

Series: The Acts of the Apostles: To the End II

Text: Acts 17:16-34

HI: You will search for God until you are found in Christ.

Title: *The Search for God*

Hook: Shopping

Date: 5.12.24

Purpose: To encourage God's people to engage Christ's mission and stay on message.

FCF: Like Paul in Athens, we are surrounded with idolatry. God's grace fills us, by his Spirit, to proclaim the gospel amid a culture searching for God.

COR: We all experience our worship wiring, as human beings we long for transcendence, belonging, identity, and community. The gospel meets us there, with the message of a Creator God who has come to find us in his Son Jesus.

Witness of Christ [WC*]: vv. 30-31: search for God hinges on Jesus

Apologetic: The transcendence, belonging, identity, and community that you are longing for is rooted in the image of God within you. You were made for these things, BUT you will only find them—the meaning you were made for—in relationship with the creator who made you. In God we find the transcendence we were made to experience. In God we find real belonging. In God we find our true identity. In God we find genuine community.

Text Tone: Exhort

Preaching Voice: Sage

Form: Inductive

Call to Worship: Psalm 34:8

Benediction: Psalm 145:17-19

Outline:

I. God calls his people to proclaim the gospel. (16-21)

A. Paul engages the mission. (16-17)

B. Paul stays on message. (18-21)

(HI) You will search for God until you are found in Christ. (22-31)

A. Humans are wired for worship. (22-23)

B. We search for meaning until we meet our Maker. (24-27)

C. The God who made us is not far from us. (28)

D. God's claim upon us hinges on Jesus. (29-31)

1) He commands repentance.

- 2) He guarantees justice.
- 3) He offers assurance.

(HI) You will search for God until you are found in Christ. (22-31)

III. The witness of Christ draws mixed reviews. (32-34)

- A. Some mock. (32a)
- B. Some procrastinate. (32b)
- C. Some believe. (33-34)

Main Idea:

Subject: A gospel confrontation with secular religion

Complement: The answer to the longing for God is the risen Jesus.

Exegetical Idea: The gospel confronts secular religion because the answer to the longing for God is the risen Jesus.

Theological Idea: Human beings are instinctually religious, and God's answer to these longings is Jesus.

Homiletical Idea: You will search for God until you are found in Christ.

Introduction:

READ Acts 17:16-34

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

²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ 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.

²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ 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, ²⁷ 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, ²⁸ 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.’

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

³² Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” ³³ So Paul went out from their midst.

³⁴ But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them. ¹

I. God calls his people to proclaim the gospel. (16-21)

Athens was “one great altar, one great sacrifice.”

“[In Athens], it was easier to find a god there than a man.”

Babbler: “someone who collects scraps”

READ Acts 17:22-23

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ac 17:16–34.

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John Calvin: “the human heart is a perpetual idol factory.”

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READ Acts 17:32-34

III. The witness of Christ draws mixed reviews. (32-34)

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Conclusion:

“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. ... If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthy pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.” C.S. Lewis

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