

(Through the Bible) Acts 17

by Chuck Smith

Paul's sermon emphasizes the importance of worshiping God in spirit and truth, and not being limited to specific locations or temples.

Duration: 58:44

Scripture: Psalm 139:5, Jonah 3:4, Acts 17:27

Topics: "Repentance And Faith", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the preaching of Jonah to the Ninevites, where there was no message of repentance, hope, grace, or salvation. Jonah preached a message of doom and gloom, stating that destruction would come in 40 days. Surprisingly, the people repented and hoped for God's mercy, even though there was no promise of it. The preacher then emphasizes the eminence of God, his prevailing presence everywhere in the universe, as described by David in the Psalms. The sermon concludes by highlighting the importance of feeding the spirit instead of the flesh, and the two common responses to the gospel: mocking and procrastination.

Transcript

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Now, Luke passes that off in one verse. From Philippi to Amphipolis was 30 miles, another 30 miles onto Apollonia, and another 37 miles onto Thessalonica.

So it no doubt took them several days to travel almost 100 miles to Thessalonica. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, that is into the synagogue, and reasoned them for three Sabbath days out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ, that is the Messiah, must needs to have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is the Messiah. Now Paul took their Scriptures, and out of their Scriptures he pointed out and showed to them the necessity of the Messiah dying.

No doubt he was using Isaiah 53 as his text, and Psalm 22, and the other Scriptures where there is a type of the death of Christ. And so he was reasoning to them out of their own Scriptures, showing them, look, the Messiah needed to suffer and die. And Jesus, the one we are preaching to you, is the Messiah.

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude. So some of the Jews believed, but a great multitude of the Greeks, and of the chief women not

a few. A very strong church was established at Thessalonica, and for super extra credit you can read Paul's two epistles to the Thessalonians, which grew out of this ministry.

And of course, if you will read the epistles in conjunction with your reading of Acts, it really begins to put it together, and you begin to really, you know, tie the Scriptures together, and it's a very helpful thing. But the Jews which believed not were moved with envy, and they took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort. They went down to the bar, and gathered a bunch of Hessians, and they set all of the city in an uproar, and they assaulted the house of Jason, and they sought to bring them out to the people.

But when they did not find them, they drew Jason and certain of the brethren to the rulers of the city crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come here also. I like the charges that were made against Paul and Silas. Earlier the charges were made against Peter by the high priest that he had filled the city of Jerusalem with the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

What a glorious charge. Oh, that we could be arrested in that charge made against us. We have filled Orange County with the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

How I wish I could say guilty as charged. That would be great. Here's another interesting charge.

These men who have turned the world upside down. Oh, how I wish that I could be charged with turning Orange County upside down for Jesus Christ. But in reality, I would dispute this charge.

I believe Orange County is upside down and needs to be turned right side up. And so this charge isn't quite right. They should have said that these men who have turned the world right side up have come hither.

Men have their priorities all wrong. Men who are living after the flesh are not living as God intended men to be. They're living a life that is upside down, topsy-turvy.

They need to be turned right side up. And the mission of the church is to turn men right side up that they might have a right relationship with God, get their priorities straight. Now, Jason has received them into his house.

And they do things that are contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king followed by the name of Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. And so when they had taken security of Jason, that is, Jason had to post bail.

And of the others that were with them, they let them go. And so the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night unto Berea, who coming there went into the synagogue of the Jews. You guys just don't quit, do they? Now, those in Berea were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind.

And then they searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so. In Thessalonica, Paul reasoned with them for three weeks. When Paul came to Berea, he began to reason with these people, but they were more noble than those in Thessalonica.

They went home and did their homework. They read Galatians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. They went home and studied the scriptures to see if what Paul was saying was true.

I strongly encourage that. I have heard more junky garbage on television being passed off for doctrine by some of these evangelists that is just disheartening for people to take some of these weird, far-out ideas that these guys say and they just run with them. They don't search the scriptures to see if it be so.

