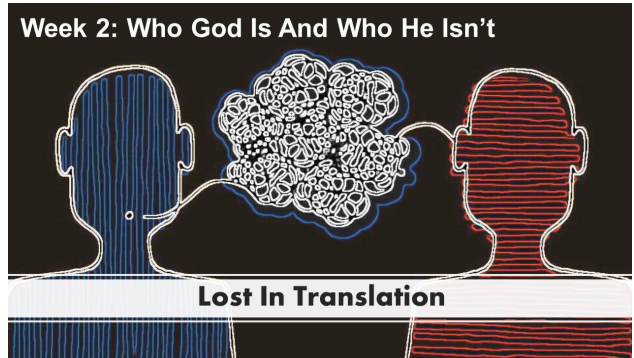


Lost in Translation (Week 2): Who God Is and Who He Isn't

Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less

1) When you read Paul's speech to the Areopagus as a 21st-century American Christian, you're struck both by what he emphasizes and what he doesn't - for example, there is no explicit mention of the incarnation (deity and humanity of Jesus), sin, the cross, or atonement.



2) This week, we're going to pay attention to the attention paid to who God is and who God isn't.

3) First, Paul says God isn't served, manipulated, or coerced through what we do at temples, as if He were a chaotic, unpredictable force needing to be placated or convinced to act on our behalf.

4) Instead, the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition is a giver by nature, not someone from whom we must struggle to get anything (see James 1.17).

5) Second, Paul says God isn't regional or territorial, the possession of one people over and against another, the champion of some and not others.

6) Instead, God is the Lord of all people, no exceptions, and God is working His creative good everywhere for everyone.

7) As reformed thinker Abraham Kuyper put it, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence which God, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

8) Likewise, Paul is proclaiming what Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian Christian novelist would write simply 1800 years later: "God is the same everywhere."

9) Last, God's nature and character is impossible for human beings to grasp, even with the very best of our reasoning and artistic expression.

10) In contrast, the God portrayed in scripture is better, greater, and more benevolent than even the very best we might imagine Him to be.

For this Week

1) Scripture reading this week:

- On God not needing our offerings and sacrifices, see [Psalm 50.7-15 NRSVA](#)
- On what God wants from us, rather than offerings, sacrifices, and other religious rites: [Psalm 51.16-17 NRSVA](#) and [Isaiah 1.10-17 NRSVA](#)
- On God being greater than our ability to express in an idol or artistic physical form: [Isaiah 40.12-26 NRSVA](#)

2) A short, simple sermon from a small UCC church in MA on God being greater than our words and imaginations: [God Is Bigger Than We Can Imagine!](#)

3) A leading American New Testament scholar on the clear N.T. claim that Jesus/God is Lord, which means Caesar is not: [If Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not | Scot McKnight](#)

4) A thoughtful article entitled "[5 Things God Is Not](#)"

5) A devotional on God being a giver as an expression of His love for us: [God Gave](#)