

Introduction (Acts 17:16-34)

A number of years ago Karen and I saw a romantic comedy called “While You Were Sleeping.” Sandra Bullock played the role of Lucy and saved a man named Peter from an oncoming train after he had been pushed onto the track by some muggers. Even though Peter was saved, he fell into a coma. Lucy escorts him to the hospital, where she is mistakenly identified as his fiancé. Most of the movie takes place while they are waiting for Peter to regain consciousness. While they were waiting, Lucy falls in love with Peter’s younger brother, Jack, and also with his entire family. At the same time, their whole family falls in love with Lucy. All of this happened while they were waiting for Peter to regain consciousness.

In our text today, no one is pushed onto the train tracks, and no one suffers a coma. However, the setting does bear some resemblance. Paul, Silas, and Timothy had been preaching in Berea, and many people had received Christ. When the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching in Berea, they came there, agitating and stirring up the crowds. The brethren in Berea led Paul out as far as the sea. Essentially they got him out of the way of the train of hostile Jews. Then, some of them escorted Paul to Athens, and a command was given for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible. Our entire passage is about what takes place while Paul was waiting for his team to join him. I have entitled it, “While He Was Waiting.”

(Acts 17:13-15) “But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds. {14} Then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there. {15} Now those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left.”

What do you and I do when we are waiting? When I moved to Tijeras from Atlanta, I was waiting on my next ministry assignment. I knew we were supposed to come here, but I did not know what my next assignment was going to be. I knew that the Lord had called me to plant churches and raise up leaders. I knew that I was called to teach and pastor. We sought the Lord for direction for a church home. We are all called to be members of a local church. When we receive Christ we are members of THE CHURCH, but we are all called to be joined to a local church where we are to worship and serve the Lord. We joined a local church and plugged in as much as possible. Karen taught Sunday School. I started a men’s ministry, and led a men’s Bible study. I organized and conducted equipping workshops. I did a teaching workshop, two evangelism workshops, and one workshop on prayer and intercession. For five years I waited patiently on the sidelines. I was not included in leadership. I was not allowed to preach, not even once. I was not walking in my full calling. Because of the men’s ministry, an outsider would think that I was doing a lot. But, those who knew and understood my calling, knew that I was sitting on the bench. I was waiting for my next assignment. In early 2010, the Lord impressed on us to plant a vineyard in the East Mountains. We prayed and received prophetic confirmation about the next assignment. For the past six years, we have been busy with this assignment.

Why do I bring this up? While you and I are waiting for direction from the Lord, or anything else from the Lord, there are things for you and I to do. While waiting, Karen and I were faithfully doing the things that we should have been doing. We were studying, teaching Bible studies, Sunday School, and equipping the saints for the work of ministry. We were tithing and giving offerings at our church.

We were faithfully serving God while we were waiting. While we are waiting on God, we don't stop serving God. While we are waiting on the Lord about a church, we don't stop honoring the Lord with our tithes and offerings.

In our message today, Paul was waiting for his ministry partners, Silas and Timothy, to join him. Instead of withdrawing and taking a break from ministry, Paul faithfully served God. While waiting, his spirit was provoked by the idolatry in Athens. While waiting, he faithfully preached the gospel. He reasoned in the synagogues and in the market place. He testified in the Areopagus. And God used him to lead many people to the Lord. Then, he went on to Corinth, where his companions finally joined him. Turn to Acts 17:16, and let's read our text.

While he was waiting

1. Paul's spirit was provoked
2. Paul reasoned in the synagogue and market place
3. Paul testified at the Areopagus
4. Paul went out of their midst

(Acts 17:16-34) "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. {17} **So** he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. {18} And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,"—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 which you are proclaiming? {20} For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean." {21} (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.) {22} **So** Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. {23} For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. {24} The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; {25} nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; {26} and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, {27} that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; {28} for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' {29} Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. {30} Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, {31} because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." {32} Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." {33} **So** Paul went out of 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. Paul's spirit was provoked

Paul was waiting in Athens for Silas and Timothy to join him. The Jews in Thessalonica had heard that Paul was spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ in Berea, and they went to Berea and agitated and stirred up the crowds there. Therefore, the brethren in Berea escorted him all the way to Athens, and now he was waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him there. While waiting his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

(Acts 17:16) "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols."

