

. . . *apart from me you can do nothing* (John 15:5)

The invisible God, in whom we live and move and have our being, rules the world so that we would seek and find him.

A. Seeking the invisible God (1)

Every human being is *seeking* God whether he realizes this or not for we are all the offspring of God. Accordingly, our hearts are *restless* until they find rest in God. The sad reality of life, however, is that most human beings seek *substitute* gods instead of the one and only true God. Even *Christians* fall into this trap because they find it so difficult to live by faith alone, i.e. rightly get to know their God in the ups and downs of life, trust him alone, humbly and patiently submit to him, and expect all good from him alone.

B. Seeking the invisible God (2)

When Paul arrives in Athens he notices this seeking of substitute gods because he sees that the city is full of *idols* or given to idolatry. Idolatry is placing your trust in people or things in *addition* to or *instead* of the one and only true God. Wherever Paul walked and looked, he was *confronted* with this idolatry. And he felt greatly *distressed*, i.e. provoked to anger because he was jealous for the honor and reputation of God (cf. 1st petition of the Lord's Prayer). And so he *reasoned* in the synagogues with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. A group of *Epicurean* and *Stoic* philosophers began to dispute with him, and he with them. *Some* of the philosophers looked down on Paul as a second-rate intellectual. *Others* among them through he was advocating foreign gods because he was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. So they took Paul to a meeting of the *Areopagus*, a court or council responsible for the city's religion, morals and education, where they asked him to give a further account of his teaching.

C. The God whom we seek is the invisible God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and who rules the world so that we would seek and find him.

Standing in the meeting of the Areopagus, Paul then proclaimed the *God* whom every human being is seeking. His point of contact is the altar to the *Unknown* God he had seen in the city. This God is the *creator* of the universe (v. 24). Moreover, he is the *sustainer* of life (v. 25). Furthermore, he is the invisible *ruler* of the nations (vv. 26-28). The *Epicurean* philosophers were so remote from this world that they took no interest in this world and had any influence on what happened in this world. The *Stoic* philosophers believed that the world was determined by fate and that it was our duty to live in harmony with nature and reason in a self-sufficient manner. Paul, however, preaches that God is not remote from this world, but that this world and the people of this world live and move and have their being *in* God. When we preached on God being the eternal God, we saw that even though as the eternal one God transcends time, he *enters* time at each moment and invisibly permeate each moment of time with his eternity. Accordingly, we are *always* living in the dynamic and immediate presence of the invisible God. Thus, nature and the supernatural are not separated, but are *joined* together. The *Epicurean* philosophers taught that the world was ruled by chance. Paul preaches that this invisible God in whom we live and move and have our being *rules* this world. From one man he made every nation. Moreover, he *determined* where each nation should live. He does this so that we would *seek* after him and *find* him for he is not far from us. And when we do find him, God does not want us to commit *idolatry*, i.e. place our

trust in people or things in addition to God. For instance, he does not want us to make *idols* of this God so that we can manipulate him to do what we want him to do. For ultimately that is why the city of Athens was *smothered* with idols. Instead, God wants us to put our *faith* in him, i.e. i.e. rightly get to know their God in the ups and downs of life, trust him alone, humbly and patiently submit to him, and expect all good from him alone. When we do, we will find out that this God is not some impersonal force that rules the world, but the eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ who has become *our* God and Father in him. Accordingly, we can trust that he will daily open his hand and *provide* us with what is needful for that day. We can trust him that he will *turn* to our good whatever adversity he sends us in this life of sorrow. For he is *able* to do so as the almighty, invisible God in whom we live and move and have our being. And he is *willing* to do so as our faithful Father. **Reflect:** *How has the invisible God in whom you live and move and have your been ruling your life? How are you rightly getting to know your God in the ups and downs of your life, trust him, humbly and patiently submit to him, and expect all good from him alone? To what extent is their idolatry in your life? Where or how might you be trying to manipulate God into doing what you want him to do?*

D. The invisible God whom we seek has become visible in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The invisible God whom we seek has become *visible* in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is he who calls us to be *joined* to him through faith so that we can join him in living and moving and having our being in God in him. When we do, our restless hearts find *rest* in him.
Surrey Covenant Reformed Church

