

# Acts 17 (Part 2): 16-34 • Knowing the Unknown God

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*“<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babblor wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. <sup>19</sup> And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? <sup>20</sup> For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” <sup>21</sup> Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.*

*<sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, <sup>28</sup> for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’*

*<sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> 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.”*

<sup>32</sup> Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." <sup>33</sup> So Paul went out from their midst. <sup>34</sup> But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them." (ESV)

Let's pray.

Father God, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the power of it. We thank You for the wisdom that's contained in it. We thank You Lord for blessing us with an understanding through Your Holy Spirit of what the Word has to say, and what it means and how it applies to our lives.

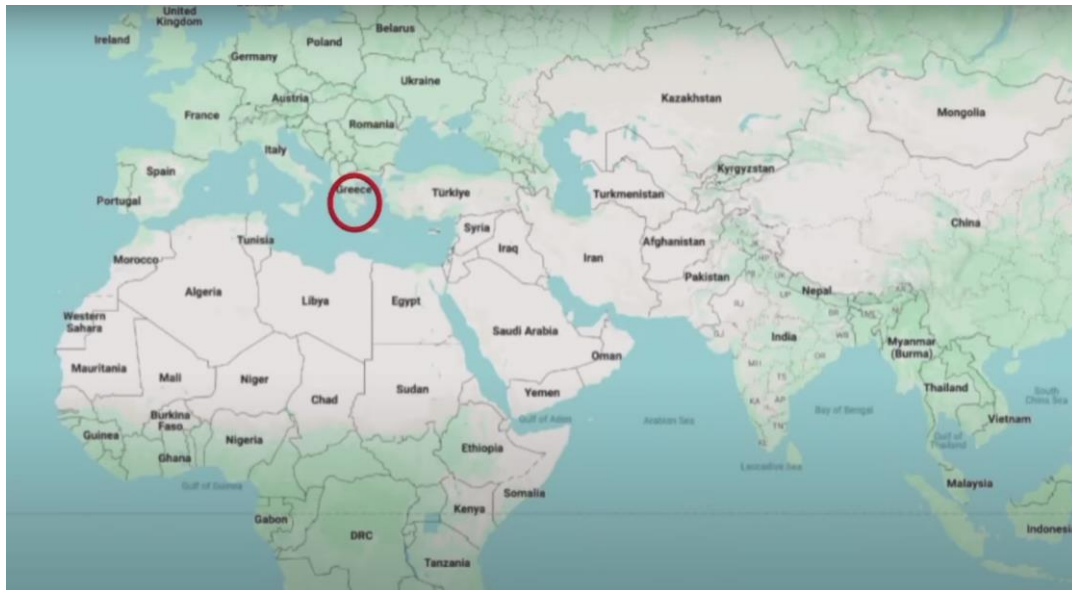
And we pray Father God that You would use this Word today to really speak grace and insight to us. And help us Lord God to lay hold of the wisdom here for our day. We thank You Father. We thank You and praise You. In Jesus name, amen. Amen.

All right. Well, as you've seen probably in our study of Acts so far, I've been putting up lots of maps so that you can know where we are in the world, and we're going to do that again here. This particular map takes us all the way from Antioch on the far right side of the screen to Athens, where he, and that's the end of the red line there, you can see the places that he has gone. Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, on to Troas, across the Mediterranean there, now into Europe, into Philippi, down to Thessalonica, Berea.



And it was there you'll remember that Paul was whisked off to Athens because of some trouble that arose there in Berea. So there's a drawn map.

And I've told you guys many times what's so cool about this, these maps, is that of course, you can look at a modern Google map and see the same thing. In fact, if you're looking at this on a modern map, let me show you this. This is the little circle right there is where Paul was where these things took place. That's essentially Athens, Greece.