Paul had God's heart. Throughout the old testament, we saw the heart of God was provoked by idolatry. When God gave the ten commandments to Moses, the first commandment was, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God..." **Paul was provoked because he had God's heart.** Paul was also filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is part of the trinity. The Holy Spirit is God, and Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. His spirit within him was being provoked as he observed the city full of idols.

(Exs 20:3-5) "You shall have no other gods before Me. {4} You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. {5} You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,"

Here are some questions that I must ask myself. Here are some questions that all of us need to ask ourselves.

- Am I provoked by the idolatry that is in this area?
- Am I provoked by the things that provoke God? Do I know the things that provoke God?
- Do I love the things that God loves? Do I know the things that God loves? Am I giving myself to doing things that God loves?
- Do I hate the things that God hates? Do I know the things that God hates?

Proverbs 6 tells us six things that He hates, and seven which are an abomination to him. These include haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. Do we hate those things. Do we hate arrogant, critical eyes that look down on everyone. Do we hate lies? Do we hate white lies? Do we hate an exaggerating tongue? Do we hate one who spreads strife among brothers? Do we participate in things that spread strife? Do we hate the things that God hates? And, do we love the things that God loves? Paul was provoked by the things that provoked God. He had God's heart and God's perspective.

(Pr 6:16-19) "There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: {17} Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, {18} A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, {19} A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers."

Why was Paul waiting? Why is that such a big deal? The model that the early church used is much different than most churches today. They believed in team ministry. When Jesus sent out the twelve, He sent them out in pairs. When Jesus sent out the seventy, He sent them out in pairs.

(Mark 6:7) “And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;”

(Luke 10:1) “Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.”

Before Barnabas began his work at Antioch, he went and found Paul. He brought him back and together they led the church. Even though Barnabas led the work, Paul did a lot of the teaching. That is very different than what most churches do today. The Senior Pastor is expected to teach every week and the ministry is built around him.

(Acts 11:25-26) “And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; {26} and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

In Acts 13, God called Barnabas and Paul to apostolic ministry. The early church believed and practiced team ministry. There are lots of reasons and benefits for using team ministry. Here at EMVC, we strongly believe and practice team ministry. This may seem strange and different to some because they have not seen it practiced, but we see this as the Biblical pattern to follow. **Paul was waiting for his team to come because he believed in team ministry.**

(Acts 13:2) “While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

2. Paul reasoned in the synagogue and market place

While Paul was waiting for his companions to join him, his spirit was provoked. These were lost souls who were worshiping false gods and idols. These were people who needed to hear the gospel. Paul had an urgency to share the gospel with these people while he was waiting for his companions. These were people who had no hope outside of worshiping the true God. These were souls who were going to be eternally separated from God unless they received the forgiveness that God offered through Jesus Christ. There are some things that cannot wait. Paul felt the urgency to share the hope that was in him. “So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.”

(Acts 17:16-17) “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. {17} **SO** he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.”

SO, Paul was reasoning with whoever would listen. The Greek word is dialegomai, which means to discuss thoroughly. We get our English word, dialogue, from this word. He was conversing with them. Most people do not receive Christ through Crusades or in church. Statistically, only 1% get

saved through crusades like Billy Graham or Reinhart Bonke. Only 3% are led to Christ through pastors. There are a number of ways that people come to Christ, but **most people receive Christ through relational evangelism**. In fact, 87% become Christians through relational evangelism. That means that you and I have to get to know our neighbors and co-workers. You and I have to dialogue and have discussions with people. We have to talk to people. There is a common saying that there are two things that we are not to talk about with people, religion and politics. Friends and family, let me tell you that we must talk to people about their relationship with God. We must discuss, dialogue, and reason with people about their relationship with God. We have been given a mandate to share the gospel with people, and if we never enter a discussion with them about God, we are not being obedient to God.

- Visitation – 1%
- Crusades – 1%
- Church Programs – 2%
- Sunday School – 2%
- Special Circumstances or Needs – 2%
- Pastors – 3%
- Church meetings 2%
- Relational Evangelism – 87%

Where was Paul reasoning with people? He was reasoning with people in the synagogues and in the market place. He found the Jews and God-fearing people in the synagogues. He found all others in the market place. Paul did not exclude anyone from the gospel. He shared the gospel with religious folks and he shared the gospel with those who were not religious.

