

Text: Ac 17.23

Proposition: All men everywhere are built for the worship of God.

This afternoon I want to touch on another theme found in the book, *Instructing a Child's Heart*, by Tedd and Margy Tripp.

We will start with what might be an unusual text:

Ac 17.23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

The next thing I'd like to do is give you the opening quote from the chapter, "Giving Children a Vision for the Glory of God."

"Children are instinctively worshipers. They are glory givers. It isn't a conscious decision on their part; they are hard-wired for worship."¹

That is a bold proposition. Let's change the word "children" to "people."

What do you think? Do you think that is true?

The Tripps go on to say this:

"they are worshippers. They are made in the image of God. They are uniquely designed for worship. Their eyes and ears and imaginations are receptors for seeing the glory of God in all that he has made so they can respond with worship, adoration, and love."²

Yet in our text, we see the Athenians worshipping many gods, not the True God, and even going to the extent of putting up an altar to the "unknown god" in case they missed one.

In our own culture, the gods of wood and stone are pretty well finished. In the minds of many people, worship is passé. We've "evolved" beyond that, they think.

Our proposition is this:

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¹ Tedd Tripp and Margy Tripp, *Instructing a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2008), 93.

² Tripp and Tripp, 93.

Of course, we know that most men everywhere don't worship the True God. But they do worship. So let's think about that.

I. After the fall, the perverted heart of man substituted false worship for true (Rm 1.21-23)

"[The lost] don't cease worship, they simply worship something other than God."³

A. Those created in the image of God delight in amazement

1. The simple pagans were amazed at their world
 - a. There must be a god in that thunder
 - b. There must be a god in the forces that cause crops to grow
 - c. There must be a god who becomes angry at us when famine comes
 - d. And so on...
2. Science freed men from superstition, but doesn't satisfy the desire for amazement

So, in our culture...

- a. We are amazed at the feats of superstar athletes
- b. We are amazed at the performance of talented musicians
- c. We are amazed at the daring of our leaders (at least some of the time)
- d. We are amazed at our most excellent selves

"This is uniquely human. There are no diving competitions for penguins in the Antarctic. They dive from massive ice flows, barely breaking the water, and yet no one scores them. ... there is no award ceremony...

"A brown bear grabs a salmon from the raging Columbia River. No bears line the shores applauding. Little bears

³ Tripp and Tripp, 94.

don't idolize Big Brown. They don't hang posters of him in their dens."⁴

To quote one of my old professors, "I speak as a fool."

"Idolizing greatness is innately human."⁵

3. What things in our world dazzle our imagination (stir us to worship)?
- Power and influence
 - Pride and performance
 - Possessions
 - Pleasure and sensuality
 - Fear of man and desire for approval
 - Friendship
 - Being 'in the know' (a Covid idol for sure)

"When you think of idols of the heart, don't think of scandalous sins. Think of harmless hobbies in which [people] will invest vast amounts of time. Think of the daydreams that provide excitement to a heart that is not finding true and lasting pleasures in knowing God."⁶

II. To the fallen, the converted hearts of believers must preach the glory of God (Ps 63.1-6)

The Tripp's cite many psalms in this section, speaking of the glory of God. We will look at just one.

- A. We know these things to be true
- Nothing satisfies like God satisfies – we get great spiritual relief from knowing and loving God
 - Nothing has more power and glory than God has – when we bow in amazed worship of God, we bow before the GREATEST power of all

⁴ Tripp and Tripp, 94.

⁵ Tripp and Tripp, 94.

⁶ Tripp and Tripp, 97.

3. No one loves like God loves: he gave his own Son save us from our sins – we praise him and serve him in humble gratitude

4. Our God is great, there is no life without him

B. How do we preach the greatness and glory of God

1. Well, with words, sermons, Bible studies, conversations: the “foolishness of preaching”

2. And with how we live our lives

C. Consider some examples

1. When trouble comes into your life, how do you interpret it?

a. “Nothing ever goes right for me.”

b. “Lord, you know, I will trust you through this hard time.”

Which attitude preaches the glory of God?

2. When we allow sinful habits to dominate our lives

a. Are we saying that temporary pleasures are better than the pleasures that come from walking with God?

b. Are we saying that we can't rest satisfied in God?

3. When we put a priority on earthly activities over faithful worship, what do we communicate?

“I have observed children coming to church in their Little League uniforms. At 11:55, the family quietly slips out of the Lord's Day worship service. The game starts at noon and the coach won't play anyone who is late. The church is gathered to exult in God's glory and to hear his Word. The pastor is opening the Word of God. Just as he is getting to the application, an entire family leaves the church because there is something more time sensitive — the child's participation in Little League. If this child concludes that life is found in knowing God it will be in spite of, not because of, his parent's examples.”⁷

⁷ Tripp and Tripp, 106.

4. What is the answer for us, in our modern world: “We must be dazzled by God” (Tripp)

D. How do we become effective preachers of God’s glory?

1. Saturate your life with God’s Word

a. Sermons

b. Hymns

c. Audio/video

d. Christian biographies

2. Meditate on God’s Word

3. Communicate God’s Word: tell others what God is doing for you

Conclusion:

Proposition: All men everywhere are built for the worship of God.

Yes, “all men” includes you.

If you will give yourself to these things, you will find your life communicates the grace of God to others every day.