That's where he's chilling, hanging out, talking to the crowds, and well, crowds, people, whoever he can really talk to as he's waiting there in Athens for Silas and Timothy to join him. They stayed behind in Berea to get the earlier, the believers, the people that came to Christ through Paul's ministry. To get them going and get them settled and that sort of thing.

But Luke tells us that as Paul made his way around Athens, that *"his spirit was provoked..."* Interesting word because he was seeing in this city, it was just jam packed with statues and figurines of pagan deities and that sort of thing.

And so Paul would go into the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. He would reason with the Jews. He would spend time in the marketplace talking with anyone who would strike up a conversation with him. It tells us that he even struck up a conversation with some philosophers, some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.

I don't know if you've ever talked to philosophers, people that are into philosophy. It can be an exercise in futility sometimes. It really can because

philosophy, and philosophy is interesting, but philosophy really exists to ask questions.

Theology answers questions. That's one of the reasons I like theology so much. I like answers. It's like, I don't want to sit around all day long just talking about, well, what if, and how about, and gee, wouldn't it be cool if, and that sort of thing. But I like, I guess I'm kind of a, well, being a teacher. I guess teachers are black and white, and sometimes badly. But I like answers, and anyway, I can only imagine how those kind of conversations went.

But if you look with me in your Bible it, all of this conversation eventuated into Paul being invited to a very interesting place. It says here in verse 19, “...*they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?”*”

He's coming to this place that is powerfully well known. And I don't know if you have ever studied much about ancient Greece and the Areopagus, it's also referred to as, Mars Hill. But you can get on to Google and just say, tell me about the Areopagus and you'll get all kinds of information because it served a lot of purposes for those living in Athens, not the least of which it was a prominent place where judicial cases were heard and where people would offer appeals to Athenian justice system.

And by the way, the Areopagus was named after the God Ares; the God of War. Do any of you guys watch the first Wonder Woman? You don't have to admit it. I actually thought it was a pretty good movie, actually. Anyway, in Wonder Woman, she's battling Ares, the god of war, and he was a mythological creature in Athenian belief, and he was believed to have been tried on that very spot for killing the son of Poseidon, another mythological creature.

Well, anyway, so they created this huge place called the Areopagus and it has a rather sensational backstory because of course it's all rooted in pagan mythology. If you go to the Areopagus today by the way, here's what you're going to find. Let me show you a picture. This is actually taken from the Acropolis and it's just it's a big rock.



It's just a big rock outcropping today in Athens so if you go there and visit, you can play king on the hill or any other number of things on there, but that's about it. It's just a big rock today.

But that's right where Paul the apostle stood and made his defense of the Gospel to some educated pagans. I know sometimes when you think about pagans, you think about people running around half naked, burning fires, and people in those fires and they did that.

But when Paul got to Athens, he ran into what is probably a cultured, educated, pagan crowd and these are the people that he's going to essentially share the Gospel with. It's probably not unlike sharing the Gospel in the world that we live in today, and even right here in the United States of America.

But these people know nothing about the one true God. They know nothing. And they're like, what is this? What is this babbler talking about? I don't understand anything about what he's saying.

So the people said to Paul, look with me in verse 20. They said, “...*you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.*”

And then Luke gives us this very interesting character sketch of the Athenians in verse 21. It says that, “...*the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.*”

This is what they did all day long. He describes, Luke describes them as a curious people, but they had nothing better to do than to sit around and talk

endlessly about new ideas, philosophical, theological, and otherwise. They would just talk.

And the implication, although Luke isn't saying it outright, the implication is that while the people love to talk about new ideas, they weren't terribly concerned about truth.

Now, there might've been some, and we know that Paul eventually, we see this in the passage. Paul got a few converts, a few. It wasn't a big harvest of souls, because again, most of the Athenians love talking about new things, but at the end of the day, it was just another new thing, and it wasn't really anything to take all that seriously.

