

18 Acts 17:16-34 Philosophical debates in Athens

In our quieter moments as we reflect on life we sometimes hear distant echoes of a better way. These 'echoes of Eden' are evidences of how our lives still resound with something of the image of God despite being disfigured by sin.

As Paul wends his way around the city of Athens he hears the echoes of Eden in the people's worship of idols. Alert to his surroundings, his careful observations shape his message when invited to address a group of the thinkers at the Areopagus. The city's altar to the unknown god reveals the deeply imbedded truth that worship remains a vital part of who they are. However, the one true God of the Bible is unknown to them. This is also true for many people today. When we stop worshipping the true God it is not that we don't worship anything, instead we find something else to build our lives around.

The Athenian's worship was distorted by ignorance. An incorrect knowledge of God leads to incorrect worship. The most obvious distortion of our internal instinct to worship is that we end up worshipping ourselves and acting as though God exists to meet our needs.

We need to grow in our knowledge of God because this will transform our lives more than any other thing.

Many idols to unknown gods are still worshipped today. Identifying them opens up connections with our surrounding culture. Like Paul, we can then challenge these false gods by declaring that God is the explanation for the universe, that he is not far from us, and that he has appointed a 'man' approved by the resurrection.

Pray:

- For an increased awareness of the false gods worshipped in our culture today.
- For opportunities, wisdom, sensitivity and boldness in exposing the lies upon which people are building their lives.