3/10/24 - Acts 17:16-34 - "Knowing the Unknown God"

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Preacher: Carman Arroyo

[0:00] The passage today is going to be in Acts 17, verses 16 through 34. And if you have a Bible provided in a chair, it's page 926.

This is God's Word. Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.
So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him.
And some said, what does this babbler wish to say? And others said, he seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities.
Because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?
[1:16] For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know, therefore, what these things mean. Now, all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

So, Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.
For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God.
What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, Does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, As though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.
And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live in all the face of the earth, Having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, That they should seek God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.
[2:48] Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being. Even some of you, your own poets, have said, For we are indeed his offspring.

Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, An image formed by the art and imagination of man.
The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, And of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.
Now, when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, But others said, We will hear you again about this.
And so Paul went out from their midst, But some men joined him and believed. Among them were also, Whom also were Dionysius, The Arepagites, And a woman named Demarius, And others with them.
[4:15] This is God's word. Praise God. Well, good morning, Steel Valley Church. My name, Good morning. My name is Carmen Arroyo, And I am a pastoral apprentice here.

And I am very excited to be up here today As we continue on Paul's journey through Acts, And as he arrives in the city of Athens. We once again see Paul's incredible ability to evangelize and adapt to the Jews and the pagans.

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So, before we embark on this, on Paul's next journey, though, I came across an interesting article released in 2017, recalling a sanitary crisis in Bangladesh.
In 1999, the development organization WaterAid funded a construction of latrines, which are toilets, in small villages in northern Bangladesh.
Many people lacked toilets and defecated outdoors, a practice which led to the mass spread of diseases such as cholera, hookworm, roundworm, and schistosomiasis.
[5:24] Try saying that again. WaterAid's leaders invited this outside expert named Dr. Kamal Carr to conduct an evaluation of the work. Dr. Carr traveled to the site in Bangladesh, and that is where our story begins.

Now, this article that I read used a four-letter word, I dare not say. So, instead, we're going to take this opportunity to go ahead and learn some Hebrew and refer to that pesky four-letter word, just as it was referenced in Malachi 2, verse 3, as peresh.
Did I say that right, Duffy? You know. Sure. Okay. Getting back to Dr. Carr in Bangladesh, when he arrived, he found out that the project had actually gone exactly as planned.
The latrines were well built, and even some of them were being used. However, while he was walking around the town, he still noticed a lot of peresh in the villages and in the fields.
He even stepped in it. Open defecation was still running rampant. It was an eye-opening moment for him. Villagers, while he was talking to some of the villagers, Dr. Carr would ask why they weren't using these new latrines, and most of them were answering, why would I go there when it's nicer than my own house?
[6:45] Dr. Carr soon realized that adding more latrines would not solve the open defecation issue. So, as a result, Dr. Carr engaged the villagers by meeting them where they were, walking around their village, starting conversation, and asking questions.

He noticed that if he hung around long enough, the smaller crowds would get larger and larger as they would make these walks throughout the town. During these walks, the stench became so pungent, so overpowering, that many people were covering their noses with their clothes.
But Dr. Carr kept pushing forward and asked the villagers to actually draw a rough map of the village in the dirt. Quickly, the villagers went ahead and mapped out the boundaries of the village. Along with important landmarks, like a school, a church, a stream. And then what he ended up doing was asking them to take stones and leaves and put where their individual's houses were and this map.
Once the map was filled in, he pointed to a bag of yellow chalk he brought with him and asked them to sprinkle this chalk where they would go to the bathroom. And more chalk in areas where they would go more frequently.
[7:55] The crowd looked around at each other and began to nervously laugh, but the kids loved it. He then asked where the villagers would go in an emergency if there was a rainstorm or if they were sick.

And then they embarrassingly started looking at each other and said, well, around our houses. And so that's what he would do. He would have them put chalk around their houses. At this point, the entire map of the village was covered in yellow chalk.
There was now a turbulent energy in the crowd. They were anxious, disgusted, angry, embarrassed, but they still weren't sure why, what this all meant.
Reasoning with the villagers, Dr. Carr then asked for a glass of clean water to see if anyone would drink it. They all agreed that they would. He then pulled a hair from his head and then walked over to a pile of pares, dipped his hair into it, went back to the clean glass of water and swirled it around, took that same clean glass of water, well, not clean, and gave it back to the villagers, asking them again, would you drink this?
He got a resounding no. Why would we drink that? It's dirty. He continued, so this hair on my head, you can barely see it, right?
[9:17] They were like, yes. They were like, and if I were to compare this hair with a leg of a fly, how many of you would say that a fly would be able to gather more pares than this little strand of hair?