After all, he said the Greek, and I don't know Greek, so it must be so, you know. One of these evangelists recently was talking about Paul's thorn in the flesh, and he said, now where else in the Bible do we find the word thorn? What was Paul's thorn? You know, people say a physical infirmity, but where else in the Bible do we find thorns? Going back in Matthew, the parable of the sword, and some fell among the thorns. But what were the thorns in Matthew's gospel? They were the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things.

And so, Paul's thorn was the cares of this life. He had taken too much on himself. Great biblical exposition.

But get your concordance, and you'll find out that the thorn that Paul talked about in his flesh was literally a tent stake, where the thorn referred to in Matthew was a little thorn that you might run into in a rose bush. One is a tent stake, different Greek word entirely, but you know, this evangelist is espousing his doctrine that nobody should ever be sick. And if that is true, then Paul could not have been sick.

And it is never God's will that a child of God should ever suffer. Suffering is never according to the will of God. What do they do with Jesus? And what do they do with 1 Peter 4.19? Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God.

Oh, wait a minute. But you just told me nobody ever suffers according to the will of God. Well, Peter, why did you write that? Didn't you know? Hey, don't just take what they say.

Search the Scriptures and see if these things be so. Because a lot of things are being proclaimed as Scriptural, which are not Scriptural. Be like the Bereans, more noble than they of Thessalonica.

Go home and search the Scriptures and prove all things and hold fast that which is good. And I encourage you, don't just take what I say. Prove all things.

Hold fast that which is good. Therefore, many of them believe. Why? Because they had searched the Scriptures and they saw it was so.

They saw the Scriptures were confirming it. And also of honorable women who were Greeks and of men, not a few. Again, a good work was established in Berea.

But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the Word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came thither also and stirred up the people. And then immediately the brethren sent Paul as it was going to see. But Silas and Timotheus stayed there in Berea to strengthen the brethren for a time.

And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens. And receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus to come unto him with all speed, they departed. So these brethren brought Paul, they accompanied him down to Athens while Timothy and Silas continued there in Berea to strengthen the brethren.

But when Paul came to Athens, these fellows that brought him down, he said, when you get back, tell Timothy and Silas to get here in a hurry. So they left Paul in Athens. Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred, provoked, literally, as he saw a city that was wholly given over to idolatry.

It would be the feeling that you would get perhaps in going to portions of Hollywood or San Francisco. When you see an area given over completely to sensual lusts, it just provoked him. He was stirred inside.

Therefore, he disputed in the synagogue with the Jews and with the devout persons and in the market daily with those that met with him. So Paul started meeting in the market daily with a group of fellows and started sharing the truth about Jesus Christ. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him.

Epicurus actually lived from 342 to 271 BC. This was happening in 53 AD. So it had been over 300 years since the death of Epicurus.

And in this period of time, his philosophy had degenerated. Originally, Epicurus said that the chief good was pleasure. But he went beyond that.

He declared that pleasure came from a simple life. That the more complex our lives become, the more we have to bother with the details. The more possessions we have, the more we have to worry about taking care of them.

So if a man can just live a very simple life, that is the key to pleasure. And pleasure is the chief good. Diogenes, who was following the Epicurean philosophy, was very content and happy to possess nothing more than just a tub to sit in.

And Alexander the Great was so totally impressed by Diogenes because Alexander the Great had conquered the world and was still restless. He vowed to be the disciple of Diogenes for life, upon which Diogenes handed him two fish and said, carry these around for two weeks and you will then be my disciple. And Alexander the Great became incensed and went off mumbling to himself about the stupidity of this man.

And Diogenes just shook his head and said, what a shame, such great devotion dissipated over two smelly fish. But the simplicity of life. But that is not the way the Epicurean philosophy was now being interpreted.

By this time, they had said the chief good of life is pleasure. Thus, you are to pursue after pleasure above everything else. And as a result, they had given themselves over to sensual lust.

