

Acts 17:16-34

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 April 2017

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] Well, I'm glad to be here with you this morning, and I am thankful that it is Easter Sunday. I am also thankful that as followers of Jesus Christ, that we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ the other 364 days of the year.

I'm thankful that we don't have to dig deep into our catalog of songs to sing songs about the resurrection. I'm thankful for its ongoing and ever-present implication in my life.

Jesus is alive, and I have life in Him as a result. This morning, we're going to continue our study of Acts in Acts chapter 17.

I'm glad that a year ago on this Sunday, we were in Mark chapter 16, which the resurrection story of Mark's telling is there.

In our text today, Paul speaks of the resurrection, and he speaks of the resurrection as the affirmation of gospel truth.

[1 : 11] And so as we gather today as the church, let me assert to you that the gathering of the church is for the Christian.

This primarily is for those followers of Jesus Christ in order to be equipped to go out there and to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

As you've heard me say, we are gathered in order to go. And this morning, the burden for me is that you would see in the life of Paul the way in which he deals with the Athenians, and he shares this good news of Jesus Christ.

Give an affirmation by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because as followers of Jesus, you are His marketing plan.

You are meant to go out and to be light in a dark world. Now, even as I say this, I am thankful that there are many churches gathered today that will have people sitting in their crowds that have not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 21] I am thankful today that there are many pastors who typically don't preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, who are having to wrestle with all of the implications of the resurrection.

And I pray that they are pouring forth gospel truth to a people that desperately need to hear it. But I want you to understand why and to appreciate why we celebrate the resurrection of Christ every single day, and certainly on the Lord's Day when we gather together.

It is empowering for our living. Don't leave here and wait until next year to consider the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Before I preach from Acts chapter 17, I want to pause and I want to pray. And I want you to join me in praying for this morning and what it means in our community and beyond.

And then we'll turn to the text. So join me in a word of prayer this morning. Father God, I praise you this morning that you are the creator and the sustainer of this world.

[3 : 40] That you are sovereign. That your providence never fails at any point. You are always reigning over all things. I praise you for your gospel truth. I thank you that as we pray to you, we are praying to you clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

That you are hearing our prayers and you are pleased with us because you are pleased with him. I praise you this morning, Father, that you have a church. Jesus is building it.

He's drawing people to himself. And I pray that that would be the case in so many gathered groups this morning. That the gospel would be preached.

Sin would be addressed. The need for repentance would be poured out. That people would turn and believe in Christ. I pray, Father, that men this morning who may not even themselves know what the gospel is, will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That we would have pastors this morning come to faith in Jesus because they have to open the word and deal with the text. I pray that countless people will know that today, that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not firstly about them, but it's firstly about you.

[5 : 03] That they would know that they would know that they would get caught up in you bringing about the bright and proper praise that is due you this morning.

Father, we know that we cannot schedule a revival. There's no tent large enough to rent. And no personality persuasive enough to bring about a working of your spirit.

We know that for true revival to happen, you must visit us in a special way. I would ask that you do that this morning across our communities. Even now, as I'm sure, at 1120, men are opening up your word and speaking from it.

Save souls this morning, Father. Do that in our midst. Equip us for the going out. Help us to see that we are meant to be your billboards, displaying your grace and mercy.

And I pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen. Okay. My head is clear now, I think. So the book of Acts.

[6 : 17] You've heard me call the book of Acts, the Acts of the risen and ascended Jesus. That he is now still active, right, by the agency of the Holy Spirit in the life of his church.

And we exist still as part of this telling of the story. But we get to step back, right? Luke, for our benefit, pinning down what happened in the life of the early church.

So we're going to continue our study by looking at Acts chapter 17, verses 16 through 34. So if you're not already there, please take your copy of God's word and join me.

Beloved, this is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and for our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

And I'll begin reading in verse 16 of Acts chapter 17. Now, while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.

[7 : 27] 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 babbler 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 are 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 live 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.

[8 : 31] 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 actually not 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 the 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 mocked, but others said, we will hear you again about this.

[9 : 58] 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.

Now this morning our study of this text will be structured in the following way. Number one, mankind's need to philosophize.

You could say mankind's need for philosophy. That spelling is more comfortable for you. Number two, mankind's need to know who God is.

And number three, mankind's need to know what God has said. How are those for your three Easter morning points?

Mankind's need to philosophize. Mankind's need to know who God is. Mankind's need to know what God has said. So Paul has traveled from Berea to Athens.

[11:09] You can look back previously in chapter 17 and read more about that if you have not been with us the past couple of weeks. Up in the region of Macedonia, he's no longer there now.

