

Searching for the Supernatural

Acts 17:16-33

**16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) 22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. 24 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ 29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” 32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed.**

I love it! I love it! It’s great to be with you guys this morning. In our family we do 13-year old trips. And so when a child hits 13 years of age, they get some time with Dad. We go on a trip. We make a memory. We talk about all things life. And so this past summer my daughter, Finley, and I go to Seattle. And so neither of us had been to Seattle, and so we went there. And we’re trying to figure out the things that you can do in Seattle. And one of the things that you can do is

go whale watching. And so we signed up for this, which meant we took a car to a little town around Seattle, like outside of Seattle. Cute town with cobblestone roads, little downtown area with coffee shops, and gift shops, and little restaurants, and whatnot. So we are walking, and we have a little time to kill, and we are walking in this downtown area, and there is this shop and it sells rocks.

Okay, and so it's a rock store. And so I'm like "Hey let's go in the rock store and see what they have to offer." So we go inside, it's a little store, and it's got a coffee table - large coffee table - completely made out of rock. It has sculptures in it out of rock, like they have little skulls that are carved out of rocks. And then they have these baskets and bins filled with all kinds of rocks. Separated, like if you want fool's gold or something, like they have that. Geodes, you know those rocks where you break them open and there's like crystals and stuff inside, like they have those. You can buy them. All kinds of fossils, and whatnot, you can buy all sizes. And so we are just kind of walking around the store. There's an older couple there, in their 70's, a completely normal looking couple. Like they could be here this morning. Clearly married, love each other very much, and they go to the crystal section. And they're choosing a crystal, and you can tell that they are on a mission. There is just a little bit more excitement with them being there than normal, being in the rock store. And so they are huddled up in the crystal section. They're trying to choose a rock for themselves. And they choose one, it's about four inches, you know just a little crystal. And they take it with care to the cash register, and they purchase it. And they're real excited about this. And I'm not eavesdropping, but I am.

And they take it over to the corner, after they buy it, and they're just looking at it almost like it's a newborn baby. They are like "Oh my, it's so, look at that, it's so beautiful. Did you see it? Yes!" And they are just kind of showing it off to each other. And then they go back to the person that they purchased it from and they say "Hey we're going to go to lunch for about an hour. Would it be okay if we left this here, kind of leaned up against that skull over there?" And the person who works there is like "You want to leave it here while you go to lunch?" Like "Yeah!" And they are like "What if someone sells it?" And they are like "No! Don't let anyone sell our crystal! Can you tell all your coworkers that we purchased it, it's ours? We just want to leave it leaning up against that skull over there for about an hour." And then the person is like "Why do you want to do that?" And they say "Because we want to charge it." It just got weird! And everyone is a little confused, and so then Finley and I walk out of the store and she is like "What was that all about?" And I'm like "Well they are searching for the supernatural. They are trying to find something bigger than themselves." And then I was burdened with the thought of, you know I know the supernatural, but I didn't tell them. I didn't bring that clarity for them. I let them sit in their confusion of trying to find power from rocks. And maybe you are like, yeah but that's weirdo Seattle. I'm driving down Hewitt Drive yesterday, Woodway, Texas, there is a store on Hewitt Drive where you can go and buy some crystals for your metaphysical work, if you want, help you manifest. And some of you if you are here, and you're a little older, you may not know what I'm talking about. But if you have children, you need to, because this is a growing pattern. This is a trend among young people.

In fact, we record a podcast here every week. It's called Becoming Something. And this is not in any way meant to be a flex. And I understand that's the risk of me saying this. Last week, that podcast was the number 10 podcast, number 10 religious podcast in the world, because we covered crystals and manifesting. And it topped the charts in the world, because of this topic.

And we need to know about it, but I think that we could tend to be a superstitious bunch. Like there's a superstition that has crept into our world.

Did you know that in America most hotels do not have a 13th floor? Did you know that? Like if you go to a high-rise hotel, the elevator is going to from 12 to 14, because people don't want to stay on the 13th floor. The 14th floor is actually the 13th floor, just insider talk, just so you're aware. Yeah. And you're like that's cool, but I'm not superstitious. Do you blow out birthday candles? Somebody said "Uh oh!" What do you say before you blow out birthday candles? Make a wish to who? Who are you wishing to? Wish upon a star. Hey, I got a wishbone in the turkey, let's break it and see whose wish is going to come true. Who are you wishing to? Throw a penny in the fountain, make a wish. But we're not supernatural.

