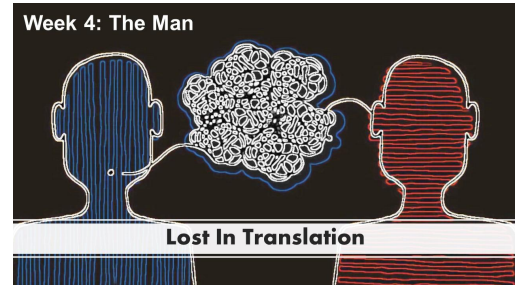


Lost in Translation (Week 4): The Man

Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less



1) We've arrived this Sunday at the climax of Paul's presentation about Christianity to an entirely-unversed audience - it's what will linger with them longest or most, it's his finishing flourish (17.30-31).

2) No surprise, the person of Jesus takes center stage in his crescendo, simply dubbed "The Man God has appointed," probably due to the Athenians' complete lack of awareness of the person of Jesus.

3) The latest findings of a long-form, longitudinal study on Americans and Christianity by The Barna Group would suggest that American Christianity has a serious messaging problem - that is, whatever we're communicating about Christianity, it doesn't seem like non-Christians are hearing Jesus.

4) In Jesus, Paul says "all people everywhere are now commanded to repent," this is the last of Paul's inclusive, universal statements that permeate his sermon.

5) To repent is to change your mind and to redirect yourself toward the life God offers in Jesus...it is an invitation, not a threat.

6) To repent and follow Jesus is a lifelong journey, as applicable to longtime Christians as it is to those who aren't, and one is left to wonder whether or not American Christianity's messaging problem is at least in part due to the fact that we ourselves have not been consistently challenged to change and grow by Jesus.

7) Paul makes two assertions about why we should repent and follow Jesus: first, it's because God has committed Himself to steering history toward His great end in Jesus (He has "fixed a day," Paul says).

8) For the Christian, human history isn't indeterminate nor is it doomed, but instead, as New Testament scholar N. T. Wright puts it, "Jesus is the resolution to a story (history) in search of a completion."

9) Second, Paul says that we should change course and follow after Jesus because God will "judge the world in righteousness through Him": biblically, God's judgment is not punishment, retribution, or retaliation, but instead more about seeking justice, telling the truth, exposing what's hidden, and ultimately rehabilitating and redeeming us (see the two articles below to read more on this).

10) The proof or validation that Jesus is who Paul says He is, and that God will do through Him what the apostle claims, is the resurrection.

Explore More This Week

- Want to rethink your understanding of God's "judgment" and return to a more biblical way of understanding the subject? These two devotionals from the United Church of Christ will be a big help: [Redeeming Holy Judgment](#) and [Here Comes the Judge](#)
- One of the key functions of our creeds is to ground us in what matters most, and to point us in the right direction as we start to ask new and/or hard questions. Check out the PCUSA's Confession of 1967 addresses so much of what Paul did in this climax of his sermon - from the resurrection of Jesus, to God's righteous judgment of the world, to the good end toward which God is steering history (check out 9.10-11, 9.21, and 9.53-56 specifically): [confess67.pdf](#)
- Want to revisit what Trevor Hudson wrote about repentance as a way of life for all? Check out the video lesson that accompanies the chapter on repentance in "Seeking God": [Trevor Hudson - Changing Direction](#)
- Here's a summary of the most recent findings of that study from The Barna Group, mentioned at the start of the sermon: [Openness to Jesus Isn't the Problem—the Church Is](#)
- If you're interested in hearing more about the resurrection being God's validation of Jesus, check out part of the Easter sermon from 2023 (from 35:47 - 40:48) on this very subject: [Don't Start with Resurrection - Easter Sunday Service. - KirkWood Worship 2023-04-09](#)
- A presentation by New Testament scholar N. T. Wright on the intersection of Jesus, God's redemption, resurrection, and the future of the world (very much in line with that Paul is saying in Acts 17.30-31): [N. T. Wright on the Future of the World](#)