Many years ago I heard a quote from Billy Graham about religious folks. I heard that 70% of the people going to church today do not have a relationship with Christ. If that is true, there are lots of religious people who desperately need us to talk to them about God. Paul cared about the souls of these religious folks. He went to the places where he could find them, and talked to them about having a relationship with Christ. He was provoked in his spirit. He was stirred up in his spirit. Are we stirred up about the souls of people? Are we stirred up enough to share with both the religious people and the non-religious people? Are we stirred up enough to pray for our neighbors and co-workers? Are we stirred up enough to initiate conversations about God? Paul's spirit was so provoked that he reasoned with people in the synagogues and in the market place.

Luke names two specific groups that Paul reasoned with, the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The Epicurean philosophers determined truth through their senses. Does this feel good? If it feels good, it must be truth. The Stoic philosophers did not concern themselves with the senses. Everything was based on logic. Truth was established through logic. These two groups were both interested in truth, but their methods of determining truth were very different. I believe that Paul knew and understood his audience, and that is why Luke gives us this information. For Paul to converse with them intelligently, it was important for him to know what they believed. Paul knew his audience, and tried to identify with them. We will see this again when Paul shares at the Areopagus.

(Acts 17:18) "And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection."

What was Paul speaking to them about? **Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection**. He did not preach joining the Vineyard. He did not preach any other church or denomination. He did not preach Calvinism or Arminianism. He preached Jesus and the resurrection. What should we be talking to people about? We should be talking to people about Jesus and the resurrection.

We have a very simple message. All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Our sins have separated us from God. Jesus came to die for our sins so that we could be forgiven, and could have a relationship with God. After dying for our sins, Jesus was resurrected from the dead. When we receive Christ, we die to sin, and like Jesus, we are raised up to a new life in Christ. It is a very simple gospel message. It is also good news. Our gospel message promises forgiveness of sins and freedom from sins. We have very good news to share with people.

3. Paul testified at the Areopagus

Because of Paul's conversations with people, they wanted to hear more. They took Paul "and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, may we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?" Paul's conversations with them had been done in such a way that they were thirsty to hear more. He had seasoned his conversation with grace, so that they wanted to hear more. In Colossians 4:6, Paul wrote, "let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." When we speak harshly, it angers and closes down communication. When our words are critical, judgmental, or arrogant, it causes a breakdown in communication. However, when we speak gracious words, it opens the doors for more conversation. We need to season our speech with grace so that people will open up to us. When they open up to us, we can listen to them and hear their heart. Then, we will be able to properly respond to each person. It begins with seasoning our speech with grace, which is what Paul had done. His conversations had created a thirst to hear more the gospel that he was proclaiming.

(Acts 17:19) "And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?'"

(Col 4:6) "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

How are your words? Do your words invite more conversation? Are your words seasoned with grace? Are your words critical of others? Or, do your words edify and give grace to others? May we learn to speak gracious words to others so that they want to hear more about the gospel.

"SO, Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus." The Areopagus was a hill in Athens. Ares was the Greek god of war and pagos meant a rocky hill. In Greek mythology, it was at this rocky hill that Ares was supposedly tried. In Roman mythology, Mars was the god of war, so Mars and Ares were often used interchangeably. That is probably why the KJV translates this as Mars Hill. Much of the KJV was translated from Latin manuscripts, where the Roman god Mars would have been mentioned. Areopagus is the Greek term, and I believe it is the proper translation.

(Acts 17:22) "**SO** Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects."

The Areopagus was more than a rocky hill in Athens. The term "Areopagus" refers to the judicial body of aristocratic origin that subsequently formed the higher court of modern Greece. In classical times, it functioned as the high Court of Appeal for criminal and civil cases. So Paul was given an opportunity to testify before the highest court in Greece. God opened up a big door for the gospel.

“So Paul stood in the midst of the high court called Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘to an unknown god.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.’” I want to make several observations of Paul’s opening remarks. **First, Paul had gracious speech.** He did not put them down for worshipping false gods. He had gracious speech. He said, “I observe that you are religious in all respects.” He was not judgmental. He was not critical. He was not condescending. He found something very positive to say about them.

