



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 57 Getting to Know the Unknowable God Pt. 2**  
**By Pastor Jody May 11/26/2023**

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**Acts 17:22-27 ESV**

**Paul Addresses the Areopagus**

<sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> **nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.** <sup>26</sup> 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, <sup>27</sup> 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,

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**[READ THE TEXT]**

**[PRAY]**

**[REVIEW]**

The season of Advent is here, and it is epitomized in this verse from the Apostle John:

**John 1:14 ESV**

And the **Word** became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of **grace** and **truth**.

Jesus is the Word, or the **Logos**<sup>1</sup>, John’s use of this word has long been a debatable topic among theologians, but most have believed that John’s use

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<sup>1</sup> λόγος (*logos*). n. masc. **word**. Generally, a thing that is spoken, or a matter.

In a number of cases in the NT, *logos* is used to express the idea of divine revelation. Most important for such a discussion are its uses in John 1. In John 1:1, the *logos* is identified with God; later in that chapter, the *logos* takes on flesh (John 1:14). The Gospel shows that Jesus is this *logos*, and is, therefore, the ultimate divine revelation. <https://www.logos.com/grow/bsm-why-did-john-call-jesus-the-logos/>



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of 'Word' was to appeal to the Greek intellect. The word *Logos*, means literally a Word from outside the world, the heavens, it is Truth for it exists within the objectifiable view of the divine. So, what John is saying is the ultimate Truth, because there is only 1 God, who put on flesh and dwelt among men, not to gain a better understanding of us, but so **we could have a better understanding of Him**, to know real Truth.

This too becomes the thrust of Paul's ministry, that he would introduce men to the divine Truth, the only Truth, in the life of Jesus the Christ. That's what **Advent is supposed to be for everyone**, the focusing in on the coming of the Lord, the incarnation of God into flesh, fulfilling the prophecies of being born to a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem. So, this Advent, we find ourselves in our study in Acts going through the same focus, discovering this same God, for it was the central theme of Paul's sermon to the men of Athens, and the rest of the Gentile world.

<sup>27</sup>that they (Gentiles) should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and **find him**. Yet he is **actually not far** from each one of us,

What better time of year to do this study than when everything in the church is focused on the Incarnation, where God makes Himself relatable not just through creation but through human flesh so we could see Him, touch Him, know Him, and hear Him. Paul IS right, He is actually not far away from each of us, **He is knowable**. This, as we said last week helps us to answer that big question everyone wants to know, **"What's the point?"**

Last week we started with Paul's first point and that came from v. 24:  
*The **God** who **made** the **world** and **everything** in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,*  
It is **God who is the creator of all things**.

Gen 1:1 - This creator wants to be known.

Ps. 104:24 - The creator wants you to see intelligent design.

John 1:1-3 - This creator had a plan, built pre-time with a loving family.

Col 1:16 - This creator made governance for His Providence.

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Rev 4:11 - This Creator ensured the plan worked to receive glory establishing His people's eternal joy.

Now, what's the next topic on the menu from Paul, as he is helping us to get to know what the Greeks thought was the unknowable God?

<sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself ***gives*** to all mankind ***life*** and ***breath*** and ***everything***.

## **2. God is the Sustainer of Life.**

Paul is stating the biggest point of difference between the Jews and the rest of the world, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who came in the form of Jesus, is **not served/controlled by Human hands**. He is not housed in a temple, His grounds are not maintained by the priests, He is not moved by the sacrifice of men, He is not provided funds by offerings or temple prostitution, there is nothing this God needs from man. In fact, all of scripture in the OT and the NT reveals a God who is the one doing all the giving, so that **He alone may receive the glory**.