The Epicurean philosophy was expressed in the Roman orgies where you would eat at these feasts all that you could hold at the first course. Savoring and enjoying every bite. And then between courses go out and forcefully regurgitate so you could eat all that you could hold of the second course.

And eating for the pleasure of eating. And seeking to measure the intensity of pleasure each taste brought to you. And so they were busy measuring degrees and intensities of pleasure.

This degrading of the Epicurean philosophy ended in the pantheism. The worship of everything, anything, all things. The Stoics said that the chief virtue was, I mean, the chief good was virtue.

But a man cannot know virtue who is emotionally involved. Therefore, you are not to have feelings. And they sought to become totally unfeeling.

To not feel pain, not feel grief, not feel joy, not feel anything. To just be Stoic about everything. Untouched, unmoved in your emotions about anything.

And this led to an atheism. These were the two philosophies that Paul encountered in Athens. And some of them said, what will this babblers say? The word babbler in Greek is seed picker, or we might say cotton picker.

What is this cotton picker going to say? And others said, well, he seems to be setting forth some strange gods because he is preaching about Jesus and the resurrection. So, they took him and brought him to the Areopagus saying, may we know what this new doctrine whereof you speak is? For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears. And we'd like to know what these things mean.

For all of the Athenians and the strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. The Athenians, not committed, just want to listen to anything novel and new. Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill.

The Areopagus is about, oh, halfway up from the Agora, the marketplace, to the Acropolis, the top of the hill where stands the Parthenon. And, well, almost up to the Parthenon, maybe it's two thirds of the way up, is this outcropping of rock where it was known as the Stone of Impotence, where men would go to espouse their philosophies and their ideas. And all these guys would sit around, you know, in their robes and the Grecian.

And here is the Parthenon above them and the Agora below them and all. And there, you know, they're getting into these philosophical debates and discussions and all. And so Paul is set on this Stone of Impotence.

And, you know, go ahead and give your spiel. So Paul said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. Now the words too superstitious are a poor translation.

The American Authorized has a better translation. It translates that you are very religious. Paul was not insulting these fellows to begin his speech.

That's no way to persuade people. And Paul was going to try to persuade them to his belief in Jesus Christ. And so he said, I perceive that you are very religious, which indeed was evidenced in the city of Athens.

There were travelers to the city of Athens who said there were more gods than people in the city. That every street corner had its god. And then along the block, there were all of these gods, marble, silver, gold, carved images, idols that were worshipped by the people.

Many great temples, which some of them, the ruins still stand as magnificent wonders today. And so as I was passing by and beholding your devotions, watching these people stop and praying to these various gods. It's always interesting to watch the devotions of people.

I find it fascinating in Mexico. I find it fascinating to see the veneration that is given to the saints, where the mummies and all are in these caskets within the cathedrals. And to watch the people coming on their knees and dropping their money in and crying and weeping as they're praying to this saint for some miracle to take place.

I find it interesting to watch the Muslims wash their feet, get out their little rugs and bow towards the east. And Paul was observing their devotions. And he said, as I was observing you and your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription to the unknown God.

Now, 200 years later, there was an explorer who passed through Athens who was also a historian, Pausanias. And he writes in his books of the number of idols in Athens. And it is he who made this statement.

There are almost more gods than people. And in describing the city of Athens in his history book, he also speaks of this altar to the unknown God. In fact, he speaks of three of them that he observed in Athens.

Now, the Greeks had deified just about everything they could think of. They had deified the forces of nature. They had deified the various emotions of man.

They deified various concepts. There was the God of the arts, the God of the carpenters, the God of the masons, and gods for everything. The God of war, the God of peace, the God of love, the God of hate, the God of jealousy, the God of anger, gods for everything.

And some fellow no doubt thought, well, we may have forgotten one. And it would be a shame to slight one of them. He might get angry with us.

