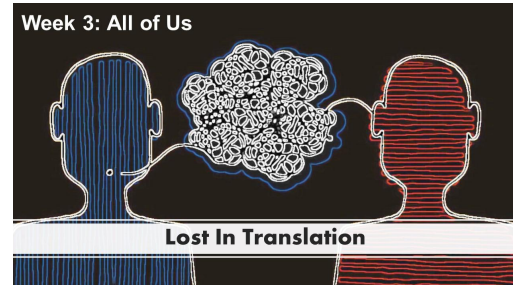<u>Lost in Translation (Week 3): All of Us</u>

Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less

1) A second key emphasis in Paul's presentation of Christianity to the ruling council of Athens can be found in his repeated use of plural or encompassing verbiage (no less than 10 times between verses 24 and 30).

2) As also portrayed elsewhere in Paul's writings (like Romans 1-8), this is meant to show Christianity as an egalitarian, inclusive, and universal faith: it is for everyone everywhere, not merely for a chosen few, it is about all of us, it shows us that we are the same, and that we have so much in common.

3) As the late Desmund Tutu, archbishop of South Africa, put it, "We (Christians) are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome. We all belong to this family, the human family, God's family."

4) Paul declares that every single human being shares the same lineage, making us more the same than we are different, and that God cares deeply about the welfare of all territories and peoples, not only our own or those who hold power like Rome (see Acts 17.26, as well as Eph. 3.14-15).

5) He says that we all share a universal pattern to our spiritual lives, from the most devoted among us to the least: we all seek God, whether we know it or not, we all "grope" in the dark to touch Him, and we all hope that our seeking pays off with discovering and "finding" Him (see Acts 17.27-28a).

6) The great apostle himself saw his own relationship with God as a seeking and discovering dynamic, a pressing on toward that which he had not attained or experienced yet (see Phil. 3.12-14).

7) Happily, we search and hope to find a God "in whom we live, move, and have our being," and "who is not far from each of us," again regardless of our status, education, privilege, or religious background (see Acts 17.27-28a).

8) As C. S. Lewis once wrote, "We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him...The real labor is to watch. In fact, to come awake. Still more, to remain awake."

9) A third and final universal truth that Paul highlights is that we are all God's "offspring" (Acts 17.28b-29a): we all possess a divine spark, a signature of God's presence and goodness, and we are all children of our heavenly Father, who loves us so.

10) We see in Paul that Christianity rightly communicated should sound like good news, not bad news, applicable to all (from religious to irreligious, from rich to poor, from our country to your country, etc.), uniting us in our common humanity.

For this Week

1) Scripture reading for the week - about the inclusive, universal, equalizing good news of Christianity:

- Read both halves of Ephesians 2 (1.10 and 11-22) and note how universal its perspective is...we all have the same problem, we all have the same solution, we are all being built together in God's new temple and people: Eph 2 NRSVA
- Read through the first eight chapters of Romans and pay attention to every way Paul levels the playing field, and lumps all human beings into the same boat, e.g., all of us have access to God's truth (either through the O.T. law or our own conscience) in Rom. 2, we all defy that truth in Rom. 3, we are only saved through faith in God's grace in Rom. 3-4, and so on: Rom 1-8 NRSVA

2) A book excerpt in which the late Desmund Tutu beautifully describes our one human family, God's family: God Has a Dream by Desmond Tutu

3) A thoughtful piece on how we are all seekers, and how a key facet of Christian mission to make room for those who seek and aren't sure: To Spiritual Seekers, Doubters And Abandoners: We'll Hold A Place For You

4) A book excerpt in which the late Henri Nouwen talks about being God's beloved child as our core, deepest, and truest identity: A Child of God by Henri Nouwen

5) Two songs about being one human family together, the first an old Methodist hymn, the second a gospel tune performed by a children's choir...Enjoy!: One human family God has made StF 687 and One Human Family