And that's an important reminder for you and me. You might strike up a conversation with somebody about Jesus, the Bible, or whatever, and they may even engage you fairly passionately about those topics, but it doesn't necessarily mean they're interested in hearing the truth, right?

They might be more on the philosophical side, where they want to ask a lot of questions, and they're interested in those questions, but when you get down to saying, well, here's the truth, that might just shut them down. Because that's not really something that they're looking for.

Verse 22 goes on and it says, *“So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.”*

Now that word, religious in the Greek literally means, you are a people fearing the gods. That's what it means, right? The Greek didn't necessarily have a word for religious. That's an English word that's put in there. And Paul is essentially acknowledging the fact that Athens was a place that acknowledged and revered many deities. And that's what Paul's saying. I see that you are a people who acknowledge and revere many deities.

And so he goes on here and he says, *“For as I passed along (I'm in verse 23) and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’”*

And, it was obvious to Paul that the God who created heaven and earth was completely unknown to these people. And so when he saw this inscription, *“To the unknown god,”* he decided that this was a wonderful opportunity to tell them about the God that they knew nothing about. And so he says there at the

end of that verse, *“What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”*

And what Paul is going to do in these next several verses, is he's simply going to go on to declare what God has revealed about Himself in the Word. There's really nothing here that should be surprising to you and me. We hear what Paul said to the Athenians and it's all just, he's..., you could find biblical passages for all of these statements.

And so he begins to just proclaim to them the God of creation, and you'll notice that he's going to begin with creation itself. He says, verse 24, *“The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord (and that word means Master) of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,<sup>25</sup> 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 again, all these statements, you can find them in the Bible. *“<sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,<sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. (and we're going to talk about that, what he means by that in just a moment, he says,) Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,*

*<sup>28</sup> for “In him we live and move and have our being”; (some of you have a song going through your mind right now) as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.”*

Paul is just echoing what he knows to be true. He's telling them what is true about God. That's all he's doing. He's not getting in yet to the Gospel message because they know nothing about God.

Now this is a very important step by the way when you're evangelizing people who don't know God. And I want you to notice here that he's not quoting any books of the Hebrew Scriptures. He's not saying, well, as it says in the Psalms, or as Jeremiah says, or Isaiah, he's not doing that.

And the reason he's not doing that is that wouldn't mean anything to these people. They don't know anything about the Bible. They don't know anything about the Hebrew scriptures. They know nothing about the one true God. And so he's beginning at the beginning, for lack of a better way of putting it. And he's just starting off saying, let me tell you about God. This is really important. And I want to encourage you guys that if you get an opportunity to witness

today, it's important for you to find out before you start quoting a bunch of scriptures. And there's nothing wrong with quoting Scriptures, but before you get around to quoting, author, chapter, and verse, find out where the person is at. Do they know anything about the Bible?

Now, it's good to then introduce the Bible once they show an interest and they're like, well, tell me more. That's when you start getting into the Scripture and say, well, let me tell you, in fact, here's a Bible, let's open it up and we're going to read some passage. Great.

But when you're starting off, it's very easy to overwhelm someone who has absolutely no knowledge of God, or the Bible or anything, and you're going, Isaiah 52. 11. And you're and you're quoting it, and King James, and this and that, and the other. And you can just absolutely blow people away.

So I think that what Paul is doing here is actually quite wise. He's talking to these people in their world and with their understanding. You guys are interested in a lot of gods here, and there's even this one inscription that, of this unknown god. Let me introduce you to Him. And he's just giving them the basics, alright?

He goes on in verse 29. He says, *“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.”*

Paul has seen all these idols around the city and he's basically telling them that's not God. Okay. All these idols you've got, that, I want you to get that out of your mind because that's not God.

And he even goes on to say that, God overlooked that kind of ignorance, but now is the time to repent. Because..., and this is where he gets into it, he says, because there's a judgment day coming.