So why don't we build an altar to him? And since we don't know him, we'll just inscribe it to the unknown God. Just so we're not slighting him and getting him angry with us. And Paul said, I saw this altar with the inscription to the unknown God.

And he's the God I'd like to talk to you about. Interesting how Paul begins right where they are. You're very religious people.

I can, I've observed that. And here in the Agora down there, I pass by this one little altar to the unknown God. That's the God I'd like to talk to you about.

And what does he tell him about the unknown God? He said, you worship him ignorantly. How many people today are still worshiping God in ignorance? You remember, Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, God is a spirit. And they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

But men are still worshiping him ignorantly. But he is the God that made the world and all of the things that are therein. He is not a creation of man.

He is the creator of man. He is not made out of marble or gold or silver or things found in the earth. He created these things.

He is vastly superior to the gods that you are worshiping. For he is the creator. Oh, the people would realize that today.

You see, I would say that though the polls show that the majority of the people in the United States believe in God, I would dare venture that though the majority of the people in the United States may believe in God, the majority of the people in the United States worship materialism. Now, they may believe in God, but they don't worship God. They worship the creation of man.

The created things by man rather than worshiping God. And so the unknown God whom you are ignorantly worshiping is the one that made the world and everything that is in it. Seeing he is the Lord of heaven and earth.

This unknown God rules over all. He is the Lord over the heaven and the earth. And he doesn't dwell in temples made with hands.

Directly below Paul from Mars Hill at that end of the Agora was the Theseum, that glorious Doric temple that still stands pretty much intact today as a magnificent demonstration of the perfection of architecture. At the far end of the Agora, a block and a half, two blocks away, that great temple to Juno, which ruins are still pretty much intact today. Above Paul there on the Parthenon, that great temple to the Athene, the goddess and those marvelous temple structures there on the Acropolis.

Paul said, God, the unknown God, he doesn't dwell in these temples. It is interesting when Solomon built a temple for God. That as Solomon dedicated the temple, he said, Oh, God, we know that the heaven of heavens cannot contain you.

We understand how that you fill the universe. So we haven't really built this for you to dwell in. In other words, it isn't that God is going to dwell here exclusive of someplace else.

He dwells in the universe. He fills the universe. The heavens of heavens cannot contain you.

How much less this house that I have built, but God meet us at this place. Let this be the place where we can come and meet you. We all of us in a major are guilty of thinking of God in a locality as being more in one place than another.

Like truly God must be more here tonight than he is the bar down the street. Not so. God is just as much in the bar down the street as he is here.

You can't escape the presence of God. No matter where you are, you're surrounded by him. And God is never limited to locality.

Now, when I was a little kid in Sunday school, I was taught that if I went to a movie, the Lord wouldn't go in with me. And so if I decided to go in and watch that show, I had to leave the Lord outside and just hope that he would be waiting for me when I came out. But I wasn't assured of that.

And so I was taught a localized God. There were places where he was and there was places where he wasn't. Not so.

I can't escape him. So he declared unto them that he doesn't dwell in temples made with hands, and neither is he worshipped with man's hands or with man's handiwork. He isn't worshipped through idols.

He isn't worshipped through images. Not all of the churches believe that today, do they? And yet this is what Paul is declaring. He's not worshipped with ornate altars overlaid with gold.

He's not worshipped in fancy buildings. And careful, that cost 18 million dollars. You can worship God out there under that tree.

You can worship God beside your bed at home. You can worship God sitting at the kitchen table. You can worship God sitting on the sand at the beach.

In fact, I find sitting on the sand at the beach a very great environment to worship God. He isn't worshipped by the works of men's hands as though he needed anything. As though God needed for me to give him something.

What a ridiculous idea. Oh, Chuck, I need for you to really give to me this week. I'm almost broke and my program won't be able to go on another week.

Unless you bail me out, Chuck, and help me now, please. You know, I'm desperate. I know I've sent letters like this before, but this time I mean it, you know.