We don't have time to build this out today, but all of the ancient stories of the Greek gods have had stories where their livelihood was rescued by their half-blood children like Achilles, Perseus, Heracles, and Theseus. Their tests of heroism emboldened men to take on life without the aid of the gods. While the one true God again sends His only begotten Son (Jn 3:16), who is the exact imprint of His nature (Heb 1:3), lived a life in place of all men (2 Cor 5:15), to show them they need to depend on their God (Lk 4:1-15), for He is the sustainer of all life (Col 1:17). Here's is the Main Point for the day, to help you remember that God is truly the Sustainer of all of life:

### **Main Point:**

**God Doesn't Need Us, We Need God.**

So, I am going to go to several different texts like last week and show you several truths pertaining to God as Sustainer of all of life. With these texts I want to show you these **three simple truths**: God always has more than enough to meet our needs caused by yesterday, God will always shoulder our



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burdens for the day, and God is always holding it all together securing our tomorrows (**example would be Dicken’s “Christmas Carol”**).<sup>2</sup>

**1<sup>st</sup> God always has more than enough to meet our needs, so we don’t have to worry about our yesterdays.**

Right here in the start of our morning you may be here today or listening in wanting to find out if church and Christianity is for you. Perhaps you are here because your past keeps coming up in your life and it is shoved in your face, and it’s something you can’t get around. You may be discovering that many times the people that love you the most are the same ones that put you down the most.

Perhaps you are even here today thinking well at least if I start in the church, I can make amends and perhaps build a way to get over my past. Perhaps if I can do enough good things I can earn God’s favor, if I can give enough, I can earn His blessing, if I just try hard enough to be nice to others then maybe I can redeem myself by sacrificing in my life and THEN maybe I can forget my past THEN maybe others will just drop it. You’re here to discover to see if there is anything you can do to get the ghost of **Christmas past** off your back.

Well, there is good news and bad news. Bad news is ‘no’, you can’t do anything about it. BUT the good news is GOD CAN, and that’s why we need Him more that He needs us. The clue is in scripture, and we trust that more than man around here so let’s go there for answers.

**Psalm 50:10-15 ESV**

- <sup>10</sup> For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.**
- <sup>11</sup> I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.**
- <sup>12</sup> “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.**
- <sup>13</sup> Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://crestacademy.e-act.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2020/05/A-Christmas-Carol-Exam-Question-By-Sanya-A-year-11.pdf>



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As we stated earlier God is not dependent on our sacrifices, and neither can we give Him anything of value since He owns everything, including you. But there is still a command to give.

<sup>14</sup> **Offer** to God a **sacrifice** of **thanksgiving**, and **perform** your **vows** to the Most High,  
<sup>15</sup> and **call** upon **me** in the day of **trouble**; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

The sacrifices we are called to give, is WORSHIP, PRAISE, THANKSGIVING and praising God is the vow of worship keeping Him above all others. THEN you are to call on Him on the day of trouble, that’s the command! The sacrifices we offer don’t save us, God chooses to intervene on our behalf outside of our behavior because He is God and it’s about honoring His own name. Now how does this work WHEN we don’t deserve it PJ?

**Hebrew 10:14 ESV**

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

That single offering **is Christ**, it has nothing to do with you, only God can offer a one-time sacrifice worthy of Him and capable of covering all of our tainted past; Christ in the World living for you, Christ on the Cross dying for you, Christ now reigning in Heaven over you – THAT IS **PERFECTION!**

**He meets our need for sacrifice, covering our past, by the perfect sacrifice in Christ.**

Wherever you are at today, understand God is the only one that can do something about your past, so you have come to the right place. That also means when/if people bring up your past that has nothing to do with how God sees you, IF you know Him as Savior and Lord. A sacrifice by you a Christian does not make you clean nor clear your past, BUT a sacrifice by the Son, received by Faith, clears you of all things, now and forever.



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You also may be thinking though, “I have wasted so much time living for myself, I am behind in this game of following Him. I am ill-equipped to just pick up now and start over!” Again, I got some great news for you...

**2 Peter 1:3 ESV**

His **divine power** has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence

Again, the good news is you don't have to be a lifelong Christian to have the same power to live life well as a Christian who has been following Jesus for years. Power to walk this path, this narrow way, IS a gift of divine power, it is called **Grace!** Here's how this works.

**Ephesians 2:8 ESV**

For by **grace** you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

**He meets our need of godliness through granting us Faith in Christ.**

You are receiving and you will receive all you will ever need in this life to live a life of godliness by the gracious gift of God, not by your work or stored up knowledge, so no man can boast. Now again, when one comes to the first understanding of this truth it doesn't necessarily take away a feeling of weakness, I get that, especially when perhaps you're dealing with a life-long problem, disease, or sin. 1<sup>st</sup> I would tell you as I tell people all the time don't trust your heart it is deceitful above all (Jer 17:9). But secondly, and more importantly that is by divine design so that you would come to a fuller knowledge of God.

