

Worshiping God in a Pagan World

Psalm 137:1 *Of David.*

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise;

² I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

³ On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased.

⁴ All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth,

⁵ and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.

⁶ For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.

⁷ Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.

⁸ The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands."

Psalms 138

All My Friends are Heathens

TWENTY-ONE PILOTS, one of the most commercially successful bands of the last decade (their song “Stressed Out” has nearly 1.4 billion views on YouTube), and consisting of a grand total of two people, both of whom were Christian homeschoolers, wrote a song for the DC Comics movie *Suicide Squad* (this song itself has a billion views). It opens, “All my friends are heathens, take it slow. Wait for them to ask you who you know. Please don’t’ make any sudden moves. You don’t know the half of the abuse.”

Now, as happens with songs, there are some interesting opinions about what these lyrics mean. It is just a song that they wrote to somehow fit with the movie? Kind of. The *Suicide Squad* is a team of incarcerated supervillains who carry out missions in exchange for reduced prison time. They actually are heathens. But the question was actually put to Tyler Joseph who wrote it.

“How did ‘Heathens’ come to be, because that was separate from the album?”

“David Ayer [writer and director] came to me about an idea for this movie he was making. ... I kind of went on my

own describing this other story when I'm taking my friend to a secret meeting where me and my other friends meet all the time and kind of giving him a warning speech before we get there of what to expect. In a lot of ways it went with the themes of the movie, but more so it was a comment on the fact that we were starting to get bigger, and pop-culture people were starting to know who we were and it was a kind of note or message to those people kind of warning or describing who our fans are, what these people are like, and they're special and they're different."¹

Given their background as Christians, this has then led to the speculation he is talking about their so-called “[skeleton clique](#)” which is like a fan-club for the band. Someone writes, “I can't help but believe the line ‘Wait for them to ask you who you know’ is referring to how he would prefer to wait for people to ask him about his beliefs or God rather than going straight at it, instead taking it slow...”² In their line of work, they really are surrounded

¹ “The TRUE meaning of ‘Heathens’ by TOP FINALLY,” posted by The Pop Song Professor, June 13, 2017, <https://youtu.be/Tw92fX7XLtY?t=181>.

² Josh Tyler, at Clifford Stumme, “Deeper Meaning of Twenty One Pilots’s ‘Heathens’: Witnessing and the Church?”, The Pop Song Professor (June 17, <https://www.popsongprofessor.com/blog/2016/06/17/deeper-meaning-of-twenty-one-pilotss-heathens-witnessing-and-the-church>

by heathens, but they feel an obligation to figure out ways to tell them about Christ, which is not easy when you are literally rock stars and the whole lifestyle that usually goes with it. I thought this little story would make for **an interesting segue way to the psalm** today which I believe helps us answer the question: *How we can worship God in a pagan world?*

The words pagan and heathen are virtual synonyms. The second definition of a **pagan** is “one who has little or no religion and who delights in sensual pleasures and material goods : an irreligious or hedonistic person.” The first definition of **heathen** is “Of or relating to people or nations that do not acknowledge the God of the Bible.”

Now, most do not realize that the word “pagan” actually seems to come from a late Latin term *paganus* meaning “villager, rustic; civilian, non-combatant.” There’s nothing evil about that. The religious sense, which is what we usually think of, “Is often said to derive from these people’s adherence to the old gods after the Christianization of Roman towns and cities.”³ The dictionary says it wasn’t applied to pantheists and nature-worshippers until 1908.

³ “Pagan,” Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/pagan>

“Heathen” comes from the old English word *hæðen* and it simply means not Christian or Jewish, or someone of a race of nation which does not acknowledge the God of the Bible.⁴ It’s roots are similar to “pagan” as it literally may just mean a “dweller on the heath, someone inhabiting uncultivated land.”

Why tell you all this? I am strongly convinced that the majority of the United States has become a full-fledged pagan and heathen land. It seems to me that these two words in *all* of their connotations perfectly describe the situation we are in today in America. Granted, it isn’t everywhere. The South is still clinging on to a kind of nominal Christianity. And our collective politic still holds the sham that of being “Christian.” You know, Presidents who don’t believe in their own sinfulness or that Jesus is God, stuff like that. My favorite example of this has to be Al Gore, that “inventor of the internet” and Pope of the modern day religious movement known as Environmentalism. What do I mean?

