

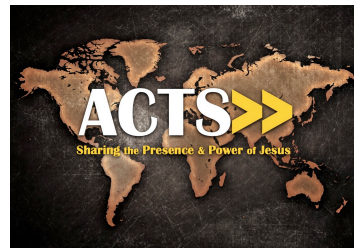
SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message...

Sharing Christ in Culture

With Ryan Dawson - Lead Pastor

September 14, 2025



How do we share Jesus in a culture of competing voices?

Acts 17:16-34 (NLT): While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city. ¹⁷ He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there. ¹⁸ He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about Jesus and his resurrection, they said, “What’s this babbler trying to say with these strange ideas he’s picked up?” Others said, “He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods.” ¹⁹ Then they took him to the high council of the city. “Come and tell us about this new teaching,” they said. ²⁰ “You are saying some rather strange things, and we want to know what it’s all about.” ²¹ (It should be explained that all the Athenians as well as the foreigners in Athens seemed to spend all their time discussing the latest ideas.) ²² So Paul, standing before the council, addressed them as follows: “Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, ²³ for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: ‘To an Unknown God.’ This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about. ²⁴ “He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, ²⁵ and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. ²⁶ From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. ²⁷ “His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ ²⁹ And since this is true, we shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone. ³⁰ “God overlooked people’s ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. ³¹ For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.” ³² When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, “We want to hear more about this later.” ³³ That ended Paul’s discussion with them, ³⁴ but some joined him and became believers. Among them were Dionysius, a member of the council, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

1) Feel the Burden. ¹⁶ “While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city.”

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2) Build a Bridge. ^{22b} “Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, ²³ for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: ‘To an Unknown God.’ This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about.”

3) Use the Bible.

Romans 10:17 (NLT) “So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.”

• **God is Creator.** v.24-25

• **God is King.** v. 26, 28

• **God is Saviour.** v. 30

Ephesians 2:4-7 (NLT) “But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.”

• **God is Judge.** v. 31

4) Inspire Belief.

Galatians 6:9 (NLT) “So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.”

Big Idea: Because we love people, we build bridges, share Truth, & inspire belief in Jesus.

Who in your life will you love, build a bridge of friendship, open God’s Word, & to invite to believe?

Who is your “Athens” today?



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To get plugged in email:
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Sharing Christ in Culture
#20 of 23 - September 14, 2025

Context: for Acts 17:16-34

1. What do we learn about the city of Athens and its people from this passage? How does that shape the setting for Paul's message?
2. Why do you think Paul chose to engage both in the synagogue and in the marketplace? What does this show about his mission strategy?

Observation:

3. How did the philosophers and council members initially respond to Paul's teaching about Jesus and the resurrection?
4. What does Paul point out about the Athenians' religious practices, especially the altar to "an Unknown God"?
5. What truths about God does Paul emphasize in his speech (vv. 24-29)?

Meaning:

6. What does Paul's approach teach us about how to engage people who don't know or understand the Gospel?
7. Why do you think Paul connects the Gospel to the Athenians' culture, poetry, and religious practices? What does this reveal about sharing truth across different worldviews?
8. How does Paul present both God's grace (overlooking ignorance) and God's justice (a day of judgment through Jesus) in his message?

Application:

9. Where do you see "modern idols" in our culture today, and how might Paul's message to the Athenians speak into those areas?
10. How can you use Paul's example to build bridges and share the gospel with people in your own circles (school, work, neighborhood, online)?



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