You ever knock-on wood, you know? And I will pick on me. I'm in my house, we're building a house, I'm in my house all by myself the other day. All by myself. And in the hallway, there is a ladder leaning up against the side of the wall, right, a ladder. There is a hallway and there is a big area where I can go under the ladder. And then there is this tiny little six inch area where I can go around the ladder. And I am there all by myself, and I'm like "Well, I'm going to walk under the ladder. It's bad luck. Everybody knows." And I'm like what am I thinking? Like God's watching me up there like "No, no, no, don't do it! Don't do it! You did it! Michael, did you see what he just did? Break his leg!" You know, how does this work? Like what is it that we are actually thinking? I think we tend to be more superstitious than we think, and sometimes that superstition creeps into our faith. And we think, well if I didn't get a quiet time this morning, then something bad is going to happen to me. If I don't pray before this meal, maybe it is going to be poison, or I'm going to get sick. Or if I don't add "in Jesus' name" on the end of it, God may not hear it. And there's a superstition that can creep into the things that we believe about God.

There's only two supernatural forces in the world. There's God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and his angelic armies. And there's Satan and his demonic armies. Those are the only two supernatural forces in the world. If you're not talking to this one, you're probably talking to this one. Be careful! Be careful! But you and I, because of where we are at, and the book that we possess, and the songs that we sing, and really because of the Savior that we profess faith in, we know the one true God. But there's an entire generation, and people all around us, who are confused. And they're looking for someone to help them bring clarity to who this God is. They're seeking the supernatural, but they don't have a guide. They don't have someone to show them. And so you and I have to help them know who God is.

And so that's what I want to talk about this morning: The God we worship. We are going to talk about the God we worship. We're back in Stories from Acts. We are wrapping up this. We will actually wrap up next week at Family Reunion, but I'm not going to talk long there because that's going to be a celebration. But we will be back in Acts for just a minute. You are going to want to make sure that you're there. But as we look backwards, we started, Jesus ascended to be at the right hand of the Father, and his Holy Spirit came down with power. And Peter preached boldly the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and 3,000 people believed. And the church begins to grow, and it picks up momentum, as then we pull up a front row seat into the window of the first gathering of the church where they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and the breaking of the bread, and having all things in common. And then we moved into the temple where there was a lame man, a person who could not walk. And Peter says "Get up", and he

does, and there's a miracle. And everyone gathers around, so then he preaches the gospel again, and many believed and the church grows to thousands. And then there's this pause, where this couple, Ananias and Sapphira, they managed the perception of what others think of them. And they die right there on the spot. And then there is a man named Stephen, who boldly declares the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The people get so angry that they pick up stones and they begin to throw rocks at him until his spirit leaves his body and his heart stops beating.

And there is a terrorist there, named Saul of Tarsus, and he is the one that is leading the charge on this killing and persecution of Christians. Until he's on a road to Damascus and he meets Jesus. And Jesus says "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Why do you bring trouble upon my body? The work of my church." And in a strange turn of events, this terrorist leader becomes the greatest missionary the world has ever seen. And he goes town to town preaching the good news of the one that he persecuted. Here's a map that kind of shows you the journeys of Paul and all of the places that he's been (shows map). If you just look at those lines, you see how he uses the Mediterranean Sea as a highway, a thoroughfare, to go to all of these places. He gets off and he says "Jesus has died for your sins, and God has raised him from the dead. Jesus has died for your sins, and God has raised him from the dead." And people begin to believe. And now you are going to see him in Acts chapter 17 move into Athens. He visits Athens with this good news, and he's going to tell them that our God gives eternal life, that our God can be known, and that our God is the creator, the One who made you.

I will start in verse 16. Acts 17 verse 16. **16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.** So he goes into the church, or the temple, or the synagogues, where the Jews would practice their faith, and he preaches the good news. But then he goes over here to HEB. And he's like, hey guys as you purchase your fruit, and your goods and your food, let me tell you something about this Jesus. Let me tell you about this Jesus. And he preaches His death and resurrection.