And so he continued with the crowd just kind of looking at him like, you guys are looking at me now, asking me where I'm going with this. And so he continued, and then he asked them, have you ever seen flies on your food?

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And then it started going off. And he was like, when the flies go onto your food, do you throw the food away? They're like, no. And so the crowd's tension was now unbearable.
The truth was inescapable. They had been eating each other's own pares. They began to confront one another, challenging each other, saying, we can't continue this. This is madness.
How can we stop this? You see, church, as I read this article, I couldn't help but see the correlation between the villagers in Bangladesh surrounded by pares, the Athenians surrounded by their idols, and even us today.
[10:27] That despite the reality of their situation, it took someone convicted and provoked by what they saw to speak up, to confront, to challenge those around him for them to recognize they're surrounded by filth.

Paul does this very thing while he's in Athens. And today, by observing how Paul evangelized the influential city of Athens, we find some important lessons about preparing ourselves and engaging unbelievers.
In this sermon titled, Knowing the Unknown God, we'll see that if we're to learn from Paul's visit, we need to look at what Paul saw, what Paul felt, where Paul went, and what Paul said.
Each point is related and vitally important if we desire to imitate the apostle. Now, before we begin, let us pray for illumination that as we read his word, ask God to enlighten our minds and our hearts.
Let us pray. O Father, make your word a swift word, passing from the ear to the heart, from the heart to the lip of conversation, that as the rain returns not empty, so neither may your word, but accomplish that for which is given.
[11:45] Amen. So, now this journey to Athens is one of the most popular stops along Paul's missionary journeys and is a focal point within Paul's journey giving us insight into his heart and his ministry that provides important lessons for us Christians even today.

Looking at today's verses, we must not lose sight of what just occurred to Paul at the beginning of chapter 17. Having been traveling with his friends Silas and Timothy, they were chased out of Berea by an angry mob disrupting Paul's journey and he left for Athens alone.
As many of you are aware, Athens is a beautiful metropolis that has prided on their rich history, philosophy, education, their arts, their natural and architectural beauty.
So it is here in this cultural center of Greece that we now join Paul all alone as he arrives and sees something that has provoked his spirit.
Leads me to my first point, his first perspective, what Paul saw. Here's how Luke describes Paul's reaction to the grandeur of Athens.
[12:56] We read in verse 16, Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. You see, church, it wasn't the history, the people, or the food, or the beauty of Athens that first struck Paul like it would many of us.

He saw the city differently than us ordinary people or ordinary people. He saw Athens as a Christian. It's an amazing thing what happens to a person when God does a work in them and they're renewed in Christ.
Things that we normally once found joy and comfort in, we start to see differently. Our worldview has changed. Now the definition of worldview as defined by the Oxford Dictionary is simply a particular set of philosophy of life or conception of the world.
It establishes belief on the fundamental issues in our lives such as where we came from, what the meaning of life is, our morals, and etc. This worldview can be shaped by many things, where we're born, who our parents are, what our parents believe, circumstances we encounter throughout our life, and other influences of people we admire.
However, when a person is truly saved and becomes a Christian, it transforms everything we see, doesn't it? Why?
[14:30] It's because we all share a basic set of beliefs that are grounded in the storytelling of the Bible, creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. It's this belief that shapes our view of the world.

It reminds me, actually, of a song by some of you older generation might know this. John Conley, rose-colored glasses, whereas John wrote about being so in love that he sees things differently than others.
We as Christians see things differently than non-Christians. we have a different lens. We see movies differently.

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We listen to music differently. We think about sports, video games, board games differently. We look at business, charity, and work differently. We view race differently.
We view the poor, the orphan, the widow differently. We see the trees and the mountains and the clouds differently. We view people differently. We view relationships, marriage, sex differently.
[15:33] We even view our own death differently. We see this world and everything in it differently because we see it through the lens of God's revelation and creation in Scripture and His Son, Jesus Christ.

This is how Paul saw the world. To you. everyone has had a worldview. Turn on the news and it's evident enough that there's many different worldviews still to this day.
The fact that your own family has a different worldview than you, your parents, your children, your neighbor, your friends, all have a different worldview. But the biggest question I have, especially for us Christians, is whether or not our worldview is clear and do we apply it to all aspects of our life? Are you living a double life? Are you the same person today on Sunday as you are on Monday through Saturday? We Christians being transformed into new creatures with the renewing of our minds have been shown that this world is full of idols and some of us still worship them.
Now this word idol sometimes takes on the connotation that is a particular statue or shrine or temple which leads many of us to especially brush it off because, well, I don't pray to some statue.
[17:02] I don't pray to some idol. I don't pray to some shrine. It's easy for us to just say, I'm not an idolater. If this is you, brother, sister, I'm sorry but you're absolutely wrong.