⁴ It merged with the Old Norse *heiðinn* (adj.) "heathen, pagan," of uncertain origin, and is a cognate with Old Saxon *bedhin*, Old Frisian *bethen*, Dutch *beiden*, Old High German *beidan*, German *Heiden*.

Well, this man who was voted “Baptist of the Year” in 2007 by EthicsDaily.com wrote in the Environmental Bible called *Earth in the Balance* very positively of something called the “Gaia hypothesis” where he sees the earth as a self-regulating system that has characteristics of something alive.⁵ Gaia, of course, of the Greek goddess Mother Earth. He discusses this after very positively affirming how in prehistoric Europe and much of the world, the religion was that of a single earth goddess who was assumed to be the fount of all life and who radiated harmony among all living things.⁶

Does that sound like good Baptist Christian theology to you? Of course not. But it is utterly pagan. And it represents the proliferation of non-Christian thinking, including the return of the gods that we are witnessing both in pop-culture through movies and books and in the cultural and moral activities we are engaging in as a people that were always associated with the gods. Basically, if you can find it forbidden in the Law of Moses, it is because it was an activity that was considered deeply religious and the Israelites were

⁵ Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance: Forging a New Common Purpose* (Routledge, repub. 2013), 264.

⁶ 260.

not to worship Yahweh in those ways. So let's move to the song and see how it relates to what I'm talking about here.

Psalm 138:

What? Worshipping God

First, a short comment on the “what” of the song. Psalm 138 tells you the kind of song it is in the first four words. “I give you thanks” (Ps 138:1). This is what the song is about. Later in the same verse it says, “I sing your praise.” It is a praise song, a worship song. And it is therefore teaching us about what it means to worship God.

Where? In the Midst of the Gods...

Next, we want to look at the where. This is the connection to heathenism and paganism. The song begins the last set of Davidic songs in the Psalter (138-145). Yet, because of its placement in Book V, the song was incorporated, probably by Ezra and the priests, to speak to their contemporary situation. It is actually a companion

song to 137 in some ways, but I had too much to tell you last week to preach them together. You may recall that Ps 137 speaks about weeping by the rivers of Babylon and having to sing the Lord's songs in a strange land.

The setting is similar here in Psalm 138. This is made clear in the first verse as well. “I will give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart, before the gods I sing your praise” (Ps 138:1). The phrase “before the gods” gives us the setting of the song, which is important to applying it correctly. This is a unique phrase in the Bible, though the idea of living beings called *elohim* (gods) is not unique at all.⁷

Most major English translations render it like the ESV does, as “gods.” This would certainly fit both the context of Babylon and their god **Marduk**, as well as earlier of David when he went to live with the Philistines who worshipped

⁷ In the Psalter alone:

Ps 29:1, “Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.”

Ps 47:1, “All you strong ones, clap your hands, acclaim, you gods, with shouts of joy” (Dahood).

Ps 68:1, “Sing, o gods, chant, o his heavens, pave the highway for the Rider of the Clouds” (Dahood).

Ps 82:1, “God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.”

Ps 96:4, “For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.”

Ps 97:7, “Worship him, all you gods!”

Ps 103:20, “Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word.”

Ps 148:2, “Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!”

Baal. Some, like the LXX, have “**angels**” instead. It still sees them as heavenly beings; but the psalmist is not thinking of singing before the courts of heaven—as is made clear in the next verse, for he has no access to this place as he would have thought about it.⁸ Some, Jewish translations and apparently the NIV (“**gods**” in quotations) render it as **idols**, but this is wholly unjustified as the word never means this. *Elohim* are living creatures; idols are not, they are their houses and means of depicting them. Other Jewish translations (along with Calvin and Matthew Henry) take it to refer to **human judges or kings**.⁹ This makes more sense of the setting in a foreign land, but no sense of the word *elohim*, as one scholar put it long ago this “**meaning is totally unnecessary.**”¹⁰ In other words, *elohim* is always explainable in every passage as a supernatural entity, even though people may not like it. And of course, that is its usually meaning in 99% of its

⁸ It is possible that “angels” simply became a replacement word for “elohim,” and that it is not trying to soften the meaning, but rather to explain it.

