

# The Knowable God

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     just thinking that Cameron's probably the first pianist in this church who's ever played three staves at one time the other stave's on his hand so after three everybody say aww right well thank you Jean and Eleanor and Cameron and Esther Brooks I think she got mentioned this morning it was good to worship the Lord one of the things I love about this fellowship is that people here do love to sing the praises of God and you can tell on a Sunday morning I'm sure anybody else, Bill and others who've done any preaching here, John will say that it's very uplifting for the preacher by the time you get up here you feel as though your own spirit has been lifted before you try to lift anyone else's spirit so that's a beautiful thing let's just pray for a moment

Father we marvel at you and children should always have a sense of wonder at their parents they should always have a sense of awe and admiration and how much more the children of God we bless you we bless you Lord you are without beginning you will not have an end we bless you that you are the uncreated one and we bless you that you are infinite oh Lord and therefore our future with you in eternity is going to be laden with surprises because we'll never get to the end of learning about you knowing you and we wonder at this and we praise you for it but the great thing right now for us is that we can know all that we need to know about you through your blessed son through our saviour we praise you Father that you are the knowable God and you desire to be known and you've gone to such great lengths to be known we praise you for that and ask in Jesus name that when we leave here today we may know you somewhat better than when we came in and may it spill over from our lives into the lives of our society around us Lord because if ever a society needed to know you it's it's this very day be glorified oh Lord in us in Jesus name

Amen well turn with me then to Acts chapter 17 we're in Acts 17 the second half of the chapter now Cal took us through the first 16 verses sorry rather Thomas took us through the first 16 verses last week and today we're with Paul in Athens certainly gets around our Paul praise God that he did because if he hadn't got around the way he did we wouldn't have the faith we have today we wouldn't have the hope we have today so praise God for Paul's ministry so at verse 16 now while Paul was waiting for his the rest of his group in Athens his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols 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 some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him and some said what does this babblers wish to say others said he seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities because he was preaching

Jesus and the resurrection and they took him and brought him to the Areopagus saying may we know what this new teaching is that you're presenting for you bring some strange things to our ears we wish to know therefore what these things mean now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new so Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus said men of Athens I perceive that in every way you are very religious 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 the God who made the world and everything in it being Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temples made by man 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 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 not actually far from each one of us 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 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 the times of ignorance God overlooked but now he commands all people everywhere to repent 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 now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some knocked but others said we will hear you again about this so Paul went out from their midst but some men joined him and believed among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them may God be praised for these words let's just remind ourselves just for a moment

[ 7:17 ] I need to adjust this let's just remind ourselves of something absolutely critical to our understanding of the text I'm going back to Acts chapter 1 the very first verse in the first book O Theophilus I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and to teach remember those words all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day when he was taken up after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen he presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God and while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father which he said you heard from me for John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now when you think in it you know what's happening here is in my Bible it probably says the same in yours there's a little subheading just above the text that we read from Acts 17 just above verse 16 it says

Paul in Athens it would be just as accurate to say Jesus in Athens because all that Jesus began to do and to teach was recorded by John in his first gospel this is him recording what Jesus is continuing to do and to teach this is the continuing work of Jesus so it's just as accurate to say that Jesus here is in Athens this is Jesus at work in the intellectual capital of the world because basically that's what Athens was in those days it was the intellectual capital of the world if you wanted to meet the Oxford grads that's where you would meet them so so here we are with this this text what are we to make of of Paul being here in in Athens excuse me

I'm a bit dry do I have a sorry about that Paul's waiting for his friends to catch up with him in Athens they're still working through some of the work with the churches that they had been doing in Macedonia in the towns like Thessalonica and Berea and Paul's waiting in Athens and his spirit is provoked within him now that's that's a word you couldn't really exaggerate the strength of that word the word provoked it's the word from which we get our English word paroxysms so you're talking about you're talking about a feeling within Paul that is almost convulsive it's almost a violent emotional reaction that he's having to what he sees around him his spirit is provoked within him as he sees that the city is full of idols the Greek literally means utterly idolatrous utterly idolatrous there was a one commentator made an interesting observation that there was a historian of these times who about 50 years after this thank you