He says, *“<sup>31</sup> ... he (God) has fixed a day... (and) he ... (is going to) judge the world... (on that day, and He's going to do it)... by a man whom he ... appointed;* And, of course, he's referring to Jesus Christ, the man Jesus Christ, who, of course, is also God, but he's not getting into those details yet.

And he's talking about Jesus, and he tells the Athenians that God has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is the man, that He's chosen to be the judge of the world *“by raising him from the dead.”*



And that's where things began to fall apart, at least with the Athenians, because we're told there in verse 32, that just as soon as Paul said that, and "*they heard* (him talking about) ...*the resurrection of the dead*, (it says that) *some of them mocked.*"

And the reason they mocked is because the Athenians, that was ridiculous. To Grecian ears, the whole idea of a resurrection from the dead, it's like, well, okay, now you're talking gibberish. This is dumb. And I don't even know if we should stick around and listen to this anymore. The reason they thought that is because any talk of a resurrection to them was lacking in wisdom. You with me? It lacked wisdom.

And that is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians later on and he said this, on the screen. Let me show you this. He wrote to the Corinthians and he said,

**1 Corinthians 1:22-23 (NIV84)**

*Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to some Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,*

*Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but (the bottom line is) we preach Christ crucified: (and He will always be) a stumbling block to some Jews (and He's going to be) foolishness to Gentiles,*

They just think it's absolutely foolish and one of the big things is about the resurrection. And so he's basically saying here that everybody has some kind of a bias trigger, and in Greece, it was the resurrection. That's what triggered them. They had a natural bias against any conversation that addressed an issue having to do with the resurrection of the dead. And it just set them off. As soon as Paul talked about it, they're like, forget that. The guy's an idiot.

There are other examples in the Bible of people having a bias trigger. When we get to the 22nd chapter of Acts, we're going to read about how Paul is just about being torn apart by a mob, and he finally calms them down, he starts talking to them about his ministry. And they all settle down and they start listening to him. And in fact, they're listening very patiently as he's telling about his ministry of sharing Jesus.

But the moment that Paul mentioned that he was taking that Gospel to the Gentiles, the crowd absolutely became unhinged and they just absolutely went ballistic, because that was their bias trigger, right? That was their trigger, and they thought, that's dumb. That's, in fact that's to them, it was blasphemous to

take the Gospel to a people that didn't deserve it and so forth. Anyway, two examples there.

And when somebody has a bias that gets triggered by something that you're saying, there's not a whole lot you can do about that. So can I just encourage you, when you're witnessing to someone and telling them about Jesus, and if something triggers them along the way, that's not your responsibility. That's their responsibility. It's not your responsibility to be completely un-offensive when you're telling people about Jesus, because the Gospel is pretty offensive. And you're going to offend some people. Just share Jesus and let them deal with it however they're going to deal with it. Anyway.

The whole situation wasn't all negative here. Again, in verse 32 it says, "*But others* (some of the people, although some mocked, it says in verse 32 that *others*) *said, "We will hear you again about this."* Which is sounds almost like a threat to modern ears, but they were basically just saying, we'll we'd like to hear more about this.

"So (it says in verse 33 that) *Paul went out from their midst.* <sup>34</sup> *But some men joined him...*" And then it even names "...*Dionysius* (and he it says he was a member of the court of) *the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and* (some) *others...*" Not a huge group of people, but some folks, some folks, came to faith in Jesus through his very short talk there.

And you know, honestly, we can cut Paul probably a little slack here because this is really his first attempt at sharing the Gospel with the educated Gentile class that were also pagans. And I'm sure Paul learned a lot.

But you'll notice something however here about his sharing. It was all Paul. It was just Paul sharing, that's all it was. In other words, what I mean is, did you notice there were no miracles that took place? Did you notice there was no demonstration of the Spirit?

Other places that Paul went, there was often miracles that accompanied the message and powerful demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, but there's nothing like that going on here. This is just Paul talking to people about God, which isn't bad, necessarily.