⁹ Judges/Mighty: Targum, JPS

Idols/ “gods”: CJB, NIV

Angel: LXX, VUL, NETS, NAB, NJB,

Heavenly Assembly: NET

Gods: NAS, YLT, TNK, ESV, ASV, BBE, GNV, KJV, RSV, NRS, NLT

¹⁰ **Cyrus Gordon**, “*elohim* in Its Reputed Meaning of Rulers, Judges,” *JBL* 54:3 (Sept 1935): 144. <http://www.dougvandorn.com/Gordon%20Elohim.pdf>. Gordon’s paper deals with the first meaning in the old BDB lexicon that *elohim* means “rulers/judges.” He shows that this is an absurd conclusion.

undisputed uses in the OT. So I believe, with people like Spurgeon, that the ESV, KJV, and others got it right. “I believe David referred to the false [as in treacherous] gods of the neighbouring nations, and the deities of the surviving Canaanites.”¹¹

This setting of being in a foreign land continues into the second verse. “I bow down toward your holy temple...” (Ps 138:2). Daniel is the quintessential model for this. “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously” (Dan 6:10). You see, he was in a strange land (Babylon), so he turned to home of his God far away in Jerusalem in the temple. Muslims still do this today when they pray towards Mecca and the Kaaba where they believe Allah resides.

The point here is that the psalmist is offering worship to the LORD in the presence of strange gods because he is in a land that is far away from the temple and Jerusalem. In this

¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150*, vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 243.

way, it seems very obvious that the song is directing both Israel and us to think about what it then means for us to worship God before the gods and the pagans. If we live around many heathens, people who are good, salt-of-the-earth folk, but who either worship other gods or simply are irreligious and hedonistic (lovers of pleasure), **what should our worship look like?** How should we engage in it? And what message, if any, might that worship send to those around us? This is what we will spend the rest of the time looking at.

How? Worship with the Whole Heart, Worship of the Name

The *how* of worship also comes up in the first verse. And it is vitally important. “**I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart...**” I don’t think this point can be made strongly or often enough, and we have made it before in the Psalms. The kind of worship that God requires is worship that comes from **the whole heart**. It is worship that is gladly given and joyful to do it. This is the **first** “how” of worship.

It bothers me to no end when people come to church for any reason other than worshipping the One True God. As

some of us were talking about after church last week, it was common in the 19th century in America to come to church as **a means of gathering information**, like a newspaper. This was the social club where gossip was heard. And you showed up because you wanted all the dirt. Others come to church for **the social status** of it. All the important people in my life go, so I should go to keep up appearances. Still others **send their kids** off to church, while they couldn't care less about dawning the doors themselves. People often come because they feel like **they have no choice**. Some come because they enjoy **the free concert** and the fog machines. Others because they want some **good advice for living**. There are countless reasons people come to church that have nothing to do with giving God thanks and praising him in worship. And therefore, there is no heart at all involved.

But we can even come with a true desire to worship ... *kinda*. By that I mean, it is easy to come and give lip service, and even mean it, but the heart really just isn't that in it. We are Christians. We know we should do it, and it isn't like anyone is putting a gun to our head. But it's so easy to **fall asleep**, or to **read a book**, or to **draw the pastor** while he preaches, or to **scroll through Facebook**, or to **think about**

lunch, or look at the pretty girl, or on and on it goes. This is giving thanks with half a heart. And it is not how David is worshiping his God.

If it was, what kind of a witness do you suppose it would be to the heavenly beings that may, by chance, happen to be present? It is natural given what I say that to think of the angels (or the gods), but does your mind go to God first when I say this? How are we to worship *him*? With our whole heart, or as the law says, “Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” With everything you have in you.