Stephen I appreciate that excuse me folks about 50 years after this point there was a visitor to the city of Athens who said it was easier to meet a god or a goddess on the streets of Athens than to meet a person and numerically that was possible people because Athens had about 10,000 of a population at the point about 50 years after Paul was there 10,000 of a population and they actually they had 30,000 idols in the streets of Athens attached to buildings and gardens on rooftops everywhere you could think of gold silver encrusted with precious stones sometimes just humble carvings made for poor people's dwellings 30,000 idols in the streets of Athens that's what provoked

Paul so you need to understand this man's having an almost convulsive emotional reaction to what he sees interestingly that same word from which we get our word paroxysm is used in Acts 15:39 to describe the argument between Paul and Barnabas at which point they separated and Barnabas went off with John Mark and Paul took Silas and continued his missionary work this was a violent confrontation between Paul and Barnabas now these two men were like that it was inconceivable that anything would ever separate them Paul owed his ministry to Barnabas taking a risk on him when everybody else was terrified of him Barnabas was the son of encouragement who took Paul and presented him to the Jerusalem church and said this man is one of us this man is putting his life on the line for the gospel and as far as the church was concerned

[13:34] Paul had been a terrorist he was just a guy to give a white birth to you did not want Paul in your midst but Barnabas took a risk on Paul and so Paul and Barnabas from that point on they became a working partnership and it was beautiful what happened between the two of them and the work that they did in the kingdom for Jesus but here they were they had this absolutely violent argument they must have been literally shouting at each other they just lost the plot with each other and they never did work together again after that point which is incredibly sad and yet when you look at the work that Paul achieved with Silas immediately after that clearly God was in something God was doing something at that point that made Silas the next partner to work with Paul anyway to come back to where we are Paul is deeply provoked within him here but there's a different kind of provocation going on here because this is not

Paul being angry in that sense that he was angry with Barnabas this is Paul this is the same kind of provocation that you read about in John chapter 11 where Jesus we're told is sized deeply in his spirit and it's like Jesus is filled with resentment at the power of death over the lives of the people that he loves and the fear that they have in the face of death and he's facing the tomb of Lazarus and Jesus just sighs deeply with the sense of the indignation that death should have such a grip on people's lives and he says Lazarus come forth and somebody once said it's amazing the entire graveyard didn't empty at that point now this is a different kind of provocation that's going on in

Paul this is Jesus provoked and provoking Paul in turn Jesus is it's like do you remember when Jesus was in the temple and he saw the money changers and he saw them selling doves and pigeons and turning God's house of prayer into a marketplace and he was deeply provoked in his spirit and he had to do something about this is what's happening here here's Jesus in Athens and he's looking at a city of 30,000 idols the intellectual capital of the world and people are living in the deepest possible darkness isn't it astonishing that you can be so intelligent and so utterly ignorant and I believe in all honesty brothers and sisters that if we allow the Holy

Spirit free reign in our lives and we don't damn up the Spirit and we don't quench the Spirit and we don't say no to the Holy Spirit that there will come times in our lives when the Holy Spirit will stir us up exactly as Paul has stirred up here until the point where we cannot be silent and we have to speak out and we have to say we had a situation just through the week there with someone that we know and love who sits in total darkness 24 hours a day 7 days a week never opens a blind and is absolutely miserable and fed up and bored and has nothing nothing to look forward to no reason to get out of bed in the morning and I I saw a little song that come from the pen of Graham

Kendrick way back in the 1980s and that's way back now isn't it really way back in the 1980s and it said this go plant your feet on Satan's ground and there proclaim Christ's name and we walked into that place of darkness the other day and I did exactly like that I didn't ask permission I walked over and I opened the blinds and I let the world in and this person said oh I can't see it's too bright I said that's because you're living in darkness you'll get used to the light you're meant for the light you were born for the light and I just opened the blinds and I said Jesus is Lord throughout the earth and he's Lord in this place here too this place does not belong to the darkness I was so provoked in my spirit I could not any longer go in and out of the house and do nothing about it now whether that was right or wrong of me to do that you can all debate but it just got to that point

[18:55] Jesus is Lord darkness is not God's intention for any of us and here was a city the intellectual pinnacle of the ancient world and they were living in gross darkness and Paul is a one man wake up call that's what this man is and he's a one God man think of it he's a one God man hear oh Israel the Lord your God the Lord is one that's the basic creed of the Jewish people and has been since the time of Moses hear oh Israel the Lord your God the Lord is one and Paul's a one God man and he walks into this city of 30,000 idols and he just he can't stay silent he can't sit and do nothing about it he's provoked to the very root of his spirit and he has to do something and I wonder about our society today