As Christians, as true Christians, our eyes are open and we learn to see that the world is full of idols. We begin to see that the underneath, that we begin to see that underneath our sin problems, our relationship problems, our intellectual problems, are in fact a worship problem.
Have we forgotten what God has commanded us as Christians to do first? first, you shall love no other gods before me.
Luther once said, if we get the first commandment right, the others would follow because everything follows this fundamental issue of worship. Worship is not just coming here on Sunday.
We shall have no other gods before him applies to every single day. Are you serving him every single day? Are you acknowledging him every day?
[18:18] It is our chief priority as a people of God to worship every day. It should be offered in both private and corporately. Church, what Paul saw was a city full of people worshiping idols.

They were smothered by them just as we see today. What are the idols we see being worshiped in our city? What are the things we look to to give us what only Jesus Christ can give us?
What are we looking to to provide us joy, satisfaction, meaning, and significance? What are you hoping and putting your trust in?
Idolatry is a heart issue and is anything that we use to substitute God. It can be peer approval, success, money, sex, pleasure, what have you.
We must crucify these idols in our lives, view the world through a Christian lens, and discern the ways of this world so that we can show our families, our friends, our co-workers that these idols won't satisfy their human hearts.
[19:28] And once we've done that, we must point them to God who made them and can redeem them through Jesus Christ. this is what Paul saw through you. As Christians, in addition to what we see, we're also changed in how we feel.

In our soul, we become deeply affected by things that once went unnoticed before being in Christ, leading me to my next point, what Paul felt. Paul speaks of emotions in a number of his epistles.
We see in 2 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 10, where he writes, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing.
And in fact, Jesus is called a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, in Isaiah chapter 53, verse 3.
And in John 11, verse 33, we read that Jesus was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.
And in just a few verses after, in John 11, verse 35, it simply states, Jesus wept.
In John 11, the death and resurrection of Lazarus were shown that Christ felt, but these feelings that deeply moved his spirit weren't generated out of mourning the death of his friend Lazarus because he was going to soon raise him from the dead.
[20:55] But it was out of the grief for a fallen world entangled and sin caused sorrow and death.
So here again, depending on what translation you use, we see in Acts 17, verse 16, describing what Paul felt.

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It's the same verbiage used in John 11 regarding Jesus. With Luke writing of Paul, his spirit was provoked or troubled within him when he saw that the city was full of idols.
This word troubled or provoked derives from a Greek word meaning seizures, spasm, or outburst. A more simplistic translation would be anger. Paul was enraged.
Now, let us put into practice what Dr. Rick preached on last week and be like the Bereans for a moment and travel back to the Old Testament to better understand this verb.
Doing so, we see then the Old Testament word equivalent to the Greek word used here in today's passage describes how God feels about idolatry. Going all the way back to Deuteronomy chapter 9, verse 7, we see that Moses is challenging Israel to call to mind the long history of their stubbornness in worshiping idols and provoking God to a righteous anger.
[22:16] But despite all our human rebellion, he continually takes the initiative in inviting his people to walk in his ways even though, as it is written in Isaiah 65, verse 3, a people who continually provoke me to my face.

He is faithful. And we are able to see his mercy and love. It is this view that leads Paul to feel provoked and troubled because his heart was broken and full of compassion for the people he saw worshiping false gods.
He knew their fate if they didn't repent and believe. He was motivated by the love of God and the love of his neighbor. We see this compassion that Paul has for the Athenians by Paul's tone and demeanor in Athens.
Just look at how he relates to them in verse 17. He reasoned with them. Instead of fueling his rage and anger at the sight of every idolater he engaged, he listened.
He heard. He talked. He debated with them in holy love. How many of us when we're provoked to anger respond in a way that could be described like Paul's?
[23:33] I'm looking at you husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children. How do you respond when you're at your wit's end and your spouse or your child provokes you to anger?