He's traveled far south on the peninsula, and he is waiting for Silas and Timothy to rejoin him. You may recall that as he leaves Berea, he gives a command.

He leaves Silas and Timothy behind, but he gives a command for them to come and join him. Verse 16, while he was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit is provoked within him as he sees this city that is full of all these graven images, all of these idols, right?

Things that have been crafted out of stone and wood and gold that are set up all over the city of Athens. And he's moved by the idolatry of the city.

Quite possibly by zeal for the glory of the one true God and by compassion for the occupants of the city. However, it was that his spirit was provoked within him.

[12:15] He immediately turns and he reasons in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and in the marketplace every day with those who happen to be there. So as was his custom, as we noted in verse 2 of chapter 17, Paul goes to the synagogue and on the Sabbath to share the gospel with his countrymen and to the God-fearing Gentiles.

Again, another phrase for people who were not Jewish in bloodline, but people who were pursuing God through Judaism. Devout persons.

These were God-fearing Gentiles. People familiar with the scripture of their day, our Old Testament. So on the Sabbath, he's with these people, his countrymen and the God-fearing Gentiles, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

And he spends his weekdays sharing the gospel with anyone who would listen in the marketplace. Now, don't imagine him here wandering about a Kroger looking for people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The marketplace would have been the center of city life in Athens, where goods were traded as well as ideas.

[13:28] And it is here that this drama begins to unfold as he encounters two of the prominent philosophies of the day. So this brings us to our first point, mankind's need to philosophize.

Now, some will frame philosophy as inherently evil. Right? You tell somebody that you're a philosophy major, they will just assume that there's no way you're learning anything true whatsoever, which in large part is true.

But philosophy itself is not evil. Certainly some philosophies are. Most, if not all philosophies, are flawed in some sense. In some way, they err.

But philosophy is simply the study of theories of knowledge, reality, and or existence.

Theories of knowledge, reality, and or existence. Throughout history, mankind has philosophized. Because as cognitive beings, we have an innate desire to understand our place in the world.

[14:40] We're not merely walking through the world with impulse. Right? Not merely ingrained responses to the environment around us. But we're thinking beings.

And as thinking beings, we want to understand where it is that we fit in the world around us. All people sense that there is purpose beyond themselves.

That an intelligent world has an intelligent designer of one sort or another. Let me insert a parenthetical at this point.

Some will deny the truth of intelligent design. That would be to say that the world in which we live is the result of billions and billions of years of happenstances.

We just happen to find ourselves in the place that we are. Enter the atheist. But even the most, let me suggest to you, devout atheist, when he is honest with himself, knows there must be something greater than he.

[15:49] Paul speaks to the fact that men are aware of God's existence and furthers my argument by telling us in Romans 1, verses 18-20, that not only do they know that God exists, but they deny his existence because of their sinfulness.

I read Romans 1, beginning in verse 18, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

So they are without excuse. John says the same, but with an application to the knowledge of a revealed Savior, Jesus Christ, with an analogy of light and dark.

John 1, verses 1-5. John writes, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[17:08] He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. So Jesus Christ, and John's telling, is the light of the world.

And John continues this analogy in chapter 3, verses 19 and 20, where he writes, And this is the judgment. The light, here, Jesus Christ there, the light has come into the world.

And people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. What is the wickedness of mankind to invent all various forms of philosophy that suggest that we are not accountable to a holy God?

[18:17] We need to explain the why of why we're here. Why? Why do we exist? Why are we here? And it is the very wickedness of man that devises all types of explanations that exclude a God who is holy and places requirements on us.

Why? Because mankind is evil, and mankind wants to continue in its evil ways. Mankind needs to explain its existence, and so often prefers to do so in a way that preserves its freedom to live in any way that culture deems as valuable.

And Paul here encounters adherence to two such prominent philosophies. These are two of the three most popular schools of philosophy in Greece in this day, the Epicureans and the Stoics. Epicurean philosophy taught that pleasure and the avoidance of pain are the chief end of man. Sound familiar, Americans?

They did not deny the existence of gods. Pantheistic, this culture. But believed they were distant and did not interfere or were concerned at all with the affairs of man.

[19:44] So they were functionally then atheists. The Epicurean philosophers were functionally atheists. Sure, gods exist, but they don't care. They're not intervening at all in what we're doing, and the high chief end of man is pleasure and comfort.

Stoic philosophers, on the other hand, taught that self-mastery was the chief end of man.

Self-mastery. Being indifferent to both pleasure and pain, being entirely cerebral and feeling nothing was the highest value.