I wonder if we're provoked about what's happening in our society today because these were intellectual people who were living in total unreality can we grasp that to live in total unreality and yet still be an intelligent person what are you doing with your intelligence have you put your brain on hold we've got people here who are tearing down statues they want to say you know we've got so much sin to atone for because of the slave trade and all the rest of it I've never heard any of those people who believe these things say anything about William Wilberforce who gave 40 years of his life to oppose the slave trade and eventually won in parliament and brought that horrible trade not to a close but he brought it to a place of illegality it was no longer the thing that would support the revenue of the country and the

British Navy set out to stop the slave ships coming to our shores nobody ever says anything these days about William Wilberforce and he wasn't a black man he was a white man who gave his life for that cause and he was a Christian white man and he was provoked about this human traffic that was going on and a country getting wealthy on the back of African pain and sometimes this has to happen and when we see a society that steeped in unreality believing fairy stories believing complete and utter nonsense calling black white and good evil when you get to that point in the society can you stay silent can you not plant your feet on

Satan's ground and proclaim Jesus as Lord can you not do that are we too afraid of what it will cost us I think we probably are and I put my hand up to this I think we're all too afraid of what it will cost us or maybe cost our families if we begin to proclaim Christ as the unique Savior and Lord Peter didn't have the blessing of the state it was illegal in his terms for him to say there is one God and one mediator between God and men the man Christ Jesus there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved it was dangerous to say these things it was costly to say these things but Paul is so provoked here in Athens that he heads what does he do he heads for the synagogue the first place he goes to these are the people of the word of God they're soaked in scripture and he tries to reason with them how would he reason with them he would take them to

Daniel and say he would take them to Habakkuk and he would say Habakkuk said that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea and he would take them to Habakkuk and say is that not the way it's supposed to be how do we have 30,000 idols in this place how does that come about and what is the synagogue saying to there were Epicureans around and Stoics around the Epicureans basically were materialists they were pleasure seekers just you know there's nothing beyond this life they were practical atheists basically there's nothing beyond this life so eat drink you'd be merry for tomorrow you die that's the

[ 24 : 16 ] Epicurean philosopher you know just have a good time now and have a simple lifestyle and that's it because there's nothing to look forward to and the Stoics they took the line that well there were lots of gods but the gods had nothing to do with us or at least we hoped they didn't because there were too many of them and the only gods they believed in were like their idea of a god was someone who was like a human only more so so if we could get angry you didn't want to be around when a god got angry and if a god decided to come down to earth and make love to your wife and everybody else round about then he could do that they could get away with those things or if Poseidon was in a bad mood then your ship was going to in fear of make believe gods and having no fear of the one true god and so these philosophers would listen to what

Paul had to say with a sort of cool detached intellectualism and say what's this babblers trying to say but if you happen to have sold your life entirely to a fake bunch of gods then who's the babbler you know a babbler is someone who uses words that are totally and utterly unrelated to reality words that are absolutely meaningless words that just don't have any value but here's Paul speaking the absolute truth into their society perhaps for the first time he was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection and so they took him and they brought him to the Areopagus now Paul must have been speaking with some power he must have been speaking with some energy and some conviction and he must have been speaking with some ability to begin to persuade people or at least interest them in what he was saying because for them to gather him into their midst and take him to the

Areopagus that was the main sort of council where they would gather in large numbers to listen to somebody who they felt might be worth listening to and so they took him to the Areopagus and gave him an opportunity to explain what he was saying but there was another angle to it too because the Athenians essentially had got a sort of pleasure seeking style of life they weren't really very deep in their thinking you can't be deep in your thinking to have 30,000 idols in your city and not see anything wrong with that so they weren't very deep in their thinking and really all they were bothered about was novelty and here Paul comes along with something that's brand new and they say come on lads come and listen to this we haven't heard this before and so Paul gets his audience what does he do how does he go about this challenge what could he say to them