I know this is something I definitely need to work on because just this week our family has been battling some type of flu or I don't know maybe COVID 2024 and it started as it normally does with the toddlers since they're cesspools of disease and it just went right up to my wife and that's why she's not here today.
She's still recovering. But you have to I would be lying to you if I did not feel a profound anger welling inside of my body every single time after saying it hundreds of times to our little toddlers to cover their mouths to not sneeze in my face to not cough in my mouth that that was something that still continued to happen and every single time it happened I wanted to run away.
I didn't want to engage with them. I didn't want to be anywhere near them. I wanted to go into a different room but I digress. The thing is is that after all of this it's something I still need to work on and it's I'm telling you guys mucus does not taste the same as nuggies and goldfish crackers. Alright? So it has been a gross week. but anyway but what we see here with Paul is that he didn't take a sledgehammer to their idols but instead through his response he showed a gentleness a respect and a compassion towards others that provoked him to anger.
[25:29] This response is a challenge to us as Christians to our hearts. You see we need to be both gentle and bold when we confront sin and share the gospel.

A great example of this is no other than JC himself. Jesus Christ rebuked people boldly but he was also gentle and as Isaiah 42 verse 3 reads a bruised reed he will not break.
This is what we need to realize from Paul today. How can you engage people effectively in your marketplace? Do you show the same type of compassion towards others?
Many who live in our society today place a huge emphasis on where they work and where they live but the word of God puts an emphasis on the character of a person and we should continue to pray that God will work in us this type of heart a heart for loving God and loving people so that we can continue our duty in the great commission and live a life filled not of earthly meaning but eternal meaning not a life of temporary joy but one that is truly profound and will be enjoyed beyond the very end of the age we see this Christian desire for the nations to worship the Lord in Psalm 67 verses 1 through 5 where he writes may God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine to shine upon us Selah thank you that your way may be known on earth your saving power among all nations let the peoples praise you oh God let all the peoples praise you let the nations be glad and sing for joy for your judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth

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Selah let the peoples praise you oh God let all the peoples praise you what about you do you desire to see people sing for joy to the creator and the redeemer be honest or do you not really care if not then how can you grow your feelings towards others to answer this we must meditate on the cross if we're going to grow it's there we see God's absolute commitment to perfect holiness and we see his bottomless compassion for us sinners think about the cross his life his sacrifice his pain his punishment for your sins my sins your children's sins your parents sins everyone who's ever sinned and believed he died for us everything anyone has ever done and has truly repented and who are truly believers he has bore that wrath meant for us it is here if our world view is cross centered it will cause us to grow in truthfulness and tears because we deserve death but he gives us life how can we not share this with the world this is why

[28:43] Paul saw the world differently and he felt differently about the idols of the world because his world view was radically cross centered it challenges all of us who believe if we don't have the cross at the center of our world view we will end up either being too accepting or too demanding the cross gives us the heart to engage and to go out to share his gospel to the Athenians in our lives which leads me to my third point where Paul went Luke records Paul's evangelizing in three different places first the synagogue the marketplace and finally he's brought to the Oropagus it's really admirable to see Paul's flexibility here you see like the Athenians we Americans also live in a nation filled with great spiritual diversity some parts of our nation have no knowledge of the Bible whereas other parts they have a general understanding of faith here in Youngstown we see quite a mixture of Christians but we also have people who have absolutely no idea what we mean when we say the words like God sin heaven redemption and my personal favorite propitiation our country and our city are very diverse and there is much we can learn from Paul's engagement with both the Jewish and the pagan audiences let us first consider his ministry in the synagogue and then the marketplace first as he normally did

Paul started off in the synagogues with the Jews and we see once again Paul reasoning with them from scriptures proving to them that Jesus Christ is the Messiah I pause here because it's imperative for us to not assume that everyone who calls themselves a Christian or who goes to church has actually heard the gospel thankfully we here at SVC preach the gospel explicitly every week that's not the case everywhere so we as Christians whatever your role is within our church need to stay prudent and ensure that whether you're a pastor a minister a teacher a leader volunteer or a member that we keep the gospel our priority so that we can be better edified and as we leave this building we enter our marketplace prepared the marketplace now here

Paul is described as dialoguing with people with Luke writing Paul reasoned in the marketplace every day with those who happen to be there this marketplace was much grander than anything we have today in a world full of online shopping and malls and stores our marketplace is vastly different than what the Athenians had their marketplace was somewhere where everyone physically had to go it wasn't a click away and they had to go there to purchase goods to conduct business they debated new ideas and they did everything else an Athenian would need in order to survive so Paul goes here to this specific place to engage and reason with the public about his faith why because Christianity is a public faith our faith should be lived out and be represented amongst everyone in the streets and we see Paul living out and communicating his faith every day in the public center of ideas we too should be doing this we too should be taking our faith public by the way we live and by the way we talk