Second, we do so humbly. “I bow down...” (2). Bowing is an act of humility and a recognition that there is someone in your presence who is greater than you and worthy of honor and dignity. This someone is the creator of all things, beyond the power of anything our minds can imagine in superhero movies, beyond the knowledge of all intelligences put together, bigger and greater than ten thousand galaxies. He is King of this world. He is its Ruler. And so David bows down to him, even though he is far away from the place where God resides.

Third, as we've seen it before, he **gives thanks**. Now, giving thanks is generally speaking an act of worship. That's how it is discussed in verse 1, and singing songs goes with that. But in **vs. 2**, there is something **specific** about how he is giving thanks. And I want you to remember where he is doing it—in the presence of the gods and others (as we will see), in a foreign land. What is this specific?

He gives thanks “**to your Name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness**” (2). **Three things** are here. **First**, he gives thanks for God's steadfast **love** (*hesed*). His covenant love. His firm, unmoving, never-flinching love for David. No matter what he has done, Yahweh still loves him. And because it was sworn in a covenant, God cannot break that oath of love. This is the **second** thing, his **faithfulness**. God faithfully acts towards his servant. He is trustworthy to do so; he is firmly committed to it. God's faithfulness continues, even when the psalmist is faithless at times.

These things are **personal** things. They have been done *for David*. He knows God has treated him this way, because he has experienced it in his life. This is why he is worshiping. Those who do not know how to worship with their whole hearts either have never experienced this faithfulness and

love, or they have not been thinking about it. For as soon as they do, as soon as they really grasp that at just the right time, the perfect amount of money came in, or at just that moment of greatest despair, peace came over them, or at just that instant when they should have died, somehow they almost miraculously were spared. God shows these attributes to his people, all of them and each of them, thousands of times in their life. It is up to you to remember them and count them back to him.

But to who? He is called Yahweh—the covenant name. Yet, he is also, as we have seen in many psalms now, called the **Name**. Here is where the first really important application for worshiping God in the midst of heathens that I wish you to really get. He gives thanks (and this is the **third** thing), “to your Name ... for you have exalted above all things your Name and your Word” (2).

The Name and the Word are not one, but two of the great designations for **Christ in the OT**. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (**John 1:1**). And just a few verses later, still reflecting on the OT era John says, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his Name, he gave the right to

become children of God” (John 1:12). I really want you to get this before we are finished in the Psalms. The Name of God is God. And the Name of God is Christ. “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world” (John 17:6). Oh, and don’t forget this one. “At the Name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Php 2:10-11).

What does this mean for today? It means that you must not be ashamed of the Name, and there are many ways of doing this from being shy about Christ to refusing to pray “In Jesus’ Name” in some prayer you are offering up in public life for some reason. We are Christians. We bear the very Name as our identity. We are united to that Name through a mystical union with Christ’s Holy Spirit. Worshiping Yahweh in the midst of pagans is not merely “In God We Trust,” for there are many gods and many lords. It is Jesus Christ, the image of the Father, the one who died to save us who is the one through whom we pray to the Father and give thanks. For it is in his steadfast loving kindness and faithfulness in dying for us and sending his

Spirit to us, and never leaving nor forsaking us that we live and move and have our being. He is the offence and the stumbling stone, not just the word “God.” Therefore, we worship God through Jesus Christ as we worship God in the midst of the other gods.

Why? He Answered ME and Kings Know It

This leads us to consider the “**why**” of this worship. We’ve seen some of this in the steadfast love and faithfulness. This is why we worship this god in the midst of the gods. But David gets **specific**. In fact, this is what most of the rest of the song is about: specifics in this individual’s life. Without this personal kind of reason for worship, why would anyone do it at all? How could they even try with their heart?

It isn’t enough for him to just say, “**Lord, you have shown me love.**” No. “**On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased**” (3). David recalls some day in the past, perhaps many of them, the instances that we have preserved for us in Samuel and the Chronicles, or perhaps even something we do not. But he remembers crying out to the LORD, calling upon him for help. We

have literally dozens of these examples even in the earlier parts of the Psalter. He cries out. He needs the LORD.