I mean he could really have got piled into them couldn't he he could have made them look completely and utterly foolish it wouldn't have been difficult to do that but what does he do you see this is Jesus at work in Athens and Jesus actually loves these intellectual fools fools and Jesus is seeking to reach them and so what does he do he pays them a compliment men of Athens I perceive that in every way you are very religious oh thank you very much Paul they'd be very pleased to get a word like that and that would seem to validate their thirty thousand gods yeah I suppose we're doing not too badly really are we no I feel a wee bit self congratulatory

I perceive that in every way says Paul you are very religious I even saw an altar you've hedged your bets you've made sure that you're not going to offend some god who's left out oh you don't want to offend a god I mean these are dangerous creatures and so let's not do that and you've got this altar to the unknown god that's very clever that's very clever that just gives you a position of security and safety there just keep everybody happy but you know see this unknown god that you worship I want to tell you about him this is the god I proclaim to you this is the one I'm talking about resurrection it's this god I'm talking about it's this unknown god you see an unknown god is not a lot of use because an unknown god can only be served by uncertain worshippers think about it if you don't know your god is he in a good mood is he a bad mood

[ 30 : 02 ] I'm on his right side I'm on his black side what do you do with a god you don't know it could be totally unpredictable just when you think your god is on side he could do something that blows you out of the water oh goodness so an unknown god can only be served by uncertain worshippers they've got no assurance of anything so here they are worshipping an unknown god and they don't see any problem with that and Paul is saying actually there's a big problem with that you need to know this unknown god because I'm here to tell you that the unknown god is the knowable god the unknown god is the knowable god he wants to be known you see if you think about it theology without revelation is impossible you cannot study theology unless the god that you want to study is willing to let you know him if he hides himself in obscurity you can study theology all you like it will just be speculation now

I've used this illustration before but it keeps cropping up because it's useful just imagine how you would feel if you're digging away in your garden and then suddenly up pops this little garden worm and it says would you like to read my book I've just written a volume of anthropology I've been studying humanity for quite some time and I have all sorts of ideas I mean would that not be a ridiculous scenario would you expect a garden worm to be able to talk about mankind no and would you expect humankind who are finite we've got finite minds there is only so much that we can know only so much we can learn only so much we can understand how is a finite mind supposed to study an infinite being unless the infinite being wants to be known how is that supposed to happen so you see theology starts with revelation or it doesn't start at all theology without revelation is just speculation no one has ever seen

God said John the apostle no one has ever seen God the only God who is at the father's side he has made him known this is why we're here today brothers and sisters Jesus Christ has made the unknown God known he has made him known now it's okay to feel a wee bit of excitement at that point the knowable God is our God the God who doesn't want to hide himself a wee while ago there we sang blessed assurance I want to suggest to you that the next two words in that song are the most important words in the entire song blessed assurance

Jesus is Jesus is you can say Mohammed was and Buddha was and Krishna was and Hitler was and Napoleon was and Kim Jong Il was and all the gods of the earth were but you can say Jesus is and not be proved wrong he was and he is and he is to come this is Jesus this is the one who has made the unknown God known so we have a knowledge of God in Jesus and that's what Paul goes about to proclaim when he says to these Athenians this God you're worshipping is unknown this

I proclaim to you and let me tell you about him because the God who made the world and everything in it being Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temples made by man nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything oh my goodness can we get a hold of that this is a God who doesn't need anything now these Greeks were serving countless idols and all those gods were making demands of them oh you want to have a good crop well this is what you need to do you need to go to the temple you need to offer a pinch of incense oh you should really have sex with the temple prostitute while you're there because it's all about fertility after all and you know this is it every one of those gods was needy they all needed service of some sort there were things that we could give them that they needed and it was relentless and it was endless and here's a god who does not live in temples made by human hands he's not served by human hands and he doesn't need anything from us why because he gives life and breath and everything to everyone this is him this is the knowable god he's the one who gives everything and needs nothing he's the self-sustaining fire who can burn away in a desert bush and not consume the bush because he doesn't need the fuel he's a fuelless fire this is this is our god he doesn't need anything from us he doesn't even need worship from us if we worship him he's done the better for it if we refuse him worship he's done the poorer for it we don't add anything to him we can't take anything away from him when we worship him we worship him for our benefit not for his we don't add to his glory when we worship him we just proclaim his glory what a god we serve my goodness what a difference from the thirty thousand idols littering the streets of the intellectual capital of the world what a difference this is the god who needs nothing and he gives everything he gives everything his love has no limit his grace has no measure his power has no boundary known unto man for out of his infinite riches in Jesus he giveth and giveth and giveth and giveth and giveth and future grace is always pouring towards us brothers and sisters you will always have grace for what you need for today for tomorrow for all the tomorrows you'll never lack the grace of God it's always going to be there and he made one man and then he made from that man he made all the nations you know that Adam was the first Arab he was the first Swede he was the first Finn he was the first Dane he was the first Brit Adam was the first of all the nations and we all trace our roots back to him and God made this man the progenitor of the nations and having determined the allotted periods and the boundaries of the nations you think the map keeps changing it's God who keeps changing the map it's God who's in charge politicians

