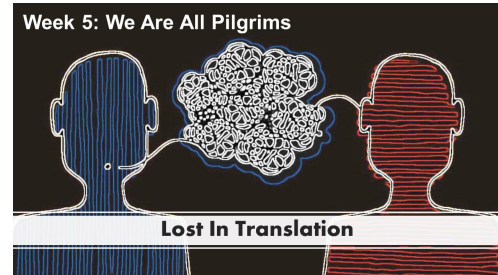


## Lost in Translation (Week 5): We Are All Pilgrims

### **Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less**

1) We finished our series yesterday by focusing on a single verse that offers us a model for engaging non-Christians in meaningful spiritual dialogue - Acts 7.27.



2) The first half of that verse is Paul stating a universal human truth, equally applicable to believers and non-believers we all seek God, we all fumble around in the dark for Him, we all can discover and find Him.

3) All human beings seek God both objectively and subjectively: we want to understand but we want to experience that which transcends understanding, we want answers but we also want the mystery of the questions lie beyond answers.

4) To become a trustworthy spiritual conversational partner for someone, view yourself as a fellow pilgrim with them: pilgrim spirituality is in motion, on the move toward greater clarity of the sacred, from what is known to what might not be.

5) In other words, become a practitioner of centered set Christianity, not closed set Christianity: be in motion toward Jesus at the center and invite others to join you in that journey instead of worrying who's "in the set" and who's not.

6) A final feature of helping others seek and find God is to start by affirming what they already believe, wonder, or feel instead of focusing on where you disagree with them (at least seven times in his sermon to the ruling council of Athens, you see Paul doing this).

7) This runs parallel with Jesus' own methodology: He befriended, spent time with, and loved overtly sinful people while rarely and/or gently pointing out their sin, only reserving His ire for the self-righteous.

8) The second half of Acts 17.27 stresses another important principle that should underlie all our attempts to engage non-Christians in spiritual conversation: God is not far from any human being (in fact, "in Him we live, move, and have our being," see the very next verse, 17.28).

9) Thus, spiritual conversation is helping others wake up to how God is always calling to them.

10) If Christians take Acts 17.27 seriously as a paradigm for meaningful spiritual discussion with others, and prioritize being fellow seekers and pilgrims with others, we can conclude no better than Sri Lankan Methodist pastor D. Thambyrajah Niles: "Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

## **A Pilgrim's Prayer**

From a book we'll recommend below, here's a prayer to carry with you through the week - you can pray it with the plural nouns/pronouns for all of us, or in the singular for yourself:

The Pilgrim's Prayer (Rev. Paul Lang; The Pilgrim's Compass, 2019):

Lead us, Lord, by the restlessness of spiritual longing, by the hope of finding our true homes, by the yearning of a hungry heart.

Lead us, Lord, so that we neither dally nor delay nor turn aside nor stand still nor stumble nor turn back in loyalty to our deficient old gods.

Lead us, Lord, by the discomfort in our souls, by the hope of finding what's really real, and by the yearning for something more.

Lead us, Lord, as a felt Presence, as a constant companion, as a counselor in our perplexity, and as our most loyal friend.

And lead us, Lord, so we don't forget You or wander away, but remains faithful to You, joyful and true on our journey with You and toward You, amen.

## **Resources For You**

- A great, easy to read book about pilgrim spirituality: [The Pilgrim's Compass: Finding and Following the God We Seek: Lang, Paul H.](#)

- Several great books for the seekers in your life, who may not be Christians but are spiritually curious and who are asking a lot of great questions:

[Finding Faith: A Self-Discovery Guide for Your Spiritual Quest: McLaren, Brian D.](#)

[Born to Wonder: Exploring Our Deepest Questions-Why Are We Here and Why Does It Matter?: McGrath, Alister](#)

[Broken Signposts: How Christianity Makes Sense of the World: Wright, N. T.](#)

- For those who have previous poor experiences with Christianity: [The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian: McLaren, Brian D.](#)

- For those who struggle with doubt: [Faith After Doubt: Why Your Beliefs Stopped Working and What to Do About It: McLaren, Brian D.](#)