

We Are His Offspring

In this week's text from Acts, Paul says that we are all God's offspring (Acts 17:28.) Don't miss the context of this verse and fail to take the Holy Spirit in Paul seriously! Paul is speaking to what we could truly call pagans in one real sense. People worshiping all kinds of various gods and shrines made of "gold, silver, or stone", and "image[s] formed by the art and imagination of mortals", in all kinds of religious ways, (Acts 17:22-24, 29.)

What modern objects and idols do you see others worshiping in a very religious way in your world of relationships? Go ahead and talk about some of them with your group now.

Paul then finds a wise way to proclaim this one and only true God [Father, Son and Spirit] as their God, and the One whom they worship, unknowingly, by pointing to the inscription of "an unknown God" on one of their altars. (Acts 17:23.) He also says to them that even some of their own pagan poets have properly stated the Good News about themselves and everyone by writing 'In him we live and move and have our being', and 'For we too are his offspring.' (Acts 17:28.) He makes even more plain the fact that the pagan Athenians are his brothers and sisters by saying "Since we are God's offspring..." (Acts 17:29) we ought not think he is something other than Who he is. By implication Paul is also saying we human beings ought not think of ourselves as someone we really aren't either!

What is shocking about what Paul is saying here, and why would this be Good News concerning your specific family, friends and neighbors who appear to be "pagans"?

Paul really gives us pause to think we he says that because of us all being God's offspring, and having our life, movement, and being in him, we all are commanded to repent!

In the light of all Paul has said so far, and because "repent" means "to change one's mind" from the Greek "metanoeo"), what are we, all of God's offspring, all of humanity, suppose to repent of?

And if that wasn't enough, right when we want to turn "repent" in to a whip of negative judgment for striking fear into the heart of others and motivating them wholly by fear, Paul says, "because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31)

Good Gravy! Do you hear what the Spirit is saying to all his offspring (aren't offspring "children"? Related? hmmm.)

Who does Paul say will be judged in righteousness (right relationship?) By Whom will they be judged? What is this judgment he is supposed to "give" to all people? What is our "proof" of this Good News and to what do we look as a sign of God's intentions for all of humanity?

Real Challenge: If all people are commanded to repent, what does this also say about everyone?!

Finally, try to think out loud with your group about specific things you can say and do to your pagan brothers and sisters (God the Trinity's offspring!), in our culture, that would be in principle what Paul said and did to the pagans in his world.

~ Tim Brassell