[ 38 : 45 ] think they are pulling the strings but it's the living God the sovereign Lord who is in charge of all things and his desire in all of this in revealing himself as the creator is that we should seek God and and and perhaps feel our way toward him and find him he wants to be found I will be found by you he said to Jeremiah if you seek me with all your heart I will be found by you and yet he's actually not far from any one of us what an astonishing statement for Paul to make to these pagan philosophers who were so near to God he didn't know how near God was to them which meant of course if God was near to them that meant they were near to God that's the logic isn't it so if God is near to them they're near to God and they don't know it there are thirty thousand idols distant from him and yet it could all the gap could be closed in a split second by saying Jesus is Lord and coming to that glad place where there's one God and one savior and the thirty thousand can let's find a skip and get rid of this rubbish but we are we're an idolatrous people by nature do you know that we're an idolatrous people by nature if I was to sum up who

I am as a Christian I would say I'm you know how you go I used to have a lot of contacts with the Alcoholics Anonymous community in Perth because the first chap who ever came to Christ in Perth came to Christ in our bathroom he was the plumber and he had major problems with alcohol but he invited me along to the AA meetings and I got to know quite a lot of the community there and there were some lovely people there but one of the things about that is that they never describe themselves as someone who's given up alcohol they always say I'm a recovering alcoholic well David Andrew is a recovering idolater I'm a recovering idolater that's what I am that's what I believe each of us is we're having our lives put right in relation to the one true

God and God is showing us how to get rid of the dross in our lives how to get rid of these trinkets and foibles and nonsense that we've carried around all our lives that are more important to us than he is because that's the simple definition of an idol you know anything or any something anyone who is more important to us than God you can make a God out of your child because you build your life around your child and your child becomes the center of your universe and before you know what's happened God has receded into the background and the child is everything and that's a dangerous thing to do to a child idolatry is something we're all capable of and we all practice to one degree or another so let's recover from our idolatry brothers and sisters let's recover totally see an alcoholic says I'm a recovering alcoholic because they don't believe they can ever be truly healed from it that's the basic doctrine of AA they don't believe they can be healed they're always going to be a recovering alcoholic but the difference with us is we can be healed

God will remove our idols from us he says he will do that we need to ask him to do that father show me those things that stand between me and the knowledge of you and help me clear them out of my life he is not actually far from any one of us and so being God's offspring says Paul we shouldn't think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone or an image formed by the art and imagination of man the Isaiah made fun of people who would take a piece of wood and they would cook their food over it and then they would take what was left from the kindling and they would carve an idol and they would bow down to this thing and he would say does it not occur to me that this thing in my right hand is a lie no wonder

Paul was provoked to see people who are so intellectually bright and so utterly steeped in ignorance at the same time idolatry is a fool's game and so Paul's Paul's big word to this dark society is God has overlooked your ignorance these times of ignorance God has overlooked them God is merciful he's not condemning you for the light that you've never had but now he's telling you the light has come and you need to do something in regard to that light once you see the light you have to respond to it or really consign yourself to darkness in a big way

[ 45 : 04 ] God overlooked the times of ignorance but now he commands men people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness by a man he has appointed a man he has appointed imagine that it's a man who's going to be the judge of all men and women it's a man the man is also fully God but he's a man let's be clear about that because as by a man came death so by a man comes life it's this man who's going to be the judge and God has given assurance that this is going to happen and here's the assurance he's given assurance because he's raised him from the dead brothers and sisters see when you and