**18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.** Simple message. Same message Peter preached. Jesus has died for your sins. God has raised Him from the dead. **19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean."** And then it says parenthetically **21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)** Greeks love to talk shop. They, at this time, would love to gather around and say "Hey, what do you believe? Here's what I believe. What do they believe? What do we think about this? What happens? Who believes correctly?" And then Paul shows up on the scene and they lean in. At first they're like this guy's crazy, but then they are like he's kind of making sense. And it's like Frank, what do you think? I don't know. Let's take him over to Bill, you know. Bring Martha and Francis, and oh, we'll go to the Areopagus. The Areopagus, it's the Roman word Mars Hill, if you've heard that. Areopagus, Mars Hill, same place. Areopagus means the Hill of Aries. Aries is the Greek god of war. But what can be confusing is that

Areopagus is both a place and a people, like the Supreme Court. Like if I'm in D.C. and I say I went to the Supreme Court. I might say I took a picture of the building of the Supreme Court, or I stood on trial before the Supreme Court. It's a place and a people. That's what the Areopagus is. Here where it says Areopagus it's talking about the people. It's referring to those who debate theology and philosophy and what they actually believe about God. These people are following religious rituals, but they're missing God. They're missing the relationship so many of us today, so many people we know, follow religious rituals, but we're missing a relationship with the Creator of the heavens and the earth. And he has this message: you can live forever. And that's our first point:

### *1. Our God Gives Eternal Life*

As we're talking about our God, I would say our God gives eternal life. As you read this text, you should be a little bit confused. You should be like why are they giving Paul the time of day? Like why are they like oh hold on. Like they called him a babbler, they're confused by him, but then all of a sudden they're like hey come talk to our leaders, you know. Like why are they giving him the time of the day? Who's there? First is the Epicureans. The Epicureans are all of your Enneagram 7s. They love to seek pleasure and peace. They're escapists. They don't want to experience any pain. They just want to find the joys of life and experience them. This is your "to each his own" people, "all ways lead to God" people, like this is those folks, right. You might know them. Maybe you know someone like this. And so here's the deal, they do not have a solution to death. They have all of this hey let's just have fun. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. They don't have a solution to eternal life. So when Paul shows up on the scene and he is like "You can live forever" they are like well, that's interesting.

And then you have the stoics. Stoics are pantheists. They believe that God is in everything. They believe that God is in the trees. God is in the grass. God is in the ground. God is in the dog, everything both good and bad. So you wouldn't resist anything. You have to embrace all of the things that life throws at you, because God is in it. But they too don't have a solution to death. They don't know what happens to you when you die. So when Paul shows up with this simple message: Jesus died, but then He came back to life, they are leaning in. They are like okay we want to hear more about that. This is the message that you have. Everyone around you is searching for the supernatural. They're seeking out spiritual things. And you are like "I know how you can live forever."

Jeff Bezos, in 2020, retired as the richest man in the world, retired from Amazon. When he did, he wrote his shareholders a really lengthy letter. And in that letter he nodded his head at the work that he was going to leave to do. And in that lengthy letter he had lengthy quotes from Richard Dawkins. Richard Dawkins is arguably the most well-known atheist of our time. The atheist doing the most work today. He wrote *The God Delusion*. And Jeff Bezos quotes him in his farewell email to his shareholders. He said "Staving off death is a thing that you have to work at. If living things don't actively work to prevent it, they will eventually merge with their surroundings and cease to exist as autonomous beings. That is what happens when they die."

Jeff Bezos leaves Amazon takes millions of dollars, and begins to invest them in a company that has one goal: the search for eternal life. And this is not click bait headlines. Like this is not age-

defying beauty treatments. They are trying to figure out how you can live forever. And he's putting millions of dollars to this work. And he could have just called me. You know, I would have done it for thousands. I would have told him for a whole lot less, how you can live forever. And I think we forget like that is what we know. We know, like you leave here this morning with the knowledge of how people can live forever.