And behold, the Living God “**answered me.**” He heard my cry. But another specific is given here. **His strength of soul increased** as part of that answer. God was not always willing to get David off the hook for a thing he prayed for. God did not recuse David from all suffering and pain in this life. In fact, he had more than his fair share of death and treachery and hatred and poverty. But in those times, he found that God was with him and that this was proven by his soul, his countenance, his inner-man, his outlook on life being changed. This is the work of God.

And David wants the world to know it. Earlier, we spoke about *elohim* not meaning kings. The reason why it doesn't mean kings is because there are perfectly good words that do, and *elohim* isn't one of them. In **vs. 4**, one of those (*melek*) shows up. It's not like David isn't also praising his God before rulers and kings. He is. And in fact he now says, “**They have heard the words of your mouth**” (4), presumably through himself, through the law, through the people of Israel, through the rumors of miracles done on their behalf and other things.

In other words, what true worship and praise does is cause the Name of the Lord to be lifted into the air and taken by the winds to the four-corners of the earth. This is because true praise is not limited to a building where you gather. It is the natural impulse of your very essence and being. You praise him in how you live. You praise him in how you talk, both in wholesome speech and in talking about him. You praise him wherever you go, because you can't help it. It simply bubbles out of you like the water out of Old Faithful. It keeps on erupting and does so beautifully, regularly, consistently, and in such a way that is not overwhelming like Mt. St. Helens. Your praise isn't there to destroy people, for you are not doing it for them. It is for God, and as they see it come out of you, they can't help but hear about it.

This kind of praise has literally been heard of by kings and rulers from Pharaoh to Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus to Herod to Constantine to King James to Washington to Obama and Trump. They've all heard of the name and the faithfulness of God, through they have not all responded in the same way to it.

But one day, they will all acknowledge it, like it or not. David looks forward to the day when, “All the kings of the

earth shall give you thanks, O LORD” for what they have heard (4). “And they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD” (5). God’s glory is his weightiness, his heaviness, his beauty, his radiance and Habakkuk prophecies, “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14).

Andreas J. Köstenberger writes of John 8:55, “Jesus’ charge ... that his opponents do not (truly) know God stands in continuity with the message of some of the OT prophets (e.g., Hos 4:1; 6:6); later prophetic passages predict a time when people will indeed know God (cf., e.g., Isa 11:9; Jer 31:31–34; Hab 2:14).”¹² In other words, Christ is the fulfillment of the glory of the Lord spreading out over the world so that men may see it and give praise. For again as John says still in his prologue, “We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Or Paul, on how God gives “the light of

OT Old Testament

¹² Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 458.

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the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6).

Today, some kings have done exactly what the song says. As God has converted many over the centuries. But he does this only when his people are praising him and worshiping him and thanking him in the presence of kings. There is no bitterness in this song, no complaining about politics, no griping about corrupt leaders. Nor is there any kind of political power play going on to use them. The focus is not worldly. It is otherworldly. It is praise and worship to God. And this praise and worship of God becomes the mechanism that God uses to regenerate kings of the earth. This ought to be a lesson for each of us as we consider how to go about being salt and light in a rotten and dark world.

It takes something we've talked about before. **Humility**. “For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar” (Ps 138:6). This is a great verse. For it recognizes God's **omniscience**. Make no mistake, he knows what the proud do, what they are, what they say and think. But he knows them “from afar.” Meaning, he is not close to them in a saving, kind, loving, faithful way. He is just watching them; bidding his time

until the day of their doom. For this is what it means that the LORD is high. He is exalted, above all things and he knows all that goes on in his creation (as we will see in the next song).

Yet, though he is high, *he regards the lowly*. The lowly are the humble, the meek, the gentle, the quiet, the unpretentious, the poor, the underprivileged. And is this not exactly what our Lord taught us when he was here about the character and nature of God? Who did he hang with? These are the people he chose for his disciples.