I when we speak about our faith we're not dealing in fantasies we're not dealing in fairy tales we're standing on eyewitness testimony and prophetic fulfillment when we talk about our faith we can have complete and utter assurance blessed assurance Jesus is mine but you could also say blessed assurance Jesus could easily be yours because God wants to be known he doesn't want to be the unknown God in everybody's life he wants to be the known God the knowable God and he has raised up the church to make the knowledge of himself available to society so here we are in the midst of the woke generation have you heard that phrase the woke generation you can either be awake today or you can be woke but you can't be both because the woke generation is living in complete and utter unreality and they do not know our history all they've got is ideas and that means that they're living in unreality just like these



Athenians were brothers and sisters this church and every church that knows the knowable God we have a call right now and I wonder if God is provoking us in our spirit to look at the state of our society and say what are we going to do to reach our society are we prepared to pay the price that undoubtedly will have to be paid to reach our society with the mercy of God in Jesus Christ are we prepared for that price because I believe it's being asked of us I do believe it's being asked of us now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked of course you always get mockers and we need to be ready for that we're going to find people who mock us we're going to find people who just make fun of us and they'll be the kind ones there'll be others

I mean for goodness sake JK Rowling who as far as I know is not a Christian has dared to say that a man is a man a woman is a woman and she has received death threats because she said these things so we need to be aware of just what the cost could be but Paul you see here this is Paul in Athens and this is Jesus in Athens this is Jesus stirring up his servant Paul and saying Paul Paul these people need the light these people need the light and so even some mocked about others who said we want to give you another hearing and there were actually some there was at least one man Dionysius who was a member of the Areopagus and a woman named Damaris that we know no more about but these two people in this intellectual capital of the world came out of darkness into light that day and they decided to throw in their lot with the message that they had received from

Paul and Jesus Christ got two new disciples and a few others as far as we can gather from the text but here is perhaps the saddest sequel to this if you could read on into chapter 18 at the very first verse you see after this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth there is no record that he founded a church as such in Athens there's no record of Paul ever having gone back to Athens to look after a church as he did in many other places where he had planted churches or St.

[ 50 : 30 ] Timothy or Titus to look after them there's no record of that so as far as we can gather there wasn't a church in Athens but there was a church in Corinth it went from the pinnacle of society to the very gutter of society because Corinth was a sick city Corinth was a massive seaport and in a massive seaport all the dregs go on all the evils in society are represented there in those days it was legendary throughout the ancient world that if a woman was called a Corinthian girl she was just as loose in morals as you could imagine her to be that was a Corinthian girl so they gave their name as a city to all that was low and horrible in society Paul left Athens to this left the mountaintop of intellectualism and he went down into the gutter of society in

Corinth and the Lord said to him in Corinth don't be afraid I have many in this city who are mine no one will harm you and Paul spent 18 months in Corinth spreading the kingdom of God in the lowest sectors of society so praise God but God doesn't have favorites he didn't dismiss the Athenians because he knew he was going to get a better response in Corinth he gave the Athenians their day to hear the good news and of the mercy of God from the lips of Paul and he provoked his servant deeply in his spirit to make sure that these folks would get that message so I just wonder folks are we sufficiently provoked to be of heavenly benefit to our society these days let's pray living

God our Father we bless you for Jesus we praise you Lord for him who was considered an object of mockery and slander and Lord we remember that your servant who wrote to the Hebrew churches said to them that we should go to Jesus outside the camp bearing the disgrace that he bore Father forgive us if we prefer our Christianity comfortable help us in the name of Jesus to be as provoked for the sake of love as your servant Paul when he saw the darkness of these intelligent people Father help us to speak boldly and confidently and lovingly and respectfully in our society make us as wise as Paul where he didn't use any abrasiveness or high octane approach to the

Greeks but respectfully came among them complimented them and opened their hearts to see that you're not very far from any of them Father we praise you for those who were saved that day and whom we will meet in glory by your grace not but we do pray in Jesus name Lord for our proud society today that you would give our modern Athens its opportunity to hear the gospel from our lips and from our lives.

In Jesus' name, amen. We're going to have communion at the end today, so if you want to have a wee pause afterwards and just stay for that.

[ 55 : 02 ] If you love the Lord, you're very, very welcome to be at the table to enjoy what He has provided for us.