
Witness Unhindered:
 “Superstition and the Living God”
 Acts 14: 8–23

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“No room remains empty for long. If God is driven out, the gods come trooping in.” – Lesslie Newbigin

“Idols are non-gods and as such are much more congenial to us than God, for we not only have the pleasure of making them, using our wonderful imaginations and skills in creative ways, but also of controlling them. They are gods with all the God taken out so that we can continue to be our own gods.”
 – Eugene Peterson

“Those who make idols become like them; so do all who trust in them. O Israel, trust in the LORD!”
 – Psalm 115: 8

“Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love . . . Salvation belongs to the LORD!” – Jonah 2: 8–9

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- What do you make of Peterson’s definition of idols in the quotation above?
 - What is the attraction of idols/gods, according to his definition? How do you experience that yourself or in the culture at large?
 - Why are idols “more congenial to us than God”? Does it remain that way for long? When do idols begin demanding rather than supplying, in your experience?
- The verse from Jonah pits the vanity of idols against the hope of steadfast love and salvation from the LORD.
 - Why are these two at odds with each other?
 - Why do folks persist with superstition and idolatry when the hope of steadfast love hangs in the balance?
- What is commendable and righteous about the folks in Lystra cashing in all their chips to worship Paul and Barnabas?
 - How does idolatry confuse the right action with the wrong object?
- Where is the battle raging for you with superstition and idolatry?
 - How are you fighting and struggling well?
 - Why is the fact of the good news of Jesus an absolute necessity for waging war with our idolatry?
- The sermon impressed upon us the need not only to *turn from* the vanity of lifeless gods but also the need to *turn to* the Living God.
 - What is the beauty and hope and good news of Jesus that captivates us and enables both the *turning from* and the *turning to*?