Being able to walk through whatever came your way in life, right, as a thinker and not a feeler at all. They were pantheists and believed that the gods tested their devotion with both pleasure and pain. So the gods were delving out the circumstances of the world and it was their job to respond with nothing, to not respond really at all to both pleasure and pain in the world.

So, the Stoic believed that you could enjoy nothing. The Epicurean believed that you should enjoy the temporal, those things that they could touch and feel and have experience of.

[20:58] Christians believed that our highest joy is found in God, the one true God as revealed by Jesus and His work on the cross. Now, at this point, I want to be clear that Christianity is not a philosophy.

Christianity is not a theory. Christianity is a reality. It's based in truth. To be clear, when you philosophize with people, don't present Christianity as a philosophy of life, not a theory.

Our highest good, our highest aim is joy in God. The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks the question, what is the chief end of man? If you're a good Reformed Baptist, you know the answer. It's man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Now, these two extremely different philosophies, Epicureanism and Stoicism, were united in their contempt for false teaching.

Someone said, this is the last part of verse 18, what does this babbling wish to say? The word babbling from the Greek literally translates, and I think ESV did well to say babbling, it literally translates, seed picker.

[22 : 18] John B. Polhill in the New American Commentary on Acts says this, the word evoked images of a bird pecking indiscriminately at seeds in a barnyard.

Not a kind thing they said of Paul. It referred to a dilettante, someone who picked up scraps of ideas here and there and passed them off as profundity with no depth of understanding at all.

You know people like that? Look at your Facebook feed and call somebody a seed picker from time to time. It's an insult and it was intended as an insult here to call Paul a babbler.

Others said, verse 18 tells us, he seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities. This shows that they weren't paying attention to him really at all.

The word translated divinities is plural in the Greek so they seem to just misunderstand him altogether. Many scholars have postulated that they misunderstood Paul and thought that he was teaching them about a God named Jesus and a God named resurrection in the Greek anastasis.

[23 : 34] So Jesus and anastasis, these foreign divinities, they didn't seem to be paying attention at all. Paul. Now, whether or not they had exactly what they were thinking cannot be known for sure from our text, but I think we can imagine that Paul did not speak about Jesus without also speaking of his resurrection.

The two were always being carried along together. Paul said in Romans chapter 1 verse 4, he being Christ was declared to be the son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.

Jesus Christ our Lord. The affirmation that all that Jesus said he was was true. The two schools of philosophy had contempt for what Paul was preaching so they took him and they brought him to the Areopagus verse 19.

Now the Areopagus was a court. It was named for the place that it had once convened and this day they probably didn't still meet up on this rock outcropping. Maybe they did.

Some may want to contend with me on that. It doesn't matter. It was named after the place where they met. But you need to see this as a court that's convened to hear what Paul would have to say. And there Paul is informally asked to give an account of his teaching.

[25 : 04] And they ask him in this way. Last part of verse 19 and 20. May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting. For you bring some strange things to our ears.

We wish to know therefore what these things mean. And as an apparent parenthetical I would suggest an explanation of what they asked him in verse 19 and 20.

Luke adds, now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. And you have to read that as an indictment on them.

They obviously did other things than hear tellings of new things. But he's characterizing them as saying they were just people who were interested in whatever anybody had to say about anything. So on the surface it seems like there's this genuine interest in what Paul had to say. But it's more likely simply a new teaching. They just want to know what is this new thing that you're going to teach us.

[26 : 05] And it is the interaction of Paul and the market with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers that has set the stage for him to correct the thinking of the Athenians and for so many in our day.

And he starts doing that with an observation. he begins, he sees this little crack in the door and he uses this to press the door open for gospel presentation.

So Paul stands in the midst of the Areopagus, in the midst of this court that's convened. Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. You are philosophers.

for as I passed along and observed the object of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription to the unknown God. And he sees this as that crack and he flings it open.

What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. And he starts off into this gospel presentation, which we'll look at more in just a moment.

[27 : 07] But let me stop at that point. Mankind's need to philosophize and give you some application here. We won't have much application later, so let me give this to you here. Number one, people need to explain their existence.

People need to explain their existence. You can get into many wonderful conversations with people if you merely ask them hard questions about the nature of their existence and listen to their answers.

Just ask people, why do you think we're here? What happens after we're here? Ask people questions, because the reality of it is that very few people really know. They'll philosophize. They'll have some theory. Talking about unsaved people. They'll have some theory of this, but they don't really know. Be willing to philosophize with them.

Be willing to understand where they're coming from and seek opportunities to kindly, graciously punch holes in their argument. You'll find it's not that difficult to do.