As though he needed anything. What can I give to God that he needs? That is the biggest problem. What do you give to someone who's got everything? David said, what shall I render unto God for all of his benefits unto me? And you know what he decided he could do? The only thing I can render to God is just to pray.

I'll call upon the name of the Lord. There's nothing I can give to God that he needs. As though he needed anything.

He's complete. My giving to God doesn't really benefit God. It benefits me.

I'm the one who benefited by my giving my life to God. God didn't benefit by that. So many times we want to make a big deal about our gifts to God.

You know, we want men to say, oh, aren't you marvelous? Whoa, what you gave to God. That's so glorious. And we have that kind of a mentality developed, you know, of exalting the man who is given to God.

As though God needed something. As though he needed anything. Seeing that he giveth.

It's not what I give to God. It's what God has given to me. That's what's glorious.

For he has given to all life and breath and all things. So our emphasis should not be on what we should be giving to God, but the emphasis should be on what God has given to us. And the ministry should not be emphasizing what you should do for God.

We should be emphasizing what God has done for you. What can you do for God? We're so weak in those areas. And yet we hear that as the constant emphasis of the ministry.

You ought to be doing this. You ought to be doing that. Now get out and do this, brothers.

Now do that, brothers. And extolling the man who has done it, rather than extolling what God has done for us. You see, when I realize what God has done for me, then I want to respond to God.

We make a tragic mistake in thinking I can do something for God and then God is going to respond to me. Now if you'll just fast for two weeks, then God will start giving you visions and you'll start doing this and you'll get this and this. So you ought to fast, you know.

Do this for God and God will respond to you. Now if you'll just start praising the Lord. Lift your hands and praise the Lord because you want God to bless you tonight and God will bless you when you begin to praise Him.

For the Lord inhabits the praises of His people. So lift your hands. Praise the Lord that you might get a blessing tonight, you know.

And they whip people into these hand-raising, praising experiences that I might be blessed. Oh yes, God, respond to me, God. Don't you see my hands are up? Respond, God, respond.

Bless me. Look what I'm doing for you. Not so.

The true praise isn't, you know, okay God, give me now. But the true praise is, God, You have given so much. Oh, how can I thank You? Oh, Lord, You're so good to me.

And it is that which arises spontaneously from the recognition of what God has done for me. That's true praise. So we need to know not what we can do for God, but what God has done for us.

And then the love of Christ constrains me. And I'm responding to that love. I'm responding to that goodness.

I'm responding to those blessings. And my life is so rich. My life is so blessed.

My life is so full. Just trying to respond to God as I'm learning more and more the grace and the goodness and the love of God that He's bestowed upon my life. I'm getting to the place where I can hardly take it.

I'm going to be translated one of these days soon. God's just going to translate me right into glory. His blessings and His goodness upon my life.

So rich, so full. And I just am overflowing as I'm trying to respond to Him. Seeing He has given to all life and breath and all things.

And He has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth. God has made us all one. There's neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, male nor female.

Jesus is all and in all. He's made us all one. And He has determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitations.

God sets the limits for our lives. My life is totally bounded by God. He has set the boundaries of my existence.

He knew the time of my birth long before my mother ever conceived me. He knows the day of my departing from this tent. He knows the circumstances by which I will depart from this tent.

My life is totally bounded by Him. He has set their boundaries that they should seek the Lord if, by chance, they might feel after Him and find Him. You know, a lot of people have sought the Lord on just purely a maybe basis.

They really didn't have many promises to hold on to, but just who can tell? You remember when Jonah preached to the Ninevites. There was no message of repentance. There was no message of hope.

No message of grace. No message of salvation. Jonah preached a message of doom and gloom.

He said, 40 days and comes your destruction. And the people all repented in sackcloth and ashes. And they said, who can tell? Maybe God will be merciful and spare us.