**2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV**

But he said to me, “My **grace** (divine power that gives you faith) **IS sufficient for you**, for my power (faith through grace) is made perfect in **weakness.**” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.



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This text comes famously on the heels of one of the most open confessions in scripture from a man of God. Paul had confessed to praying three times for something to be removed from him so he could do more for God, and God said 'no'. Well, if God said no to Paul guess what's gonna happen to you? BUT the good news is God says no to the request of immediate removal of plaguing problems SO we can learn the nearness of God, learn how to be thankful for His sustaining work not ours, and that's what brings real strength/healing/restoration learning how to be dependent on God to practice faith.

**He meets our need for strength, by perfecting Christ's presence in us.**

When we are weak then Christ is strong, His presence is strong, His peace in your life is strong, His position in your life is strong, all because your PASSION for Him is growing and you are learning **you need God, He doesn't need you!** That in those moments, when God shows Himself working through a weakness, your faith in Him grows all the more because you are seeing He **always has more than what you need**, and that is Grace upon Grace washing away the **sins of yesterday**. God is good isn't He, yes and that is just one aspect of His **SUSTAINING POWER**.

**2<sup>nd</sup> God desires to shoulder our burdens, so we don't have to worry about today.**

Some of you, it's not the past that you're dealing with, **it's today**, it's the right now, you need help in this very moment. Paul said in v.27 He gives to man **life and breath**, literally it is **God that keeps you going**. You may be thinking to yourself today, 'good' because I have just hit the wall. I get that feeling, there are times in my life as well, that the day I am looking at is daunting, I need to get moving but all I can do is drag myself around, already acting out of a Spirit of defeatism. And like myself, you could be thinking why would God answer me when I am already showing signs of disbelief? Well, because He can't lie...

**Isaiah 40:29 ESV**

He gives power to the **faint**, and to him who has no might he increases strength.



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It doesn't say He grants power after you get yourself together, it says He gives the power to the **faint**, while you're tired, while you don't want to face the world. Because the truth is His shoulders are always bigger than your burdens and this teaches us that:

**He gives power to you in your deepest moment of need.**

Some of you over this past year wish that you had never gone through a 2023, some of you right now are looking at a very hard next 2 to 3 months, or even the next year. Let me also just lay down this truth in here to help you process, **praying to God for strength DOES NOT mean He will answer your prayers the way you want them.** The request we are to ask is for more strength not necessarily a resolution to what you are going through. God is not about making you weaker He's about forcing the last reps out of you to build you up. Now you may be wondering why does God love us hard like that sometimes?

**Isaiah 41:10 ESV**

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for **I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**

God is always looking for opportunities to show up in your life, so people can see the strength of God in it, so that they come to know that HE is truly your God and that He is very real. God says I will strengthen, help, & uphold you by **His hand**, it's about showing people who does the sustaining.

In that way we begin to learn who He is and we too begin to build up our own stories we can share with others when they are dismayed. (**Illustration, a quick story about Avery**)

When God equips us with power and strength for the problems of today it is so that we would learn how not to be dismayed even when everything goes wrong, it's **about building our faith** ("Come in, – come in! and know me better, man! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! You have never seen the like of me before!" – Ghost of Christmas Present). I also want you to be aware





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that even in the hard times, as people often do, you can make months turn into years by a rebellious heart.

**1 Peter 5:6-7 ESV**

**Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may **exalt you**, casting all your **anxieties** on him, because he **cares** for you.

This is the part people usually don't like, that the Gentiles are not accustomed to, but let me be clear here. In 1 Peter the stipulation is clear, **humble yourselves**, for Peter in the context of Chapter 5 it means listen to the instructions of God through the voice of **your elders**. Peter was telling the church, be good church members, be obedient people don't let rebellion get in the way, for I am here to bear your worries, for He cares for you.

It's as simple as what it seems.

