Kingdom in many different towns.

Athens

Paul is in Athens. He is deeply troubled because he sees idols everywhere in the city. He speaks to people in the places of worship and in the city square. He has a debate with some philosophers



and when he tells them about Jesus' resurrection, they think he's sharing some strange new ideas.

Meeting place



The philosophers take Paul to a special meeting place where they discuss the newest ideas. Paul stands before the crowd to share his new ideas ...

Paul's speech

You are very religious – I've seen your many shrines. I've even seen one "To an Unknown God." I'm here to tell you about Him.



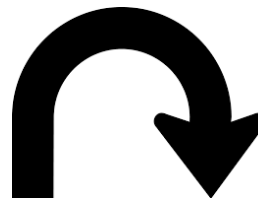
1. He is the Creator God who gives life – and satisfies all our needs.



2. His purpose is for the nations to seek God.



3. He is not far from us – which your own poets know. They say that we are God's children.



4. God is not an idol made from silver or gold. He has overlooked such ignorance before, but now commands all people to turn away from their disobedience and turn towards God.



5. Jesus is the One He has appointed to judge the world with justice. God has proven that He is the judge by raising Him from the dead.

Response

Some laugh. Some want to know more. Some become believers.

Weekly Meditation and Reflection

Below are some questions and further reading if you would like some extra food for thought on this story. Some may find it helpful to journal the answers, and others may simply want to read and pray through them.

1. Athens could be Redhill or Reigate or London. We may not have idols or statues of silver or gold that we worship, but there are definitely many idols distracting people from the one true God. Philosophers debate the existence of God, and eloquent speeches are given sharing who Jesus is. In the end though, the message is the same – turn away from your disobedience and turn to God. He loves you. He wants to have a relationship with you. He longs for you to come to Him. But many of the Athenians were more interested in philosophy or debate than in the power of God – even the power to resurrect from the dead! Is there any part of you that is like the Athenians? Any idols that need to go away or any distractions that keep you from fully enjoying your relationship with God?
2. Walk through each of the five points of Paul's speech. Meditate and think on each point. About each point, ask yourself: Do you believe it? Do you live like you believe it?

Meditate on the following passage:

- Romans 1-3

This passage has a similar message to Paul's speech in Athens, but with a different tone, because the audiences were different.