

Playing it Safe

Scripture Reading — Acts 17:22-31

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
John 14:6 —

Yesterday we talked about ancestor worship practiced by many Chinese people. When I was in seminary, we did a survey interviewing people about this topic. To our surprise, only a minority of the people who practiced it really believed in spirits and gods. Most said they did it just in case, kind of like buying insurance.

The apostle Paul encountered the same attitude among the people of Athens. In addition to the many idol gods they already worshiped, they had even put up an altar “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.” They did not want to offend any gods, just in case they had missed one.

Paul noted that they were very religious. But it’s not enough to follow a religion; people need to know the one true God.

As the Bible teaches, we will find God if we seek him with all our heart (Jeremiah 29:13). Paul said, “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth ... He is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being.”

The people in Athens and those who practiced ancestor worship missed the whole point. By trying to play it safe, they actually cut themselves off from the way of salvation. Our God is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5), so we must make sure that no people, things, or ideas get between us and him.

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for showing us the way of salvation. Help us to remind one another that
“there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” Amen.

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