Second, Paul examined their objects of worship. He studied their religious beliefs. He understood what they believed. He told them that as he was passing through and examining the objects of their worship, he found an altar with this inscription, ‘to an unknown god.’ Paul took note of his audience. He took note of what they were worshipping. He examined their objects of worship. He studied what they believed. If you are reaching out to a Mormon, it helps to know what a Mormon believes. If you are reaching out to a Jehovah’s Witness, it helps to know what they believe. It also helps to know some Scriptures to defend the deity of Christ. Paul examined what they were worshipping, and could intelligently talk about what they were worshipping.

(Acts 17:23) “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.”

Third, Paul found a springboard to share the gospel. Paul said he found an inscription that said, “to an unknown god.” He did not accuse them of worshipping ignorantly. He let their own poetry and writings say that. Then he said, “therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.” He went from worshipping an unknown God to proclaiming a known God.

Let me give you another example of a springboard. At the 1993 Greater Hartford Open I was getting ready to tee off on the 7th hole on Saturday. Behind the gallery ropes that surrounded the teeing area, I spotted a young college student wearing a sweatshirt that said, “College is where you learn to make important decisions.” After I hit my tee shot, I pulled out a copy of my testimony and a used golf ball. Golf fans love souvenirs, so a ball or glove were always gladly received. My testimony had a color picture of my family on the cover. It had my testimony of how I had become a Christian written in it. It also included a simple prayer to receive Christ. Finally, it gave a few steps to take if the person did pray to receive Christ. I took out my testimony along with a ball and handed it to the young man. Then, I said to him, “College is where I made the two most important decisions of my life. I met my wife, and I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.” My group was already walking down the fairway, so I did not have time to say anything else. I gave him my testimony and the golf ball, and then caught up with my group. I used the cute quote on his sweatshirt as a springboard to tell him that receiving Christ was the most important decision that I had made in my life, and I had done it in college. Paul used the springboard of an unknown God to declare to the Athenians the true God. We must be on the alert for springboards to share the gospel.

We should pray for opportunities and open doors with people. We should be alert at all times. We should look for springboards in our conversations and dealings with other people. We should season our speech with grace, and try and make the most of every opportunity. That is what Paul taught and modeled for us.

Fourth, Paul identified with his audience. In verse 23, Paul identifies with them by quoting inscription on the altar about an unknown god. Then, in verse 28, Paul identifies with them by quoting one of their Greek poets, “for we also are His children.” Paul looked for ways to connect and identify with his audience.

(Acts 17:23, 28) “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.... {28} for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'”

I want to read a passage in 1 Corinthians 9. The passage helps us see why Paul made himself a slave to all. He said, “to the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without the Law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.” Paul did whatever he could to identify with those whom he was ministering to.

(1 Cor 9:19-23) “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. {20} To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; {21} to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. {22} To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. {23} I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.”

When I was playing professional golf, I used golf as a way to identify with golfers. I wrote and published two gospel booklets for golfers. I found a way to identify with golfers, and used that platform to win golfers to Christ. Each of us must find a way to identify with the people God puts in our paths.

Next, **Paul proclaims eight characteristics of God with the Athenians.** After quoting the inscription on the altar that stated “to an unknown God,” Paul told them that he would proclaim what is known about the true God.

A. God is the Creator who made the world and all things in it.

(Acts 17:24a) “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;”

B. God is Lord of heaven and earth.

(Acts 17:24b) “...since He is Lord of heaven and earth...”

C. God is Spirit and does not dwell in temples made with hands.

(Acts 17:24c) “...does not dwell in temples made with hands;”

D. God is the source of life. He gives all people life and breath and all things. In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

(Acts 17:25, 28) “nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things... {28} for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'”

E. God is sovereign and determines appointed times and boundaries for people.

(Acts 17:26) “and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,”

F. God is near to those who seek Him. God wants us to seek Him. He is not far from each one of us. God desires fellowship with each one of us. That is why He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins, so that fellowship with Him could be restored.

