

4.33 Paul in Athens

Acts 17:16-31

Unit 7: Good News Spreads “Chain Breaker”

Wed. 4/22 & Sun.
4/26

“So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.”
John 8:36

The Point: Jesus Breaks Chains

STORY SUMMARY: Paul in Athens

This story takes place in Athens during Paul's second missionary journey. The Church continues to grow, and Paul continues to spread the gospel across borders and cultures. The culture of Athens encouraged inquisitiveness and debate, so much so that the people “would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new” (verse 21). Paul challenges the leaders in this intellectual setting by questioning them about the abundance of idols in the city. As he discusses the purpose of these idols with his audience, he demonstrates that Christianity is not just meant for the Jews but for the philosophically learned Greeks as well. They question him, wanting to know more. On one hand, Paul praises the Athenians for their religious devotion. However, he then presents to them a God who is known rather than one who is unknown and distant. He proclaims a God who is an integral and active part of the world, intimately involved with God's people. In fact, this God loves creation so much that Jesus was raised from the dead. This is not some “unknown god,” but one who calls us “offspring.” God is always near to us.

THE POINT: God is the creator, sustainer, and redeemer of the whole world. In former times, people worshipped gods in figures made of wood, stone, and metal. Now, the God who made the earth and sustains all people has been revealed in a human (Jesus) whom God raised from the dead. This is not some unknown and distant God. Paul strives to make God known to the Athenians, and to present God as being close to our very being, living and moving within us

BIBLE NUTS & BOLTS: Gentiles

This passage is directed at an entirely non-Jewish audience. How did the story of Jesus spread beyond the Jewish people? As Paul journeyed through Asia and Europe, he brought the gospel to an ever wider and more diverse audience. Those people who were not Jewish were called Gentiles. One of the first conflicts in the early church was whether or not non-Jewish people could become Christian without first converting to Judaism. While Paul's audience was Jewish at the beginning of his ministry, he considered himself to be the apostle to the Gentiles, regardless of their adherence to Jewish law and tradition.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Prayer

Sometimes God can seem distant and silent. Prayer offers an opportunity for us to spend time in communion with God, praising God and sharing our deepest desires with

God. As one talks with someone to deepen a friendship, so we talk with God to deepen that bond.

Spirit & Truth

Youth Team Volunteer,

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted

and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18

This is one of my favorite verse. Paul wanted the people of Athens to know God, the one true God who created the world and everything in it. God is not some distant God that is far away. He is close to us and wants us to be close to Him. We can go to Him in prayer anytime we want. What a wonderful gift!

Blessings,

The Youth Team