[28 : 09] People stand on very shaky ground as they theorize about the world and its existence. Paul teaches us in Romans chapter 1 that people are very, very aware that there is a God who created the world, and all of the bucking we see against recognizing that is because people want to walk in their sin.

Work with them to point this out and show them Christ. Two, if the atheist tries to tell you that he believes that he is the result of billions of years of happenstance, tell him that he is the evidence of a designer.

Tell the atheist it says, right, I am cosmic stardust brought together across billions of years, say to that person, you are too precious for me to believe such a thing.

I am looking at you, and I am too amazed by you to think that you are an accident in the world. Tell him that he is fearfully and wonderfully made by a creator who loves him.

Obviously, I have characterized all atheists as males, but you get the point. And because he is fearfully and wonderfully made, that is why you are concerned about his world view.

[29 : 38] You can't possibly believe that you are an accident. Thirdly, and I hope obviously, but it is too often not, preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Note that in our text so far, Paul is in Athens waiting for Silas and Timothy. This is why he has gone to Athens. He has come away from Berea and the persecution that was there in Macedonia.

He is out of the region of Macedonia now. And what does Paul do to pass the time? He shares the good news of our resurrected Savior with anyone who would listen.

And this brings us to our second point. Mankind's need to know who God is. And I am going to start speeding up. In response to the popular philosophies of the day, Paul tells the Areopagus who God is.

For our benefit, let's consider what Paul said in four titles. God is the creator, the king, the sustainer, and the revealer.

[30 : 51] And let's work through these quickly together. Number one, God is the creator. He says in the first part verse 24, the God who made the world and everything in it.

He's destroying pantheism at this point. The God, singular, right? The articles in the Greek, the God who made everything in the world.

Genesis 1-1, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Goes further in our understanding now as New Testament followers of God.

And we have the revelation of Jesus Christ. John writes in Revelation 4-11, Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

Paul writes in Colossians 1-16, For by him, being Jesus, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him.

[31 : 58] This is our God, creator of heaven and earth. Secondly, God is the king. The last part of verse 24, being Lord of heaven and earth.

He does not live in temples made by man. And also, verse 26, 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.

Psalms 103, verse 19, The Lord has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all. Paul again gives this application to Jesus Christ, 1 Timothy 6, 15.

Jesus Christ, who is the blessed and only sovereign, the king of kings and lord of lords. Rules over all things.

Third, God is the sustainer. He created it, he rules over it, and he sustains it. Verse 25, Nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

[33 : 23] The idols of the day were objects and they needed things brought to them for their sustenance. The worship of the day was about appeasing and bringing to the idol.

But God, the one true God, is the sustainer of all things. Psalm 104, verse 14 and 15, You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

The writer of Hebrews gives this application to Christ. Chapter 1, the first part of verse 3, He's the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

God, in Christ, made all things, rules over all things, sustains all things, and He is also, fourthly, the revealer, reveals all things.

Verse 27, 28, and 29, that they, all these things He's done to reveal Himself, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him, that He is actually not far from each one of us.

[34 : 56] And at this point, Paul quotes from some of their very own poets and literature. These would not have been a people that were familiar with the Old Testament scriptures, and so he uses two separate ones.

In Him, we live and move and have our being, and for we are indeed His offspring. And he makes the point from this poet, being then God's offspring, we shouldn't think that this divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by man.

So he looks back up to God being the creator of the world. By the natural revelation of God in nature, previously mentioned in Romans 1, verses 18-20, and by the conscience of man, God can be known.

God can be known by His revelation in nature and in the consciences of men, not salvifically, but sought after.

All the religions of the world are trying to find their way to God. They have enough, enough information to seek after God.

[36 : 06] They need the gospel to be saved. But as such, men are without excuse. Romans 2, verses 14-15. For when Gentiles, just those outside of Judaism, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires.

Sharing your faith with somebody who wants to have entirely relativistic moralism, ask them objective questions.

If morality is relative, can I kill you now? And is that okay with you? And the right mind says no.

Where does that come from? Where does it come from? That there are parameters that we place upon ourselves. Paul explains it to us here. It's in our nature.

Right? We do what the law requires. They're a law to themselves. even though they don't have the law, they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

[37 : 22] mankind cannot stop merely at knowing who God is. Certainly mankind needs to know who God is.

We must also know what God has said. If God is to be sought after, how is it that he is found? So our third point, mankind needs to know what God has said.

Because there is a God who is the creator, the king, the sustainer, and the revealer, and because he has spoken, we need to heed his words.