But we're going to learn in the next chapter that when Silas and Timothy joined Paul there, well, they're actually going to join him. Paul's going to make his way down to Achaia and to Corinth, the city of Corinth and Silas and Timothy are going to join him there.

And Paul's going to write something to the Corinthians that leaves us with the idea that this whole time in Athens left a little bit of a bad taste in his mouth. Based on what Paul wrote, we're going to see that he learned some important things about sharing the Gospel.

In fact, there are some Bible students who believe that Paul saw his time in Athens as a failure. I'm not sure that's exactly true because even if one person comes to faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, even if you just plant seeds and that's all you did, I wouldn't call that a failure.

But they believe that mostly because of what Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, having just dealt with this whole issue in Athens. Let me show you what he said to the Corinthians. This is really cool. He said,

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (ESV)**

*And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

*And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, (why) so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

I want you to see here in this passage on the screen what Paul is saying to the people that he visited right after being in Athens, this was written to a people on the heels of being in Athens. And you can see that Paul came to the conclusion that all the lofty arguments in the world aren't going to make a difference with someone who loves lofty arguments for the sake of just talking about lofty arguments, but aren't interested in the truth.

You can talk, and you can talk, and you can talk, and you can talk some more, but it's not going to do any good if they don't have a fundamental interest in knowing what is true and what is not. And Paul decided, after being in Athens, that his message needed to contain less of himself and more of Jesus, and the

power of the Holy Spirit. And why? He told them there, didn't he? What did he say? *“That your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men.”*

This is not about the wisdom of men. This is not about, I mean, there's wisdom in the gospel message, don't get me wrong. He says, but my arguments, the wisdom of men, that's my arguments. That's not what your faith is to be based on because you know what? Somebody's going to come along someday wiser than me and that's not going to take very long. And they're going to give their side of their arguments about why you shouldn't believe.

And if you are simply coming to Christ because I've convinced you with human arguments, it's not going to be very long before somebody comes along with very plausible human arguments based in human wisdom. They're going to bring you away. And that's not what I want your faith to rest on.

I want your faith to rest on the power of God that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. That took your sins and bore them on the cross. And Jesus said, *“It is finished.”* (John 19:30) Paid in full. That's what I want your faith to rest on.

I want to close here this morning with one final thought. You might, and I said I was going to talk about this, but there's that part here in Paul's talk where he was talking, he was sharing about, well, he made a statement about God. And I want to take it out and put it on the screen for you so you can, we can see it all together. It's verses 26 and 27 of this chapter goes like this.

**Acts 17:26-27 (ESV)**

*...he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on 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. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,*

*...he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, (check this out, listen to this) that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,*

Isn't that an interesting statement? Particularly that part where he says that, *“they should seek God, and...feel their way toward him.”*

Do you know that the New American Standard Bible (NASB) says, *“that they might feel around for him?”* Now that's not obviously taken literally, but he's

making an important statement here. The New King James is even better. It says that, *“they might grope for him.”* Isn't that great?

Those are all good translations of what the Greek is saying here, because the language is meant to depict the human race basically blind and groping for God, seeking Him. I want to know Him. But they're blind, and so they're groping, and they're doing their best, but then Paul ends and he says, *“Yet actually he's not very far from each one of us.”* That's an interesting statement.

So we're blind. We're groping for God. We're looking for Him. We're seeking Him, but He's not very far away. He's there but sometimes we still struggle to find Him. But what Paul is eventually saying here is, if you really want to know God, He's just waiting to be found.

That's one of the things I love to tell people that don't know Christ. I'll even say to the, there's people coming up after a service or whatever, and we get to talking, and I can tell God's calling their name. And they might not put it in those words, but that's what's happening.

God's calling them. And I'll even say sometimes to them, I think God's calling you, isn't He? Yeah, I think so. Well, He's actually easy to find and I want you to know, He's waiting to be found. He's just waiting to be found.