Verse 22. **22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.** I read the NIV, it says religious. Your version probably says religious. The word is not religious. It is *dido daimones*. *Dido* is the fear of. *Daimones* is demons. The fear of demons. In my humble opinion, that word would be better translated as superstitious. I see that in every way you are very superstitious. You fear demons.

**23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.** You don't know who God is. I'm going to tell you who He is. *Agnostos Theos* - the unknown God. *Agnostos Theos*. It is where we get the word agnostic. Prefix "a" is without. "Gnostic" is knowledge. Without knowledge. I can't know. There's a God. We can't know who they are. Agnosticism is the fastest growing religion in America today. I believe in a higher power. I am spiritual, but not religious. There's some sort of creator out there, but we cannot know who He is. This was the struggle in Athens. They worshiped gods. They had shrines and temples to gods that they couldn't know. And Paul shows up on the scene like Buddy the Elf. And he's like, "I know Him! I know Him! And you can too!" And that's my second point:

## *2. Our God Can Be Known*

Our God can be known. A little history lesson on Athens. Six hundred years prior to Paul showing up on the scene, so prior to this moment in history in Acts 17, there was a plague that hit Athens. People were dying. And so they began to reach out for help and they knew of a wise philosopher named Epimenides. So they call up, or send word, for Epimenides and say hey we need help. People are dying. Epimenides comes into Athens. He assesses the situation, and what he does is he gathers some sheep, hungry sheep, and he releases the hungry sheep knowing that hungry sheep don't lie down. So he thought if they lay down, this will be a supernatural work. And he instructed the Athenians if a sheep lies down, you sacrifice that sheep right there to an unknown god, unless they lie down right next to a temple or some known god. So all throughout Athens, because of what happened 600 years prior, there are these temples and these shrines to unknown gods. That's how they got there. And I would tell you that if you have a "thing" you have a creator of that thing. And depending on what the thing is, will depend on who the creator is and their ability to tell you who they are.

If you're walking through a forest, walking through a forest, beautiful day, grass beneath your feet, and you kick a watch. You pick that watch up and you look at it. There are lots of moving parts in the watch. Lots of things happening there for it to be able to tell you the time. You are not going to think, no one in their right mind, is going to think "Oh man, time and chance, look at that. Even threw Rolex up there." Just happenstance, like somehow things just clashed together and this watch was born. You see a watch, you're going to assume that somewhere there

is a watchmaker. Like, someone, in their mind the watch was born. And someone put tools together, and sprockets, and things that work and it tells you the time.

Go simpler: you are walking in the forest, and you come up to a wall, a brick wall. Bricks stacked on top of each other with mortar in between. You're going to assume that there was a bricklayer. That somebody made that wall. That it wasn't time and chance. It wasn't happenstance. The bricks didn't fall from the sky and just magically stack on top of each other. Someone stacked them. If you look at a leaf under a microscope, what you are going to see are cells stacked on top of each other like bricks making that leaf. It's interesting because that leaf attaches to a tree. And that tree breathes in carbon dioxide and breathes out oxygen. Interesting about O<sub>2</sub> is it's the very thing that you need for life. It sustains you here on earth, which orbits around the sun at just the right distance. Because if it was any closer, you would burn up and any further you would freeze. And as on this earth, this ball that is moving in a circle at a thousand miles an hour, is gravity. Gravity holds you to it. If it was stronger it would flatten you to the earth. If it was less, it would send you out into orbit. But it is fine-tuned, much more intently than a watch, a Rolex, to hold you within this atmosphere that rains down water that the tree needs, and lifts it back up into the sky, and rains it back down again. Much more intricate than a watch or a wall. We see creation and we assume a creator. When you see creation you assume a creator. And the more complex the creation is, the more gifted the ability of the creator. Does that make sense?