(Acts 17:27) “that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

G. God is the judge of the world. He will judge the world in righteousness. He will judge the world through a Man whom He appointed, which is Jesus. Because He will judge the world in righteousness, God is now declaring to all men that all people everywhere should repent. He has overlooked the times of ignorance. There is no excuse now. Everyone should repent and turn to God.

(Acts 17:30-31) “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, {31} because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

H. God furnished proof that Jesus is the Messiah by raising Him from the dead. Jesus has been appointed by God to judge the world in righteousness. The proof that Jesus is the Messiah and has been appointed by God was the resurrection of the dead.

(Acts 17:31b) “having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

What did Jesus share at the temple and in the market place? He was preaching Jesus and the resurrection from the dead. What is Paul preaching at the Areopagus? He is preaching Jesus and the resurrection of the dead. What should we be sharing with people? Jesus and the resurrection.

(Acts 17:17-18) “So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.... “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.”

4. Paul went out of their midst (Conclusion) (Chad come up)

When some of the Athenians heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer. **There are going to be some who reject the gospel.** But, others said, “we shall hear you again concerning this.” **There are some who want to hear more.** They are open to hearing more. Evangelism is a process for most people. It was no for now, but they wanted more time to consider what Paul had been sharing. They had more questions. After this, Paul went out of their midst.

(Acts 17:32-33) “Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, “We shall hear you again concerning this.”

Upon leaving, we see a third response. Some men joined him and believed. Among those who believed were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them. **There are some who are going to believe the gospel.**

(Acts 17:34) “But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.”

Dionysius was named after the Greek god of wine and revelry. He turned from worshipping an unknown god to worshipping the true God. He believed the message and joined Paul. Dionysius was not just anybody. He was an Areopagite, which meant that he was a judge in the court of Areopagus. He held a prominent position in that court. We do not know how many judges were there, but he was a judge in the highest court in Greece. He would have significant influence on others in days to come. Along with Dionysius, Damaris believed. We do not know much about her except that her name meant wife. Damaris comes from “demegoros,” which means a wife. Then, there were others that are not mentioned by name that believed and joined Paul.

Maybe some of you can identify with those who heard Paul in the Areopagus. You now understand a little bit more about who God is. You understand that God is the One who created you. It is He who gives us life. It is in Him that we live and move and have our being. It is He who will judge the world in righteousness. It is He who died for our sins so that we could have fellowship with Him. This morning, you want to repent, which means to turn from your old life and turn to Christ. You believe that God did furnish proof that Jesus is the Messiah by raising Him from the dead. If this is you, and you would like to receive Christ, I want to invite you to respond by coming up front. We would like to pray with you this morning.

While they are coming forward, there may be others that want to hear more about this Jesus and the resurrection. There is no pressure, but I want to pray for those of you. I want to pray that God will continue to reveal Himself to you. He wants fellowship. He is near you.

Others joined Paul. They became part of the church in Athens. Perhaps you are a believer, but have never joined the church. If you have a desire to join our body, let me ask you to come forward this morning. Let’s pray.

Introduction (Acts 17:13-15, 16-34)

1. **Paul's spirit was provoked.** (Acts 17:16)
 - Paul was provoked because he had God's _____. (Exs 20:3-5, Pr 6:16-19)
 - Paul was waiting for his team to come because he believed in _____ ministry. (Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1, Acts 11:25-26, 13:2)

2. **Paul reasoned in the synagogue and market place** (Acts 17:16-18)
 - Most people receive Christ through _____ evangelism.
 - Paul preached _____ and the _____.

3. **Paul testified at the Areopagus** (Acts 17:16-32)
 - First, Paul had _____ speech. (Acts 17:22, Col 4:6)
 - Second, Paul _____ their objects of worship. (Acts 17:23)
 - Third, Paul found a _____ to share the gospel.
 - Fourth, Paul _____ with his audience. (Acts 17:23, 28, 1 Cor 9:19-23)
 - Paul proclaimed eight characteristics of God with the Athenians.
 - A. God is the _____ who made the world and all things in it. (Acts 17:24a)
 - B. God is _____ of heaven and earth. (Acts 17:24b)
 - C. God is _____ and does not dwell in temples made with hands. (Acts 17:24c)
 - D. God is the _____ of life. (Acts 17:25, 28)
 - E. God is _____ and determines appointed times and boundaries for people. (Acts 17:26)
 - F. God is _____ to those who seek Him. (Acts 17:27)
 - G. God is the _____ of the world. (Acts 17:30-31)
 - H. God furnished _____ that Jesus is the Messiah by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:31b, 17:17-18)