No promise of mercy. But just a maybe, if by chance, you might really feel God and find God. But in reality, He is not far from any of you, Paul said.

And now he deals with the doctrine of the eminence of God. That all prevailing presence of God everywhere within His universe that David spoke about in the Psalms. You have beset me before and behind.

Your hand is upon me. Where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there. If I descend into hell, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there, your hand will guide me. For He is not far from any of you. For in Him, we live and we move and we have our being.

I'm totally surrounded by God. I depend upon God for my very existence. In Him, I live.

God sustains my life. I'm dependent on Him. I move.

Wherever I move, He is there. I exist in Him, by Him. As certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also His offspring.

Now, this is found in the writing of Eratus and Ecclenthes, two of the Greek poets, who declared that we are God's offspring. Now, Paul affirms that these poets were right. For as much then as we are the offspring of God, then we ought not to be seeking to think of God like these gold and silver statues or stone that have been graven by man's arts and devices.

We are God's offspring. God is not our offspring. We cannot really create our gods, though man does that.

Man is an offspring of God. In the beginning, when God created man, He made man in His likeness and after His own image. But man fell, and thus man is fallen from the image of God.

And as we look around today, we see man in his fallen state. He was made in the image of God. He was made in the likeness of God, but he has fallen from that.

God made us to be spiritual beings. God made us to live after the Spirit and be ruled by the Spirit. But man fell from that, and man followed after the flesh and was ruled by his flesh.

And being a body conscious being, he became as the animal, which is a body conscious being. And so man looked around for identity, and he says, Oh, there goes my uncle swinging from that tree. Because all he thinks about is eating and, you know, existing.

He has a body conscious life. And all I need is a place to live and something to eat, you know. And so this body conscious life, and thus I relate to the animals.

That's wrong. We are God's offspring. And I can never have a satisfactory relationship with the animal kingdom.

I must relate to God to find myself. I will never find myself in the animal kingdom. I will only find myself as I am relating again to God.

Now, I was created in the image of God. I fell from that image of God. But Jesus came in order that he might restore me into the image of God as I yield my life to him.

So, beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be. But we know when he appears, we're going to be like him.

For he is restoring us into that image. For we with open face are beholding the glory of the Lord. And we are being changed from glory to glory into the same image.

Because the spirit of God is conforming me into the image of Christ. And thus, through the work of God's spirit, that which man lost through the fall is being restored to Jesus Christ as man is being restored back into the image of God. And when the Holy Spirit has completed his work in my life, I will be fully restored back into the image of God.

And I will stand in his presence faultless with exceeding joy. So, this is God's work. I am God's offspring.

The Greek poets recognized that. Therefore, I should not think of God as some lifeless statue that cannot see, that cannot speak, that cannot walk. Made of marble or gold or silver that is standing here on the corner that men come by and pray to and bow to and worship.

You should not think of God in that terms. Because you're God's offspring, the living God. Now, in times past, God winked at this ignorance or overlooked the ignorance.

Paul said, you're worshiping him ignorantly. And in one time, God overlooked the ignorance of man concerning himself. But no more.

But now, he has commanded all men everywhere to repent. When the revelation of God was limited to the nation of Israel, God overlooked the pagan's ignorance of himself. But no longer will God overlook man's ignorance.

You have no excuse to be ignorant of God. The agnostic has no excuse for his position. God is knowable.

It is just he doesn't want to know God or he rejects God's revelation of himself. But God is knowable. And a position of agnostic is not an intelligent position.

For no man of true intelligence can rest in ignorance. And the word agnostic in Greek translated into Latin is ignoramus. God may at one time have overlooked the ignorance of man, but not now.

God is knowable. God has revealed himself through Jesus Christ. That revelation has been made known to you.

Therefore, you're inexcusable. You can know God. You should know God.

There's no excuse for not knowing God. Knowing God is no doubt the greatest bit of knowledge man can ever attain. The most important knowledge man can ever attain.