Like if I show you a cake, a beautiful cake, it's a four tiered cake, a complex cake, it's iced perfectly, or frosted - I don't know I get those confused - but it's got the stuff on it. And you see it and somebody has gone with great care and like piped out the icing on the edge, on all of the edges, it's a really pretty cake. And it's stacked, it has four tiers stacked on top of each other, and you see it and that is a beautiful cake. But then you taste, and I cut you a piece, and you put it in your mouth and you are like wow this is a flavor explosion. The sugar and the flour and the eggs, and the vanilla, and all of the things that you make a cake with, mixed perfectly together and baked for just the right time that it would be so delicious. Not just beautiful, but taste good. And you say I have to meet whoever made this cake. You want to meet them. I say that I would love to introduce you to them. And I take you over and I introduce you to a 2 year old and I say they made the cake. And you would be like "No they didn't." And that's a logical conclusion. No they didn't make the cake, because the cake is complex. The cake had to be baked. They had to control the oven. They had to mix the ingredients. They had to ice it. They can barely tell me their name. You would assume that whoever baked the cake can tell you their name, just because of the complexity that the cake is.

If there is a God, and He created the world, He can certainly tell you who He is. And maybe you draw the conclusion that He can, but He doesn't because He's not a loving God. Maybe you think that. Then you look at the gospel and you see that that God loved you so much that He came here to die for you so that you would know who He is. And then He instructs His followers "Please tell them who I am so that they would know who I am."

Verse 24. **24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth** Okay, Paul's about to go off. I might have to start over. They made the mistake, they gave him a microphone and he's like alright let's go. **24 The God who made the world and**

everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. **25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’** “We are his offspring” is a quote from Epimenides. So he’s using their own poets, and their own philosophers, to connect their ideologies to the gospel. And this is Romans 1 kind of stuff. He says hey look around you. God created everything. You are his offspring. He formed you in your mother’s womb. And not just that, but he determined when you would live and where you would live. He gave you your boundaries before the creation of the world. He ordained the path that you would walk in, the people that you would belong to. He knew it before creation.

**29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. Aratus said this. Again, one of their philosophers. He’s quoting them. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”** Paul is taking what they believe, and like a masterful evangelist, he’s connecting what they believe to the truth of the scripture of the gospel. He’s saying God made everything, and everyone from one person. He made all people. He’s saying He made us, so you could never make Him. That doesn’t seem very relevant to us today, but it was very relevant to them because they’re trying to manufacture gods. And that’s my third point:

### *3. Our God Made Us, We Cannot Make Him*

Our God made us, we cannot make him. You do not need good luck charms. You don’t need a rabbit’s foot, you have Jesus. You don’t need your lucky socks, you have Jesus. You don’t need to wear that jersey without washing it for every game. By the grace of God, please wash it. You know we all want you to wash it. That is superstition. You don’t need to touch the door knob 5 times, or knock on wood, you have Jesus. You have the gospel. You know God, you don’t need luck. You know God!

In Acts chapter 19, so 2 chapters later, Paul is going to go into Ephesus. In Ephesus there is a riot. A riot breaks out. Does anybody know why a riot breaks out in Ephesus (scans the crowd)? Does anyone know? Silversmith is correct, Demetrius specifically. There is a silversmith. His job is to make these little gods. He’s the wholesaler. He sells those little gods to the retailers in the concession stands and the gift shops, if you will, and then they resell the gods. And Demetrius brings together all of the store owners and he says “Hey, this guy Paul, he’s bad for business. Because do you know what he said?” And this is a quote from Demetrius, “He is saying that gods made by human hands are no gods at all.” And they stir up a riot. It says that everyone is rioting, that there are some people that are stirring up trouble and they don’t even know why they’re there. Because they’re selling gods made by human hands.



I believe that in every single one of you, every one of us, there is a desire to be a god, okay. Believe it or not, I actually think that desire originally comes from a great place. You see when God placed them, Adam and Eve, in the garden, He made them in His image and in His likeness. And He said I want you to rule over the fish of the sea, the animals of the land, and the birds of the air. So He made, God made humans in His likeness to rule. I've made you like a god. The problem is we then say, well, if I'm like a god, I don't want to worship you as God, I want to be worshiped as god. I want comfort and I want control. And now, that God-given desire goes astray. It has a virus in it. It's what happened between Satan and God, Lucifer and God. I don't want to worship you as God. I want to be worshiped as god. And so, when we go that way we stir up a satanic, or demonic, spirit. We go the way of the enemy. We want to build our palaces, and have our servants, and we want to be in control. That doesn't work out for anyone. And what it can get to, is it can come to a place where people will attempt to manifest that makes them like God. Have crystals, seek control or power, right, trying to make them like God. All the way to a place to where they actually make god. If you can make god, you are playing god. If you could make a god, you would be playing god. But you and I, we worship the God of all gods. The God of heaven and earth.

