

Meet Our Great Creator God Acts 17:24

We come to our passage and it is absolutely unique as far as the evangelistic sermons that we have had so far in the Book of Acts. These are just Gentile individuals with no knowledge of the Scriptures whatsoever. We have had other cases of preaching exclusively to non-Jews like Cornelius and his household, but they had some knowledge of the Scriptures. These men had no knowledge. But they were not uneducated men, but men of great education who prided themselves in all their deep thinking and pious thinking about the universe and the meaning of life.

And there is no deeper and more necessary question to answer than — why are we here? What is the whole point of life? Is it just to live our lives, accumulate things, love a few people and then pass on? People, when they really think know that there has to be a purpose for our existence. I mean think of your own life and how you would answer that question: why are you here? What is the point of your life? Why is there a universe and world, and a you and me? It is fascinating how people have tried to answer that question, and how the various philosophers like the Sophists, Epicureans, and Stoic philosophers would answer those questions. They would give deep and complicated answers and even contradictory answers even in their own philosophies.

So Paul addresses these men, he notes that they are all religious in the sense that they have concluded that this is not all that there is, or at least there might be more than what we see in this physical world. He also notes that they worshiped all kinds of various deities, but never truly arrived at the truth. They created many different gods that were all about what they wanted God to be like. And the whole goal of creating images and idols was to somehow manipulate or control that particular god. They tried to defined who God was and is. But God is not defined or created by man. It is the other way around. Not only does the great Creator God define himself, but it is he who defines the purpose and the reason for our existence. He defines us.

So think of where Paul begins his gospel presentation. He begins with God and who he is. This is the place we begin because all of life and even the Gospel is about God. We are here this morning for the ultimate purpose of everything — to honour, glorify, magnify, and worship God. All of life is about him and life is to be one big worship of Him. We often want to begin explaining the gospel with the sinfulness of mankind or the coming of Christ, but we fail to think about a couple of things. Does this person know the God we are talking about? Do they think he is everything — a pantheistic view of God, and everything is God. The streams and animals and trees and you and me make up god. All is divine. Have they tried to convince themselves there isn't a God, and if there is have they ever considered what he is like? Paul begins with basic theology. Because you cannot understand the awfulness of sin unless you understand who it is done against, and then you cannot understand the need of the coming of Christ, unless you understand that God is a great Creator God who all of us are ultimately answerable to. He is the purpose of life. Life is about worshiping him.

But even as believers we often look at God as more as a divine waiter who should be there to give us the good things we want in life. We think as we pray and serve and do our part God is there to serve us. And we have reversed the order. We have made ourselves sovereign little lords rather than God being Lord and ruler of all

that we bow the knee to. God puts us in situations and trials in our marriages, families and workplaces, and lives, and then says trust me, follow me and obey me, but we want to make it about ourselves. And in your life there is either an acknowledgement of God as Creator and Lord, or you are acting as Creator and Lord. We demand so much of others. Life does not go very well when we try to play God, when we try to act as we are the great authority. And where are you acting like creator and lord of your life? Where are you even frustrated with God because it is all about your plan and will and not his. Here is the thing we said last time that we need to say again, when you spend time in the presence of God, when you see who he is — it has a wonderful and humbling effect in our hearts and lives. It changes us from one degree of glory to another. It causes us to bow the knee.

So often we are trying to get God and others to bow the knee to our wills, and so often we don't even know it. We need to come back to the basics of who God is and who we are. And I want us to see a couple of fundamental facts about our great God that causes us to place ourselves under God, and causes us to be amazed at his wonderful grace to us as sinners before the great Creator God. So let us meet this God once again.

1. We need to see that God is the great Creator of all things. V.24a.

One of the things that is so astounding in the denial of God as the great Creator of all. In many places of higher learning you would be laughed out of class and school if you announced that God is the Creator of all things. People assume that evolution is based on fact but they have not ever thought or really looked into it. Evolution is really a faith based system in how to explain the universe. It has as its basis not scientific explanations, but theories that certainly cannot be proven. In fact, theories that cannot be ratified. So it is faith based system that is really illogical, because there great god to explain everything is basically two-fold — time and chance. If you have enough time then you will have this well ordered universe, with all of these complicated life forms. And how did everything happen? Why is there a you or me? The answer to that question is chance. It just happened. You have enough explosions in a coal mine, and one day you will have a well formed car with all the gadgets that happen to be on it. As I examine my car out in the parking lot, with the lights, electrical system, ignition, and seats, it indicates to me that there is a designer and creator. There is someone who formed and made this vehicle. It would be lunacy and foolishness to say it happened by time and chance. Whether evolutionists want to admit it or not, evolution is a faith based religious system of origins.

