

Sent | Continuing Jesus' Mission in the World

May 2: This Week Along the Way | Athens



More about Athens

Athens was a center of culture, art, and religion long before Paul's time. Before the Romans conquered Athens, it was a marvel of the ancient world, and during Roman rule wealthy Romans would take vacations to Athens to take in the Greek culture that they tried to emulate.

When Paul came to Athens, he would have seen amazing buildings (some of which still stand to this day) and shrines to every God that could be imagined, from the pantheon of Greek Gods and Goddesses to idols from other peoples and cultures. Acts 17 records that Paul was distressed by the idols the Athenians worshipped and gave an impassioned argument for the worship of the one true God. Paul's visit to Athens was one of the most challenging of his missionary career. Besides sharing the gospel in a fully foreign culture, he also arrived alone, while Silas and Timothy remained in Macedonia.

Readings for the Week of May 2

Monday | Romans 1:18-32

Tuesday | Romans 2:1-11

Wednesday | Romans 3:21-31

Thursday | Romans 4:1-12

Friday | Acts 18:18-28

WELCOME (15 minutes)

As we gather this week, share a favorite author, movie, artist, or poet. What draws you to that particular work or that creator?

WORSHIP (20 minutes)

This week we are going to be led into prayer and worship by Romans 5:1-5. Read the portion of scripture together and then pray together using the prayer prompts provided:

Read Together: “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.” (Romans 5:1-2a)

Spend a few moments in prayer together, praising God for his salvation in Jesus Christ and for the grace of God in which we stand.

Read Together: “And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.” (Romans 5:2b)

Spend a few moments together in prayer, affirming our hope in God’s glory and goodness in the dark times. Specifically bring to God hard times and express your hope in Christ.

Read Together: “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3-4)

Spend a few moments praying for perseverance, character, and hope in each other’s sufferings, and the sufferings of Christians in our church and around the world.

Read Together: “And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:5)

Close in prayer together by spending a few moments praising God and the Holy Spirit for God’s love poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Connect Groups and Spiritual Friends

WELCOME | WORSHIP | WORD | WITNESS

WORD (40 minutes)

Read Aloud: Acts 17:16-32

What strikes you in what the passage says?

What struck you in the sermon?

What difference does the cross make in this story?

Where does this passage apply to your life right now?

What is a faithful response to this passage this week?

WITNESS (15 minutes)

We read that Paul was distressed by the idolatry in Athens. Are we distressed by the idolatry around us and the ways that other idols and Gods lead people away from the one true living God? Take a few moments at the end of the session to reflect on how we individually and corporately can respond to idolatry.

- What are the kinds of idolatry that are around us? Both literal idols and other things that are worshipped (success, beauty, money, etc...) What do you think are biggest idols in West Seattle and Seattle as a whole?
- How can the church respond or speak into those idols?
- What is (or should be) the message of the church in the midst of a culture of idolatry?
- How can we live out that message in grace and compassion?
- What is a next step for us as the church and us personally in response to idolatry?