And Paul says this in 32: **32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed.** He shared about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is your job! You are going to leave here in a minute and you walk out those doors and you are like "But I don't know what to say." Jesus Christ died for your sins. Then God raised Him from the dead, giving you the hope of eternal life. Say that and leave it up to God. Jesus Christ died for your sins. God raised Him from the dead, giving you the hope of eternal life. We think, well my professor's so much smarter than me and I don't have the apologetics. I don't know how to defend God. I love what Spurgeon said when asked about defending God. He was at this place preaching and there's a lion in a cage, surrounded by soldiers with guns and knives. He said, "Defending God is as futile as those soldiers defending that lion. They're wasting their time. All they need to do is open the cage. The lion can defend himself."

When you move into a conversation like "But I don't know how to defend God." Jesus Christ died for your sins. God raised him from the dead, giving you the hope of eternal life. Just say that, and let God do his work. Let God be God. Share the gospel. And can I tell you what's going to happen if you do that faithfully? Some are going to believe and some are going to leave angry. And that's what happened here. Some believed and some left angry. Same thing is going to happen for you. You don't have to be surprised. Some will believe, some will leave angry, and God can be God. In summary, our God gives eternal life. Our God can be known. And our God made us, we cannot make Him.

How many of you know the name Jim Elliot? Just by show of hands, Jim Elliot, you know that name? You know the story? The reason that a lot of people in church do know who that is, is he's a really well known missionary of times past. Jim Elliot had given his adult life in trying to reach the Huaorani tribe, an unreached people group in Ecuador. So this was a people group, a tribe, that no one had been able to make contact with. They were extremely violent. They were known, in fact, for their violence. And so Jim Elliot, you know his job was really to study this tribe, to learn their language, and to understand what they did. And as he gave his life to that, he

coordinated drops where they would drop off supplies and gifts for this tribe, trying to build a relationship with them from afar. And his entire mission came down to this moment where he was going to make contact. And so they landed a seaplane on the shore where this tribe lives. He gets out of the plane, and almost immediately is killed. They speared him to death. Pretty anticlimactic for a missionary.

But his wife, Elisabeth Elliot, had also given her adult life to study this tribe and attempt to reach them alongside her husband. So she makes plans to go in there. Talk about courage! She makes contact with this tribe. And they don't kill her. I don't know if it's because she was a woman, or they figured out that she was the wife of her husband, I don't know why they didn't kill her. But they didn't kill her. And she lived long enough before them to give them a message. See, she knew, she had learned from studying them that they had a god that they worshiped. The Huarani tribe had a god that they believed created everything. His name is Wayne Ganghi. Their god is Wayne Ganghi. That's who they worshiped, Wayne Ganghi. And so she lands and is able to communicate something to them. And she simply says, you know Wayne Ganghi? Yes. She says he had a son. And he was speared to death to give life to those who spear him. It's that simple message. You know your god, the one that you worship that you believe created all things? Well he had a son that you may not know about. And he was speared to death so that those that spear him could live forever. That was the message. She took what they knew, and she connected it to the gospel. The Holy Spirit breathed into those words. The entire tribe converted. You want to know our mission? You're going to flood into the city, and into the countryside, and into schools, and into communities, and into coffee shops, and into neighborhoods, and into buildings, and into workplaces. You are going to be surrounded by people searching for supernatural things. And you know God. You take the things that they know and you connect them to the one true God, and show them how they can live forever. Let me pray that we would.

Father, we need your help in that. We need your help in that. A woman would risk her life to meet with people that killed her husband, and in a store in Seattle I can be afraid to engage a stranger. And I know that your grace is sufficient. And I know that your power is made perfect in my weakness. I just think, at times God, we lose sight of our calling. We get stuck in the pursuit of comfort and control, and lose sight of our calling. And so just as we focus on this song, as we see Christ the only Savior, would you renew our minds and our hearts around our calling. In Jesus' name. Amen.