

**Subject: *The Truth about Sin***

**Scripture: *Acts 17:22-34***

Paul preached the truth to people who needed to hear it. This is truth that all people need to hear. First, he preached the truth about God. Second, he preached the truth about sin. In fact, Paul preached to them about specific sins they had done.

Now Paul preached he could have called them out for many different sins. Athens was a major city that attracted many visitors and travelers, and like other major cities then and now, sin was available and plentiful. For example, we read this in Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth.

*1 Corinthians 6:9-11* <sup>9</sup> Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, <sup>10</sup> Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

When Paul preached at Athens, he didn't mention most things on that list, but he did tell them about sins that may not seem like sins, such as idolatry (vs. 16), neglecting the one true God, the sin of not seeking God (vs. 27), the sin of dishonoring God (vs. 28-30). The Bible describes all kinds of sin: sins of the flesh and sins of the spirit, sins of action and sins of attitude, intentional sins and sins of ignorance, sins of commission and sins of omission. Let's take a look at the sins of the Athenians.

**1. The sin of idolatry (vs. 16)** – This is the worship of false gods. It is a sin against the First Commandment, *Exodus 20:3* *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* When Paul first came to Athens he may not have planned to preach, but his spirit was stirred when he saw the city saturated with idols and false worship. Idolatry was common in Bible times and it is common in our time. Some people believe there is nothing wrong with idolatry, and that people are just worshiping in the way they were taught or brought up. Worship of false gods is offensive to the one true God.

The first century church confronted idolatry as a sin and challenged them to repent and turn to the one true God. See *Acts 14:8-17* (Paul and Barnabas at Lystra). Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica and describes what happened there, *1 Thessalonians 1:9* *For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*

**2. The sin of neglecting and not seeking the one true God (vs. 23, 26-27)**

In their search for something “new” the people of Athens had overlooked the truth about God and made an altar to “the Unknown God.” They should have known the one true God because He has revealed Himself in several ways: He has revealed Himself in the physical world. *Psalms 19:1* *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.* The heavens give evidence of a great God, a powerful God, an orderly God, and a wise God. He is a transcendent God, above and beyond us. But He is also a God who is near and is not very far from every one of us. Yet man does not think about God and seek God. *Romans 3:10-11* <sup>10</sup> *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:* <sup>11</sup> *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

**3. The sin of dishonoring God (vs. 28-30)**

People should honor God as Creator and Provider, but they don't. Instead of honoring God they dishonor Him. See *Romans 1:20-23*.