Christianity is also faith based. None of us were there to witness the creation of everything. Hebrews 11:3, **“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”** We accept by faith. But unlike evolution, this is not a blind leap in the dark. When you examine the human body or the human eye or heart, those things are far more complicated and glorious than any vehicle, and the intricacies of them given evidence of a Designer, Creator, and Maker. It is so much more logical to think of divine design than chance, luck and time. I talked to a geneticist, who used to be a member of our church. And I asked him if he was amazed that most children are born healthy even though there are so many harmful mutations that can happen to them. And he

said, we talk about that every day, and marvel at it. It is glorious evidence of none other than our great Creator God.

So look at who Paul presents here, **“The God who made the world and everything in it.”** This is the starting point of all theology. The Bible starts this way with the creation account. And what Paul states here is basically assaulting and confronting all their thoughts and rumination about who God is. Notice how he starts. He starts with “The God.” There is how many gods? There is only one God. This is where Paul begins. They don’t have to worry about the gods or goddesses of crops, fertility, wine, love, war, and geographical gods because there is only one God. Again, all their idols are nothing. All their teachings about origins are wrong. I am always amazed at what people are willing to worship rather than this one truth about God. They will worship a statue that has a little morning dew on it and claim that it is weeping. They will worship a Tim Horton’s window that was cleaned and as the sun hits it has the image of Jesus on it. They will worship chance and time. Rather than this fact that there is only one God.

And this God has not been silent as far as who he is. He is the God who acted and made and created. Look at what he says here, **“The God who made the world and everything in it.”** Now here is the thing — what is left out of the world and everything in it? What around us is not included in that statement? Every single thing that is living or every single inanimate thing has been created by God. Some might say, well he didn’t name the stars or the sun or moon. Look at the next phrase that we will discuss in a second, **“Lord of heaven and earth.”** He is over all because he is Creator of all. Every star and every microbe has been created by God. space.com website says, **“The biggest star in the universe (that we know of), UY Scuti is a variable hypergiant with a radius around 1,700 times larger than the radius of the sun. To put that in perspective, the volume of almost 5 billion suns could fit inside a sphere the size of UY Scuti.”** *Picture*. And how did God create that? He spoke it into existence. I mean how great is God? The witness of creation is so massive and is with us every single day.

We quoted these verses last time we were together, Psalm 19:1-4, **“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”** It is everywhere. My wife loves butterflies, and we planted a plant in our backyard that attracts them. And they are fascinating. To think that this was a slimy caterpillar, and now has transformed into this gorgeous creature. *Picture*. And to think, even though it has never been shown the way, it migrates on those feeble wings all the way down to Mexico in the winter is just extraordinary. *Picture*. How was that little creature ever taught to do that? How does it know to go to Mexico so it doesn’t freeze? Do we really think by chance and time? Time and chance would kill the butterfly. There is only one explanation. It was by a designer who created that genetic knowledge in that simple creature to do that. And what is the whole purpose of that caterpillar changing into a butterfly and then flying all the way down to Mexico? It is as Psalm 19 says — to glorify the Creator. It was to declare his worth and character, strength and wisdom of our God. The

massiveness of UY Scuti to the delicateness of the monarch butterfly exists to the delight of our God to magnify him and point to him — he truly is One. He truly is God and he truly is Creator. Only a fool can say with such massive evidence that there is no God. He truly has made himself known so that all are without excuse.

And so think of the creation of you and me. Think of why you are made the way you are. Think that no one has ever been made quite is like you. You are truly fearful and wonderfully made with all your weaknesses and strength. With your personality and joys and sorrows. So here is the question: we started with it this morning — why is there a you? Why is there a me? And once you admit there is a Creator God than the ramifications of that question are obvious and really life changing. We are here like all of Creation to magnify and glorify our great God. We are here not for ourselves but for this great God. Life really is all about his glory. And here is the uniqueness of our creation — we are made in the image of God. Where the monarch butterfly instinctively glorifies God, we are given the capacity to choose by our will to glorify him.

And certainly this is where sin comes in and judgment. But let me ask you as a believer, do you realize your purpose for living and existing? Do you realize even the purpose of salvation? It was not just to save your from eternal wrath, but it is about the glorification of another. Think of the scene in heaven — all are gathered around the throne to worship and praise the One who was slain and now lives. The last state is about worship. So with your life in the here and now, with all of its pitfalls, and obstacles, and relationships, and trials, what do you think the purpose is? It is to point and delight and worship and follow and trust and glorify the God of Creation — the God of salvation. Are we living that purposeful life? Are we living according to why we were created and saved? Because that brings us to our second point.