David knows a thing or two about both being in this position naturally, and having to have God ratchet him down a few notches through discipline. “*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me*” (7). It was through the trials of his life that he did not keep him from that the LORD taught David to be lowly. Once upon a time, the King was enjoying all his grandeur in his palace, occupying his thoughts with things he should not from the top of his roof, refusing to do what he should have been doing—going out to battle with his men. And when he looked upon the wife of one of his

mighty men and they had a child together, God tried David thoroughly in the crucible of fiery judgment. He took his sons life and taught the man humility.

Other times, David had enemies that he had to flee from. Most often it was his best friend's father, the king of Israel—Saul. David was on the run for years and years and years, but he did not die, for **God had made him a promise** that he would be king. And in his wrath, he finally dealt with Saul as he deals with all evil doers, as he vindicated his saints and judges his enemies.

And how was this done? With the **fourth term** that we see so often in the Psalms (sometime, read through the Psalter with only this thought: to see how often the Name and/or Word and/or Glory and/or Arm or Right Hand show up together) for Christ. The right hand, the Commander of the armies of heaven, the one who speaks with the voice of an archangel, he delivered David while taking wrath upon his enemies. Oh, how the OT teaches us things about God and his Christ that escape so many people who do not like to read it.

The end of the song remains personal. **“The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD,**

endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands” (Ps 138:8). As I said, God had made a covenantal promise to David that he would be king, and God has not failed to bring this purpose to pass. The interesting end of the song reads the opposite of what many people wish it would say. But rather than, “Do not forsake the work of MY hands,” it says “Do not forsake the work of YOUR hands.” It is God’s work that David is thankful for, not his own. It is God’s work that David needs in his life, not his own. It is God’s work through Christ who justifies us and the Holy Spirit who indwells us and sanctifies us that all God’s people need and for which we are to be most thankful.

The focus here is not on me or you, except in as much as we are the recipients of God’s mercy and love. Too much worship today is the opposite, and with that kind of a message, **what are we telling the world?** Because make no mistake, they are watching, and they know exactly what we are doing. They can’t help themselves. So much of our singing and our sermonettes and our sanctuary buildings and our special gatherings are for the purpose of talking much and thinking much about ourselves.

This must not be, beloved. For that is idolatry if not the worship of self as a god. We are not to praise ourselves in the midst of God, but to praise God in the midst of the gods! Too much of the church has become known for this, and the world is not singing the praises of Yahweh and kings are not converting to Christ and humility is not ruling the day and God's law is being mocked and Jesus is not being exalted by such self-centered narcissistic worship.

No. Psalm 138 gives us a better way. It was something that clearly the priests who put the Psalter together, and at this point in the book so obviously for the people who returned after the exile thought they needed badly to hear. [They thought that this song of David could help them in their worship of the LORD](#) in the newly built temple. How much more should it have that priority in our worship today, where God has not confined himself to one building in one country, but now indwells the whole body of Christ as it spreads the glory of God throughout the world in the living temple not built with human hands—his church?

Make no mistake. We are living among the gods again. They are all around you, if you just open your eyes and look. What do their names mean after all? Gaia (Earth), Eros

(Lust), Tartarus (Hell), Uranus (Heaven), Typhon (Storm), Geras (Ageing), Philetas (Affection), Momus (Blame), Nemesis (Retribution), Thanatos (Death), Hypnos (Sleep), Eris (Strife), Apate (Deceit), Cronus (Time), and so on. These things rule the lives of people today, and it doesn't matter if they call them gods or not. We are living among heathens and pagans, and I mean that in the best possible sense that we spoke about at the beginning, not in the worst sense. For this is not about us being better than anyone. It *is* about the worship of God One True and Living God and whether or not he is being exalted in foreign lands.

Are all your friends heathens, as the song sings? I actually hope that many of them are! Not all of them, but you need to have heathen friends in your life, for how else will they know about the Christ you worship? And how is the best way you can tell them about Christ? While there is some wisdom in the song's advice for you to wait to ask them who you know, there is a more direct approach that doesn't even necessitate you having to give the Four Spiritual Laws to everyone you see.

That is to be overtly thankful to such a great God as this, and to worship him with all your heart, mind, soul, and

strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. And give God praise in the midst of the gods. And kings will bow down and give him praise. So also, might a few of your heathen friends.