

INTRO

- When you think of worship, what comes to mind?

READ

Acts 14:8-18

Acts is about the mission and ministry of Jesus continuing through his Spirit and his Church, and followers of Jesus today are called to participate in this unstoppable movement Jesus began.

REFLECT & RESPOND

In Paul's second sermon (as Luke records in Acts 14), he takes a different approach to connecting with his non-Jewish, polytheistic audience. After performing a miracle, the crowd wants to divinize Paul & Barnabas. Paul takes the opportunity to bring them the good news to "turn from these worthless things to the living God." In this account, we see our human nature is made to worship, but our worship often goes wrong when we misdirect our worship. Worship that's misdirected is called idolatry—the extreme admiration, love or reverence for something/someone.

Qu: what does it mean to say we are made to worship? What about non-religious people, how do they worship?

Worship is less about liturgy and more about looking—who/what is the object of our focus, admiration, our love? We can worship almost anything, even good gifts that God gives us. For example, we idolize:

- **Work** when it becomes the thing we live for to feel successful or powerful.
- **Money** when we either have to have lots of it to feel secure and safe, or spend lots of it to feel significant and important.
- **Family**, when we prioritize our children's success and well-being above all else, strive to meet our parents' expectations above all else,

or strive to have a flawless marriage or find the "perfect" partner above all else.

When we do this or see this in society, it is a reminder that we are worshippers at our core.

Qu: what kind of things do you tend to look to for a sense of comfort, control, or approval?

Paul tries to redirect their worship toward the living God whom he describes as the benevolent Creator and Provider behind all they enjoy (rain, crops, food, joy). The term for this is **common grace**, an expression of the goodness of God to all people everywhere. Whereas idols and the gods demand more than they give, God gives more than we deserve.

However, to truly restore our worship and relationship with the Living God, we require more than just common grace. "God has come down to us in human form" in the person of Jesus, and he shows up in the ordinary and the extraordinary.

The same God who healed the crippled man also sends the rain. What the gospel does is make the miracle routine and the routine a miracle. — Eugene Peterson

Qu: what difference does it make in your life to know that God shows up in both ordinary and extraordinary ways?

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for discernment to identify anything in our lives that is rivalling God's place of authority;
- Pray for greater awareness of God's presence and action in our everyday lives.