And even though Paul in Athens, it didn't have a huge harvest of souls to show for his time there. Still, what he was trying to do while he was talking to the Athenians was he was simply trying to whet their appetite to do just this, to grope and to find God. He said, let me tell you about God.

He's the creator of heaven and earth. And he starts telling them things about God that are really very basic, but he wants them to begin to long for this search. He wants them to begin to reach out and take hold of this God of whom he speaks.

He wants to encourage them to know God because you see, He's not hard to be known. It's not hard to know God. He wants to be known. He's waiting to be known. He always, He says, knock and the door will be opened. And I have to wonder if Paul was mindful of a passage from, well, actually a couple of passages from the prophet Jeremiah and maybe even thinking about these as he was talking to the Athenians about the benefit, and the blessing of just knowing God. Let me show you this first one from Jeremiah chapter 9. I love this passage. It says

**Jeremiah 9:23-24 (ESV)**

*Thus says (YAHWEH) the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”*

*Thus says (YAHWEH) the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, (that's what the Athenians did) let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”*

Isn't that a beautiful passage? “...let him who boasts boast in this, that he...and knows me.” You see, that's what Paul was trying to get him to start doing. You want to know this God of which I speak. And there's a wonderful promise to all who would endeavor to grope for God. Still quoting Jeremiah, this time from Jeremiah chapter 29 on the screen. It says,

**Jeremiah 29:13-14 (ESV)**

*“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD...”*

*“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD...”*

I will be found by you. He wants to be found. Knock and the door, it will be open. Seek and you will find.

Our God is so good. So good that He sent His only son to bear the penalty and the punishment of your sin and my sin on the cross. And then He bids us to get to know Him. To have a personal relationship with Him.

And we will spend eternity, you guys, getting to know Him because He's infinite. And there will never become a time when you will plumb the depths of the beauty and majesty of the Lord our God.

And what a delight it is that we get to get started in that process of knowing God today, amen? Let's stand together and we'll close in prayer.

As we do every Sunday, in our services, if you need prayer this morning, we invite you to come down and we'll have our prayer team down here to pray with you for anything that's going on.

I was thinking about, we were singing today in worship about those who are weak being, being made strong. And I just, I remember, I know what it's like to go through those times in life where you just, you feel weak. Whether it's emotionally, spiritually, physically, or whatever. There's just weakness.

You know that you come to church and it's like, I'm weak. There's weakness in my life. And it can happen for all kinds of different reasons, but I just want you to know that what we sang about today is true.

God will strengthen you. He will be your strength. He'll be your rock that you can stand on, and He'll make you strong. He will give you strength when you feel like you can't go on. And I don't know if there's anybody here today who feels like they just can't go on. I just, I don't know if I can make it another day, but I just want you to know God loves you with an everlasting love, and He's there. He's there. Just turn to Him. Cry out to Him with all your heart. He'll be there. He'll help.

Father, thank you so much for loving us so much that you sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for us. And thank you, God, that You proved to us, the beauty of that sacrifice by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at Your right hand. And Lord, it is to Him and for Him that we live.

And we thank You, Lord, for all of the rich blessings that are ours in Jesus Christ. Lord, we live in a crazy world with crazy things going on, but You've called us to be light and salt, and to live for Jesus. And I pray, my Father God, that You would strengthen each one of us to do just that, to live every day for Jesus. Not for self, but for Him who redeemed us on the cross.

And Father, I pray for those who are feeling that weakness this morning. Just feeling weak in their hearts and bodies and minds and spirits. I ask you, my Father God, to touch them today with strength from on high to carry on, to keep moving forward, to put one foot in front of the next. To trust in You with all of their hearts, to not lean on their own understanding, but to follow You, and to acknowledge You, and even in their weakness.

And I thank You and praise You for who You are and who You are making us to be. For we pray all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ our Lord and all God's people said together, amen.