

# GRACE CHAPEL

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## LIFE Community Sermon Notes



Religion in America:  
Still haven't found  
what you're looking for?

### Acts 17:16-31

AC 17:16 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 the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the market-place day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute 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 want 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.)

AC 17:22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men 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. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

AC 17:24 "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 hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each 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.'

AC 17:29 "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 man's 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 all men by raising him from the dead."

## **LIFE Community Leader's Guide**

### **Sunday, March 30**

**Big Idea:** Choosing a religion means choosing a “what”. Choosing Christ means following a “who”.

**Key Verse:** Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

**Opening Question:** What was the religion of your family when you were growing up? Have you continued to follow the faith of your parents?

#### **Study/Discussion Questions:**

- Read Acts 17:16-31
- What caught Paul's attention immediately about Athens? What did he feel about what he saw?
- What is his response to what he saw?
- What do you find impressive about Paul in this situation? Why?
- In Athens, Paul begins to tell them about the living God with an inscription from one of their altars—  
"TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." Why did he choose that altar to speak about?
- Look closely at the passage. Were there other points of culture that Paul connected with in this passage?
- What were the points of truth that he made from each of these connections?
- In what ways does Paul demonstrate a respect for those around him?
- What are the five things that Paul says about God in his address?
- What is the significance to the people of Athens that God is the Creator of the Universe (vv. 24-27)?
- Why might it be important to the people that God is the Sustainer of life (v. 28)?
- Paul's different approaches show his understanding of culture and his willingness to communicate with people where they are. What are the different groups or cultures that you interact with?
- What are some “points of truth” that you might connect with as you seek to share with others your own faith in Jesus Christ?
- Pray that God would provide you with opportunities to engage with your culture in relevance and with a passion for the Gospel of Christ.