**He gives rest to those worried over life, just because he loves you.**

God is dedicated, covenanted with those He loves. He has promised to strengthen you, He has promised not to leave you in a state of distress, He will uphold His name in front of others, because He loves you. At the end of the day, you know **what the True Christian really wants, to never cut and run and call it quits**. We want to stand like Stephen, we want to stand like Peter, James and John, we want to stand like Paul, and we want to stand like Christ, AND because He loves us, He's going to get us strong enough to STAND! We can't do this without Him, **God doesn't need us but we sure do need Him**, we need **Him to shoulder our cares**, our worries of today so we can be focused on gaining the strength we will need for our tomorrows.

**3<sup>rd</sup> God holds everything together, so we don't  
have to worry about tomorrow.**

Thinking about our tomorrows is when we all start losing sleep. You want to know if you have a problem with this? Look at the clock next time you can't go to sleep. For some reason the human body likes to wake up between 2:30-4



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from dreams because that is usually when human fears come to light in our psyche and your cortisol spikes making it hard for you to go back to sleep. It shows that you and I may have a problem with worrying too much about what tomorrow can bring, but again the Gospel has good news about that.

**Hebrew 1:3 ESV**

He is 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.

Christ is the glory (weight) of God, we know He is God for when on earth for He was the exact imprint of the divine. This being, Jesus the Christ, is the one right now that is holding everything in place as we spin through the cosmos, coming to the conclusion of human history, where all things will point to Him and bend a knee to His reign, and He does it all by His spoken commands.

**We don't worry about our tomorrows because God controls the fabric of creation.**

Nothing is going to happen outside of Christ's control and that even means a climate warming apocalypse, WWII with China, a giant asteroid catastrophe, or an alien invasion, none of those things will be our end because Jesus is flying the ship.

**Colossians 1:17 ESV**

And he is before all things, and in him **all things hold together**.

To add to the list of why we don't worry about tomorrows is the truth that nothing happens without the **consent of Christ**. Jesus is holding all things together, what are all things? Colossians 1:16 describes that - whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. All things are all the governing powers of the world whether in the spirit realm or the physical world.

**We don't worry about our tomorrows because nothing happens without Jesus' consent.**



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Nothing will happen that will change the plans of glorifying God, preserving your faith, and securing eternal life for those who have been called. Nothing can separate us from God for Christ is in the middle of all things. Even if our country goes straight up communist and the church is persecuted, it won't be the first time and it won't be the last, and Jesus will still be your King, and He will still return, and He will avenge those who are owed justice. **We don't worry about tomorrow because whatever tomorrow holds is nothing compared to the one that holds all tomorrows in His hand.**

**Psalm 55:22 ESV**

Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will **SUSTAIN** you; he will **never permit the righteous to be moved.**

This is perhaps the most satisfying and comforting thing I can tell you today. Sometimes I get a little concerned about enduring through my tomorrows, I get concerned about people leaving their faith showing they were never really saved. But in this Psalm is one of the best promises of the Gospel that when we go to the Lord for help and we let Him sustain us, He will not let you be moved.

**We don't worry about our tomorrows for they won't affect our standing with God.**

Whatever happens tomorrow, your SALVATION IS SECURED!<sup>3</sup>

**Romans 8:38-39 ESV**

<sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. – **He will never let the Righteous be Moved!**

God is holding all things together by the might of His hands, ensuring our **tomorrows** will never have the strength to crush us, this is **why we need Him, more than He needs us.**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://founders.org/library/chapter-17-the-perseverance-of-the-saints/>



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**[CHALLENGE]**

**Where are we not relying on the sustaining work of Christ in your life? What may we do to help us depend on the Sustainer of all things?**

Start the day off right and before you get out of bed spend the first 10-15 read, ponder, and pray.

Step 2 when you feel worry come on, pray 1<sup>st</sup> before seeking counsel. (Humble Yourself)

Step 3 listen to edifying music, sermon, Christ exalting material before sleep, to reset your fear meters. (decreases your subconscious fears)

Practicing some Christian Discipline is practicing the Truth that God is the Sustainer of all of life. By the discipline of going to Him first in all things you are developing the practice of faithful living displaying to others the gift of Divine Grace in your life.

**[PRAYER]**

**[COMMUNION]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that has lovingly created our world **ensuring** we would learn that we need Him, and that in finding Him we are blessed.

Go in the name of the Son, that holds all of creation together **ensuring** that all things will work to the good of those He has saved.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that does the strengthening, the comforting, and the convicting, **ensuring** that God's people will persevere until the end.