

Sermon Discussion Guide:

Having a Heart for God and the Lost

Sunday, June 18, 2023

Scripture: **Acts 17:16–21**

Series: **The Spirit & The Church**

OVERVIEW

Paul's next stop on his second missionary journey is Athens, one of the oldest and most influential cities of his day. Here we see not only Paul's strategy for reaching the lost with the good news about Jesus but also his heart for those who are worshipping the wrong things.

A true love for God will always produce a true love for sinners.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When Paul saw that Athens was full of idols, Paul's spirit was provoked within him. In other words, he was grieved and deeply distressed because he loved these lost sinners. What is your posture toward the world? Hardness and indifference? Hostility and defensiveness? Pride and arrogance? Warmth and love? A combination of these? What does your posture toward lost sinners reveal about your love for God? Practically speaking, how can you grow in your love for the lost?
2. What are the idols of our day? What are some of the visible monuments to those idols? What are some of the less visible but just as real idols of the world around us?
3. What are some of the good things that we—as believers—tend to idolize, worship, or live for that displace our worship of God? How do passages like Psalm 135:15-18, and Exodus 20:1-4 help us repent and put God back on the throne of our hearts?
4. How does your own proneness to wander from worshipping God help you look toward lost sinners with compassion rather than arrogance? How does it deepen your love for God? Read Romans 2:3-4.
5. Motivated by his love for God and for the lost, Paul's strategy for sharing the good news about Jesus was to engage in the synagogues with the Jews and those who worshipped God, but he also took the good news to the marketplace to people who did not know God's Word. Do you have different approaches for reaching these two very different types of people? What is your marketplace? What are some new marketplaces you can explore?
6. What else provoked your spirit within from this sermon? Pray as a group for opportunities to dialogue with all kinds of people about Jesus and the resurrection and to patiently lead them from curiosity to conviction to conversion.