



“Idols and Image Bearers: God’s Heart for Chicago” Acts 17:16-34

KNOW

- Read Acts 17:16–31. What does Paul emphasize about who God is and what He is like? Which truth deepens or corrects your view of Him?
- Paul was “deeply distressed” by the idols of Athens (v.16), yet he moved toward the people rather than away from them. What does this reveal about God’s heart toward a sinful city?
- In verses 24–29, Paul presents God as Creator, Lord, Giver of Life, and the One people were made to seek. How do these truths challenge the idols of self-sufficiency, control, achievement, or pleasure?

FOLLOW

- Pastor Jon said, “*Paul is disturbed by what he sees in Athens, but he never becomes disgusted with the people of Athens.*” Where are you most tempted to see someone’s sin or worldview before seeing them as image of bearer of God?
- What are some idols in your own life or in our city? **Use the sermon’s diagnostic:** What do you sacrifice for, fear losing, build your identity around, or believe will finally satisfy or save you?
- Paul began with common ground: *spiritual longing*, *shared humanity*, and *shared image-bearing*. Think of someone who sees the world very differently from you. What genuine common ground could help you listen well and begin a meaningful conversation?
- Which “assumption to avoid” most challenges you: *assuming people understand Christian language*, *assuming they can follow how we explain the Bible*, or *assuming they already see the Bible as authoritative*? How could you communicate more clearly?

REFLECT

- “*Meeting people where they are means loving them enough to understand them before expecting them to understand us.*” What would practicing this kind of patience and humility look like in one of your relationships this week?
- Paul changed his language without changing the truth (v.22–31). How can we speak about Jesus with clarity and compassion while still being honest about repentance, judgment, the resurrection, and faith?
- Practice the five movements of God’s story together: *Creation*, *Relationship*, *Rebellion*, *Rescue*, and *Response*. How would you explain the gospel using those five words in about one minute?

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

- Where have you grown critical, dismissive, or fearful toward people who do not believe or live like you?
- What idol is most competing for your trust, identity, affection, or obedience right now?

- Who is one person far from God that you will intentionally listen to, spend time with, pray for, or speak to about Jesus this week?

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Lord, show me the idols in my heart that are competing for Your....
- Lord, help me to see the people around me as image bearers by....
- Lord, give me wisdom and compassion to meet people where they are, especially....
- Lord, give me courage and an opportunity this week to share Your story with....

MEMORY VERSE:

- 1 Peter 3:15 (CSB) — *“But in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”*