Paul says in the beginning of verse 30, the times of ignorance God overlooked. That is to say that in times past, God did not always bring particular judgment against nations that did not know him.

He didn't always bring the specific judgment. He did at times with some nations, but not always. He overlooked times of ignorance, although generally there is always consequence for sin.

[38 : 32] That is what Paul is suggesting here. Athenians, God has not brought a special judgment down on you yet. In times past, he's overlooked your ignorance.

But now, verse 30, but now, he commands all people everywhere to repent. All people everywhere to repent.

Why? Verse 31, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man who he has appointed. God Paul is saying that a day is coming soon that the world will be judged in comparison to a man who kept the law without deviation, the man Jesus Christ.

The Christ's perfection and mankind's imperfection will be held up to one another. We will be judged by the man that God has appointed. For the Athenians and for us, to stand in the day of judgment, that is to be not wiped out, to stand in the day of judgment, we must be found in Christ.

We must have his righteousness so that when we're held up to him, we line up. We're seen as righteous, possessing it by faith in his person and his work.

[39 : 50] We must believe in who Christ is and what he has done on our behalf to be found in him. Not only will we be judged in comparison to Jesus, but God has granted judgment to him.

will also be judged by Jesus. John chapter 5, verses 22 through 27. For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man.

[41 : 03] And I mentioned just kind of as an aside when I was reading a story to the children this morning in that book, Jesus is on a horse and he says, come on, friends, come in.

Before that scene takes place, he's on a horse and on his thighs are emblazoned King of King and Lord of Lords and he has a tongue like a sword and he comes back and he's splattered in blood because he judges the Lord.

That's a judgment I want to escape. And the rest of verse 31, and of this he has given assurance, God has given assurance to all by raising Jesus from the dead.

The good news of the gospel rises or falls on the fact of Jesus' resurrection. many churches this morning, to their benefit, it's a good thing, are apologetically proving that the resurrection actually happened.

That's a good thing. It's a good exercise for your faith. I'm not doing that this morning, but for your benefit, if you're not too sure about the surety of the resurrection, spend some time.

[42 : 14] There's lots of resources. Come to me. I'll talk with you about it for a really long time. Because if Jesus was not raised, then he was a moral teacher and a lunatic.

He said crazy things if he wasn't raised from the dead. If he wasn't after the Son of God, he claimed to be the Son of God. He claimed to be from God. He claimed to forgive sin. He was insane.

But if he was, and he was, praise God the Son that he was, then he is all that he claimed to be.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who takes away the sins of the world by his perfect life and his perfect death, who is seated now at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.

Acts 4.12, Peter said, and there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

[43 : 18] Do you believe this? There are not many ways to heaven. And there are people who are out there dying, thinking, just thinking they can earn their way, inventing some God of their own making, some philosophy that they hope will find them one day in heaven with God.

those philosophies, those aired philosophies are damning to them. Who must, must, must, must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Typically on your bulletin, I like to give you a quotation from an old dead guy. John Piper is not, at least not dead.

He is old, don't murmur, it's fine. He wouldn't be offended by that. I just thought that this quotation fits so well here.

The best news of the Christian gospel is that the supremely glorious creator of the universe has acted in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection to remove every obstacle between us and himself so that we may find everlasting joy in seeing and savoring his infinite beauty.

[44 : 40] We may have that which truly satisfies the joy that can be ours. What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him forever.

So we've seen the last couple of verses, 32, 33, and 34, the mixed responses, which is pretty typical in the ministry of Paul and it will be in our ministry as well.

Some think he's crazy, they mock him. Some are interested in what he had to say and they want to hear again what he may be teaching and some believe and follow.

So this morning, just let me ask, are you one who mocks? Is it possible that you found yourself in the meeting of Christians and you're a mocker of the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

I saw a stat this week and I didn't do a lot of research on where it came from that said that 25% of professing Christians don't believe the resurrection actually happened. They're not Christians then.

[45 : 45] They can claim to be but they're certainly not. Do you think you're in Christ and you don't believe he's alive? I pity you.

Repent and believe. Are you one who would hear more? We want to share more. Boy, do we love talking about the gospel around here. Just ask.

Ask anybody. Certainly I'm available. I'd love to speak more about the gospel of Christ with you. Are you one who believes? Just believing in the resurrection is the beginning of a life lived in service to God.

You note, Clay read earlier, Jesus appears amongst the disciples. What does he say? Just as the father sent me, so am I sending you.

We're part of all of the gospel implication. We're now with the spirit of Christ in us, displaying his mercy to the world around us.

[46 : 45] So be active with your family and friends and coworkers and roommates displaying the glory of the gospel. Let's pray together.