2. We need to see God as the great authority. V.24b.

One of the things that makes the faith of evolution so popular is that there is no God that you are answerable in life. You can basically do your own thing and decide what is right and wrong. It is amazing how evolution feeds into the modern day philosophy of walking all over people and living for self, which people even when they practice it know it is wrong. One of the main teachings and explanations of the universe and mankind in evolution is survival of the fittest. And if this is true, why care for the elderly or have children's hospital? it zaps time, money, and resources away from the fittest and our personal happiness or whatever. If there is no God then there is no one higher than me, and I become the standard of right and wrong. You only go around once, so get that bucket list out and accomplish all those things. And even if you were able to accomplish all those things on your bucket list, what happens when you are done? Is that it? It is such a purposeless existence. But the popularity of it is there is ultimately no one you are answerable to. It is all about the kingdom of self.

Christianity is so different. It not only believes in God but that God is personal and just and all righteous. And that longing of justice that is in every person will ultimately be satisfied. Jesus is Lord, Saviour, Judge, Creator, Sustainer, and every single person will have to give an accounting to him. People do not like that. But realizing the authority of God in our lives has such a sanctifying effect on our lives and on our society. William Farley writes in his Book on Humility, **“There is an irony here. The more people believe in hell, the more apt they are to create heaven on earth.**

And the less people believe in hell, the more apt they are to turn this world into the very hell they deny. None of the monster-dictators of the twentieth century—Mao (China), Joseph Stalin (Russia), Adolf Hitler (Germany), Idi Amin (Uganda), or Pol Pot (Cambodia)—believed in the life to come, let alone hell. Because their pride was completely unchecked by fear of eternal accounting, they created the closest thing to hell on earth that history has to date witnessed.”

And it is incredible because people often wonder what good Christianity has done in the world? Then you look at the establishment of hospitals and old age homes, or the laws that protect the innocent and punishment the guilty are all based on Christian principles of mercy, love and justice. It is all based that man is made in the image of God, and there is dignity in our creation. We are here to be his witnesses, and to love God and to care and love our fellow man. But if you follow the theory and faith of evolution and all we are is a bunch of chemicals that came together by chance, and there really is no purpose. In the end we all die and that is it. So who cares what I do? Many of those gathered in that council in Athens, such as the Epicureans had a similar philosophy of life — you only go around once. But once you admit the obvious — that there is a Creator God then you have to do something with this God, you have to come to terms with how you have lived and functioned in this world.

Because again, listen to what Paul says here to these men about God, **“Lord of heaven and earth.”** Now again, what is left out of this statement? When you look at the earth —all of it is God’s, and he rules over all. He is King. He is sovereign. When you look up at the sun, moon, stars, he is the one who rules over them all because he has created them and owns them. Think of the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar who looked over Babylon and marvelled how great he was and what he had done. He boasted of his great rulership. No one is like me! God humbled him like one of the beasts of the field for seven years. When his mind was restored, he realized the obvious — God is ruler. He says in Daniel 4:34-35, **“At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’”** God’s dominion, his rulership is an everlasting rulership.

And this is such a sobering truth if you have lived your life as if there is no God. You have been basically at the helm of your life and decided what is right and wrong for you, rather than recognizing that you do not set the rules. You are not the ultimate authority. And isn’t it amazing in every single person there is a law written on the very fabric of our souls that indicates that lying or thievery or adultery is wrong. We might try to call it right but our conscience bears witness that it is wrong. But where did not law come from? Certainly not evolution. It came from a Lawgiver and Creator. The same God who gave the Monarch butterfly the ability and the instinct to fly down to Mexico is the same God who has written that law on our hearts. But have we obeyed God? Have we honoured him with our choices and words and actions? Have we acted as if

are God? Have we called right wrong and wrong right? There is a fearful day that all will have to appear before a Lawgiver and Creator.

But here is the grace, in God's justice and grace he has sent his only Son to perfectly obey that Law and perfectly delight in him. And Christ died on that cross, taking the punishment and penalty of any and all who will truly see their sin before a holy and just God, and simply trust in him. Today is the day to trust in him. Today is the day to bow the knee and accept that grace. Please do not delay. There is a day of accountability. Do not take the grace of today for granted.

And for believers, we have seen and been reminded this morning something once again of the enormity of our great God. We have seen that God has come and given us purpose in this life. And here is the humbling and glorifying truth about life, family, marriage, bank accounts and assets, our time, strength and weakness, our pleasures and sorrows — life is not about you. We were made and recreated and saved for another. It really is about his glory. He really is not only the Creator but he is our personal Saviour and ruler. We are not our own but we have been bought with a price therefore honour and glorify this God with our bodies, with our all. He truly has given us purpose. Let us truly seek to make much of Christ. He truly is our Creator and Saviour and Lord.