

Devoted and Unshaken: The Book of Acts
“The Power Of Truth” (#18) Acts 17:16-33
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Ed Turley
August 24th, 2025

Sermon Notes

Big Idea: Every heart has a longing for God — and only Jesus satisfies.

“God has planted **eternity** in the human heart...” **Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT2)**

Acts 17:3 – Paul taught for three Sabbaths at Thessalonica explaining Jesus fulfilled the prophecies proving He is the one and only Messiah.

Acts 17:11 – Paul teaches in Berea where the Bereans were more open minded and searched the scriptures to see if his teaching was true and as a result many believed.

The Power Of Truth:

1. God Alone Satisfies Our Longings (vv. 16–23)

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the **idols** he saw everywhere in the city. ¹⁷ He went to the **synagogue** to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the **public square** to all who happened to be there. ¹⁸ He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about **Jesus and his resurrection**, they said, “What’s this babbler trying to say with these strange ideas he’s picked up?” Others said, “He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods.” ¹⁹ Then they took him to the high council of the city. “Come and tell us about this new teaching,” they said. ²⁰ “You are saying some rather strange things, and we want to know what it’s all about.” ²¹ (It should be explained that all the Athenians as well as the foreigners in Athens seemed to spend all their time discussing **the latest ideas**.) ²² So Paul, standing before the council, addressed them as follows: “Men of Athens, I notice that you are **very religious** in every way, ²³ for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: ‘**To an Unknown God**.’ This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about. **Acts 17:16-23 (NLT2)**

“For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me— the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all! **Jeremiah 2:13 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

2. God Created Us To Know Him (vv. 24–29)

²⁴ “He is the God who **made the world** and everything in it. Since He is **Lord of heaven** and earth, He doesn’t live in man-made temples, ²⁵ and human hands can’t serve His needs—for He has no needs. He himself **gives life** and breath to everything, and He **satisfies** every need. **Acts 17:24-25 (NLT2)**

²⁶ From one man He **created** all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should **rise and fall**, and He **determined their boundaries**.

²⁷ “**His purpose** was for the nations to **seek** after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and **find Him**—though He is **not far** from any one of us. ²⁸ For in Him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ ²⁹ And since this is true, we shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone. **Acts 17:26-29 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

3. God Commands All People To Repent and Turn To Him (vv. 30–34)

³⁰ “**God overlooked people’s ignorance** about these things in earlier times, but now He commands everyone everywhere to **repent of their sins and turn to Him**. ³¹ For He has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man He has appointed, and He proved to everyone who this is by raising Him from the dead.” ³² When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, “We want to hear more about this later.” **Acts 17:30-32 (NLT2)**

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. **John 14:6 (NLT2)**

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT2)**

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **Romans 10:9 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

- Will you repent of your sins and turn to God today?

My Next Right Step:

- ☐ I choose to trust Jesus today as my Lord and Savior
- ☐ I want to be baptized as a public declaration of faith.
- ☐ Sign up for a small group on Church App in August



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Talk It Over

Big Idea: "Every heart has a longing for God — and only Jesus satisfies.

Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted **eternity** in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. **Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT2)**

Icebreaker: Have you ever visited a place (city, museum, or cultural site) where you were struck by how many people search for meaning or express spirituality? Is there anything that stood out to you?

Read the Passage Together: Acts 17:16–34

1. God Alone Satisfies Our Longings (vv. 16–23)

Paul was "greatly distressed" by the idols in Athens. What emotions do you feel when you see the "idols" in our culture today (money, success, technology, self-expression)?

Why do you think people keep searching?

Read Ecclesiastes 3:11. How have you seen evidence that God has "set eternity in our hearts"?

Are there any areas in your life that you seem to be searching for fulfillment?

2. God Created Us To Know Him (vv. 24–29)

Why is it important that Paul starts with God as Creator before moving to Jesus as Savior?

How does recognizing God as Creator change the way we see ourselves and the world?

Paul says God is "not served by human hands." What does that teach us about the difference between religion and relationship?

How can you gently point people around you to God as Creator in everyday conversations?

3. God Commands All People To Repent and Turn To Him (vv. 30–34)

Why do you think Paul ends with the resurrection and a call to repentance instead of just leaving it at “God loves you”?

What does Acts 17:30–31 teach us about God’s patience and God’s justice?

Some mocked, some wanted to hear more, and some believed. How does this prepare us for the different responses we may face when sharing the gospel?

Do you know of someone who needs to hear that God is both patient and just? If so, can you share the hope of Jesus with them this week?

Digging Deeper: Creation as a Witness

Share one truth from science (fine-tuning of the universe, DNA coding, or even the human heart) that points you to a Creator.

How does creation help us build bridges to the gospel with people who may not yet believe the Bible?

Prayer Time

Thank God for revealing Himself through creation, conscience, and most fully through Christ.

Pray for courage and compassion to share the gospel as Paul did.

Ask God to open hearts of specific people you know who are still “searching” for the unknown God.

Challenge for the Week

Identify one “idol” you see in our culture (or in your own life), and ask God to help you gently redirect yourself or others toward the living God who alone satisfies.