

Pastor Jason Mecum | Acts 17 | 09.17.2023
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“Agnostos Theos”

Altars to unknown gods

In today's message, we see how Paul ends up alone in a foreign land, without friends or supplies, surrounded by lost people worshiping false gods. There is a parallel connecting ancient Athens to our present time: we live in a world dominated by a culture that makes truth subjective and encourages us to follow our own gods. Suppressing the truth because of their unrighteousness (**Romans 1:18**), people today are content with creating their own versions of God or simply pretending that He doesn't exist.

Yet, even in modern times, ignorance of the law isn't a defense to breaking the law. Paul points out to the people of Athens that even their own poets and philosophers have recognized God and have accurately described His attributes, even if they didn't know who He is. God's fingerprints are evident in Creation and clearly perceivable to everyone living in it (**Psalms 19:1**).

Paul's spirit is stirred when he witnesses the level of idolatry in Athens firsthand because he knows that these people are completely lost and facing God's wrath (**Matthew 11:20-24**). Paul knows that God is simply holding His wrath back for a time (**2 Peter 3:9**) and all will be held to account, whether they believe it or not (**Matthew 12:36-37**).

- What is your response as you go through this world and encounter people who are completely blind to God?
- What would the Enemy want us to do in those times of tension?
- What would the Holy Spirit want us to do?

When given the opportunity to speak to the intellectual elites and atheists, Paul takes his shot. As believers, we will sometimes find ourselves in a similar situation where we are given an opportunity to witness when we weren't looking for it. When that opportunity appears, we will feel that tension that wants to keep us within our comfort zone.

Remember this: Paul didn't have to try and invent some fantastic sermon to convince these people. He used what was around him, which God had already put into place. Paul focused on this abstract idea of an “unknown god” but whether he knew it or not, the Athenians had a historical connection that would have resonated when Paul mentioned it. God was already working.

The Holy Spirit will call people to Himself, we only need to use our testimony to point people to Him. You never know what “altars to unknown gods” your audience may have in their past.