You may be studying various subjects. But the most important subject any of you could ever study would be theology. To know God.

To know the truth of God. He is knowable. At one time he overlooked the ignorance of man, but no more.

And now God has commanded men everywhere to repent. That is to turn. To turn from their own selfish ways unto him.

Because he has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. God has appointed a day of judgment. The judgment will be overseen by Jesus Christ.

The man that he has ordained for that purpose. And God has given us assurance of this truth by raising him from the dead. God has declared and then proved his point through the resurrection.

And thus that day of judgment is coming for all men. And thus God has said, repent, turn. Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.

And others said, we'll listen to you again sometime on this matter. These are two common responses to the gospel. There are those who mock at the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And then there are those who procrastinate. Well, interesting. I'll listen to you again sometime.

Putting off that repentance. Putting off that decision. But beware, lest you put it off too long.

For God has commanded now that men everywhere should repent. Because a day is coming in which God is going to judge men through Jesus Christ. So Paul departed from among them.

Now, it is interesting where Paul was persecuted, where they threw him in jail, where they beat him. He was ready to go right back and continue preaching. But to this attitude of, well, interesting.

But that noncommittal attitude, Paul had no further words to say. He wasn't going to cast the pearls before swine. I've given you the message.

I've borne witness. That's it. I think that one of the worst attitudes is that of complacency.

Really, a person who is really upset and yelling at you because you've witnessed to him about the Lord is far closer to salvation than the person saying, well, I think that's very nice for you. And I'm glad that you found something that, you know, makes you happy. That complacent attitude towards Christ is one of the most difficult to deal with.

Better the person gets stirred. Better the person get upset as it shows that it's getting to him than just that complacency. How be it? There were certain men who clave unto him and believed, among which was Dionysius, the Aria Apagite, and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

So there were a few. And of course, as church history goes, we do find that there was a church established in Athens. And some of the early church leaders came from the church in Athens.

But Paul established no real work in Athens on this visit. But he moves on to Corinth. And if you want to really get a background to next Sunday night, you can read Corinthians too this week.

And then we find him going to Ephesus by the end of the chapter. And so the Ephesian epistle would help you there. So you're going to have to watch a few less soaps and get a little bit more into the word this week, I guess.

But it won't hurt you. Isn't it a shame how much time we waste in front of that stupid tomb? I think that that's one of the greatest contributors to mediocrity in the world today, to dull people, to uncommunicative people. It's done more to destroy communication, relationships.

Man, all a guy can relate to is a TV tube. What a shame. You know, he doesn't learn to converse anymore.

Doesn't learn the art of conversation or relationships. We waste so much time. I hate to be radical, but you know, I dare say that if you left the TV off this week and when you're tempted to flip it on, instead, you just

flip open your Bible and read the Corinthian epistles and the Galatian epistles, the Epistle, the Thessalonian epistles, and the Ephesian epistle.

I would say that next Sunday, you would find yourself in such great spiritual spirits. You know, I'd say that you'd probably come to church just bubbling over. You'd probably have one of the better weeks of the year.

And then you wonder, how is it that this week is going so great? You'll never guess. You've been feeding the spirit instead of the flesh. And if you're feeding the spirit, then of the spirit, you're going to reap life everlasting.

If you feed the flesh, of the flesh, you're going to reap corruption. Oh, well, it was a thought anyhow. You can hail me before the magistrates beat me.

Do what you will. It was still a good idea. Why don't you try it? You might like it.

May the Lord be with you. Oh, may God bless you and just fill you with the knowledge and the understanding of himself. That you may come to know him in a deeper, fuller, richer way.

That your life this week might just be enriched in all things in Jesus Christ. And growing up in him to maturity, you might come into that measure of the stature of the fullness of the image of Christ as God by his spirit restores that which was lost because of the fall. So, God bless you in your walk and in your relationship with him this week.

May it get better than it ever was before.

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