4. **Paul went out of their midst (Conclusion)**(Acts 17:32-33)
 - There are going to be some who _____ the gospel. (Acts 17:32)
 - There are some who want to _____. (Acts 17:32)
 - There are some who are going to _____ the gospel. (Acts 17:34)

Introduction (Acts 17:13-15, 16-34)

1. **Paul's spirit was provoked.** (Acts 17:16)
 - Paul was provoked because he had God's _____. (Exs 20:3-5, Pr 6:16-19)
 - Paul was waiting for his team to come because he believed in _____ ministry. (Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1, Acts 11:25-26, 13:2)

2. **Paul reasoned in the synagogue and market place** (Acts 17:16-18)
 - Most people receive Christ through _____ evangelism.
 - Paul preached _____ and the _____.

3. **Paul testified at the Areopagus** (Acts 17:16-32)
 - First, Paul had _____ speech. (Acts 17:22, Col 4:6)
 - Second, Paul _____ their objects of worship. (Acts 17:23)
 - Third, Paul found a _____ to share the gospel.
 - Fourth, Paul _____ with his audience. (Acts 17:23, 28, 1 Cor 9:19-23)
 - Paul proclaimed eight characteristics of God with the Athenians.
 - A. God is the _____ who made the world and all things in it. (Acts 17:24a)
 - B. God is _____ of heaven and earth. (Acts 17:24b)
 - C. God is _____ and does not dwell in temples made with hands. (Acts 17:24c)
 - D. God is the _____ of life. (Acts 17:25, 28)
 - E. God is _____ and determines appointed times and boundaries for people. (Acts 17:26)
 - F. God is _____ to those who seek Him. (Acts 17:27)
 - G. God is the _____ of the world. (Acts 17:30-31)
 - H. God furnished _____ that Jesus is the Messiah by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:31b, 17:17-18)

4. **Paul went out of their midst (Conclusion)**(Acts 17:32-33)
 - There are going to be some who _____ the gospel. (Acts 17:32)
 - There are some who want to _____. (Acts 17:32)
 - There are some who are going to _____ the gospel. (Acts 17:34)

Introduction (Acts 17:13-15, 16-34)

- 1. Paul's spirit was provoked.** (Acts 17:16)
 - Paul was provoked because he had God's heart. (Exs 20:3-5, Pr 6:16-19)
 - Paul was waiting for his team to come because he believed in team ministry. (Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1, Acts 11:25-26, 13:2)

- 2. Paul reasoned in the synagogue and market place** (Acts 17:16-18)
 - Most people receive Christ through relational evangelism.
 - Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection.

- 3. Paul testified at the Areopagus** (Acts 17:16-32)
 - First, Paul had gracious speech. (Acts 17:22, Col 4:6)
 - Second, Paul examined their objects of worship. (Acts 17:23)
 - Third, Paul found a springboard to share the gospel.
 - Fourth, Paul identified with his audience. (Acts 17:23, 28, 1 Cor 9:19-23)
 - Paul proclaims eight characteristics of God with the Athenians.
 - A. God is the Creator who made the world and all things in it. (Acts 17:24a)
 - B. God is Lord of heaven and earth. (Acts 17:24b)
 - C. God is Spirit and does not dwell in temples made with hands. (Acts 17:24c)
 - D. God is the source of life. (Acts 17:25, 28)
 - E. God is sovereign and determines appointed times and boundaries for people. (Acts 17:26)
 - F. God is near to those who seek Him. (Acts 17:27)
 - G. God is the judge of the world. (Acts 17:30-31)
 - H. God furnished proof that Jesus is the Messiah by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:31b, 17:17-18)

- 4. Paul went out of their midst (Conclusion)**(Acts 17:32-33)
 - There are going to be some who reject the gospel. (Acts 17:32)
 - There are some who want to hear more. (Acts 17:32)
 - There are some who are going to believe the gospel. (Acts 17:34)