Paul initiated conversations not riots we should follow this pattern so what does this mean because I know some of you are looking at me like dude there is no way I'm going out there to some rando stranger and saying hey man do you know Jesus do you want to be saved are you saved saved because even though that is a very effective way to evangelize and start very interesting conversations right David yeah it's I also believe that we can also take our faith to the marketplace and the ordinary rhythm of our life as we go to school the gas station the grocery store our interactions with co-workers and especially with our family others may be thinking well there are way too many people out there with different opposing worldviews against Christianity what if they make fun of me you're right there are a lot of opposing viewpoints of Christianity in the world and you will be made fun of and that's okay because even here in today's verses where two main groups were referred to Paul as a babbler meaning a seed picker that he went around picking idea after idea after idea and jamming it together with no coherent thoughts you see these philosophers in Athens valued a clear and coherent worldview to life but the problem wasn't that

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Paul wasn't speaking clearly it was the fact that these philosophers couldn't understand Paul's worldview because it was so vastly different from their own they never heard of a person being resurrected raised from the dead that seems crazy people today will say that's crazy the text points to two particular schools of thought in verse 18 the Epicureans and the Stoic philosophies to oversimplify their philosophies the Epicureans emphasized chance escape and the enjoyment of pleasure whereas the Stoics emphasized fatalism submission and the endurance of pain in other words one group said grin and bear it there's nothing you can do about it so move on the other group said if it feels good do it there are no consequences take away those names it's still pretty common today isn't it nevertheless both world views were quite hopeless and very meaningless we live in a very similar climate where no one seems to care about the ultimate truth but instead live like these philosophers for the here and now that we
[35:59] Christians are considered uneducated naive and primitive we see this with the rising number of adults who classify themselves as having no religious affiliation the nuns N-O-N-E-S they live a life without any real sense of God but Paul provides a great example here of engaging such a culture that tries to live a part of the God of the Bible so we as Christians in every walk of life in every arena of culture who live and need we need you to live and preach the Christian world view in a way that is winsome you don't have to be a pastor to influence culture you can do it in the world of parenthood arts science education law construction steel worker medicine whatever you guys are working in right now you are in it we must not retreat from culture we must engage it humbly boldly and intelligently now as a result of

Paul sharing this gospel in the marketplace he was led by these philosophers to the Europagus so he can further explain himself now the Europagus is considered two different things the first is a place that can be referred to as either a court where people gather to teach defend and debate their case of new ideas or could actually be an actual place a hill and as it was also known as Mars Hill by the Romans maybe referred to as Mars Hill in your own Bibles Paul was invited because as we read in verses 19 through 21 the philosophers ask Paul may we learn about this new teaching you're speaking of for what you say sounds strange to us and we want to know what these ideas mean now all the Athenians and foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new which takes me to my fourth point what
Paul said so the following verses is Paul's sermon or defense to that very question and like many non-modern era the Athenians loved new ideas they were excited to hear about something new they didn't have the internet they weren't able to google anything so I mean think about how excited are we or how excited are you about any type of new trend movie or TikTok that we see is exciting for them however these new things that we become so enamored with sometimes aren't necessarily bad but we must remember that some things are unchanging the gospel is unchanging our God is unchanging we must fight not to recreate God and his word in our image we serve the God from Genesis to Revelation not a God of our own imagination Paul does this wonderfully in the following verses by first establishing commonality with them and then confronting the
Athenians we see in verse 22 that he commands the group for being very religious this is something that we can emulate even today because man is unable to worship nothing and even the atheist may say God doesn't exist but creation and consciousness is evident he does they simply exchange the truth about God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the creator as Paul writes later in Romans chapter 1 verse 25 so what Paul does next is that he establishes a point of conflict in verse 17 verse 23 saying for as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship I even found an altar on which was inscribed to an unknown God pointing this out is very obvious to us that God has revealed himself that he is not unknowable it is here that
Paul essentially explains the Christian worldview he puts the gospel into a bigger story of the Bible showing reasonableness of faith the exclusivity of faith and the necessity of repentance and faith in the Redeemer he passionately shares several core beliefs found in the Christian story through verses 24 through 31 Paul succinctly addresses that God is creator sustainer of life ruler of the nations he is noble he is the father of humanity the judge and redeemer all this points directly to the complete and utter sovereignty and his perfect love for God's creation that by Paul's proclamation of the gospel and using commonalities between the Greeks by first pointing to their statue of the unknown God and then quoting multiple poets that the audience knew he uses all of this to point them towards the cross towards his resurrection towards repentance either their judgment or redemption church no matter what you're going through right now you may not believe you're

