

To Trust God Is To Know God — ACTS 17:16-34

Sermon Discussion Guide - July 24, 2022

Intro Question:

What are some of the things that our culture “worships” or trusts in? What are some things that it presents us to trust in, making promises to satisfy our deepest desires or give us true freedom?

I. TRUST IN IDOLS

Read VS 16-23

- It's obvious from the passage that these Athenians were worshippers, but didn't know of the one true God. Read the quote below by Tim Keller. Discuss the quote, the reality of everyone being a worshipper, and what idols do to any who worship them.
- Read from the list below, “Deepest Desires” and “Common Idols of the Heart.” Go around and share 1-2 things that you tend to love or trust in too much?

II. TRUST IN GOD

Read VS 24-34

- Imagine you were there listening to Paul saying these things and you had never heard them before. What truths about God would be most attractive or amazing?
- How does knowing that God has “fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness” motivate us to be honest about our sin now, to repent, and look toward a Savior.
- VS 31 points to the reality that Jesus was raised from the dead. Some of them believed this (VS 34). How does that reality change the way God will deal with all their and our sin and struggle with idols of the heart?
- How does soaking in God's abundant love and grace motivate us to put to death things we love or trust in too much? What do you want God to work on in your life right now?

Quote by Tim Keller

“Everyone has to live for something, and if that something is not God, then we are driven by that thing we live for – by overwork to achieve it, by inordinate fear if it is threatened, deep anger if it is being blocked, and inconsolable despair if it is lost. So the novelist David Foster Wallace, not long before his suicide, spoke these words to the 2005 graduating class at Kenyon College:

‘Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship...is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough...Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you...Worship power, you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. But the insidious thing about these forms of worship is...they're unconscious. They are default settings.’”

General Deepest Desires:

- To be loved and accepted
- Purpose, to be part of something larger, transcendence
- Relationship: valued, to pursue and to be pursued, to be in community or family; • Impact, significance
- Honor, respect valued, understood, virtuous
- To protect and provide, to be protected and provided for, security
- To come through: duty, honor, to hear “Well done!”
- Beauty and creativity; transcendence
- Justice, truth, and freedom
- Peace, wholeness, completion, home, belong

Common Idols of the Heart:

Life has meaning for me or I have self worth:

Power Idolatry – ...if I have power and influence over others.

Approval Idolatry – ...if I am loved and respected by others.

Comfort Idolatry – ...if I have a particular standard or quality of life.

Image Idolatry – ...if I have a particular look or body image.

Control Idolatry – ...if I get mastery over my life in particular areas.

Helping Idolatry – ...if people are dependent on me and need me.

Dependence Idolatry – ...if someone is there to protect me.

Independence Idolatry – ...if I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to care for others.

Work Idolatry – ...if I am highly productive by getting a lot accomplished. Achievement Idolatry – ...if I am being recognized for my accomplishments and excelling in life pursuits.

Materialism Idolatry – ...if I have a certain level of wealth and nice things.

Family Idolatry – ...if my kids and spouse are happy and especially happy with me.

Relationship Idolatry – ...if Mr. or Miss Right is in love with me.

Suffering Idolatry – ...I can only be happy in times when all is going well and I'm not suffering

Pleasure Addiction – ...if I have something fun and entertaining to look forward to in the future. Religious

Performance – ...if I am adhering to my religious moral codes.

How to Identify Idols of the Heart

Daydreams - What do I most care about?

Nightmares - What do I most fear losing?

Prayers - What do I most want from God?

Imagination - Where do my thoughts go in solitude?

Spending - What do I most invest in?

Emotions - What causes them to spin out of control?

Sundays - What do I worship on the weekends?