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capable of connecting with people you may not believe you have the knowledge like [41:34] Paul does of the scripture you may not believe you're a people person but your life your background your situation your struggles your pain can all be used for his will do you see that all of these things from our very existence to our experiences in our lives our gifts from God and he has provided in you his holy spirit to go forth and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and the son and teaching them to observe all all that Jesus has commanded us and the holy spirit do not be afraid because he is with us and all things are possible through him for those who believe because salvation only comes through the man Paul describes in verse 31 the second Adam who lived the life we couldn't live and died the death that we all deserve and rose on our behalf we all come from one man

Adam but we must turn to this man Jesus Christ the Lord judge and savior this appeal to the Athenians is clear and consistent with scripture it's to repent because everyone is under the wrath of God because they have all rebelled against God but if they turn away from their sins and turn to Christ he will blot out their sins as described in Acts 3 verse 19 and give them life it's this turn that Paul takes from a philosophical debate to a personal responsibility that everyone must repent or perish we know the truth and our time to claim ignorance is over so how did these Athenians respond it is no surprise that what is described in today's verses are still exactly what we will be faced with when we share the gospel and confront sin humbly like
Paul we still encounter religious pluralism a great diversity of world views and intelligent yet biblically illiterate peoples when the Athenians heard about the resurrection of the dead some of them began to ridicule him and as we see in verse 32 but others others said we'd like to hear from you again about this you see church we will be ridiculed we will be called naive dumb uneducated but that again is okay don't let that deter you because we have no way to know who God has predestined to spend eternity with him so we march on because as we see in the last verses in 32 through 34 there are those that will want to know more and those that will believe the very moment they hear of this good news don't be dismayed be bold don't be harsh be humble do not stop what's been commanded of us for this life is not our ending this life is not our natural intention our sin is not natural our pain is not natural our suffering is not natural our death is not natural because our God is a mighty God has prepared for us a great eternity this is how Paul saw the Athenians this is what he felt for the Athenians and this is why he boldly went and proclaimed the resurrection of our creator our Messiah our Lord Jesus Christ from this great passage we learn how we could see how we should see how we should feel where we should go and what we should say because the only way we are saved is by faith alone we are not saved by works but what we need to understand is that a person who's been truly saved has been born again they have become a new creature God has done a tremendous work in them to demonstrate his power he he made us with new worldviews new affections and new desires to serve Christ and to be holy let me ask the Christians here today has he done that to you do you look at the world and long to be like it act like the world talk like the world dress like the world have the world respect and its esteem if this is you Christian and you are this way because that could just be evidence that God has not done a work in you some of you may be nodding your heads answering no to these questions and I say give me your phone give me your iPad give me your tablets let me see what movies you're watching let me see who you're texting let me follow you around and see that some of you are still imitating the world the celebrities of the world the fashions of the world and everything this world is because you love this world who are you imitating our God has made himself known and even though we fail again and again he still forgives us he still loves us he has provided everything we need to know him but does he know you my biggest fear isn't rejection it isn't death but can be found simply in [47:39] Matthew chapter 7 verses 21 through 23 does he know you or will he declare to you I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness if God's power cannot be seen in your life leading you to greater and greater holiness then maybe there is no power of God in your life that he has not regenerated your heart that you have not been born again that you are not a Christian to you the unbeliever I simply say this that yearning you notice inside of you you try to fill it with many things you look for it you listen for it but you're still not sure what you're missing it's unknown you don't know why you feel money sex fame I have seen what man has to offer it is hopeless unbeliever isn't it lonely those late hours in the evening laying in bed or while you try to find purpose what about you but when you're actually alone when there is no one else for you to talk to to cry out to when the overwhelming feeling of guilt anxiety loss in the future are tormenting your very being

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you search in the darkness the pits of your soul the pits of your mind the pits of this world and still find nothing and still you yearn for and know that there has to be something more if this is you unbeliever rejoice because he has done a great work in you our

God Jesus Christ loves you come and be made whole come and believe in him come and see what he has done for you throw away the ways of this dark world let him shine through your life let him reveal to you the majesty of the great I am come home and be a part of his church his family his love because all of this is for his glory his eternity his family for his glory alone if anyone here today has this desire and recognizes the work of God has done in you and you want prayer please get with me after this sermon or any other pastor here today I would love to pray with you let us pray you

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