

Unknown god

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide2-7 Lar/AL** - Dismiss. Welcome. Food Drive. Men's brkfst. **Ro. Sun Nt Prayer.** Move Night. **Dole Whip Guy.**
- B. **Slide8 Wed Night Identity Wrap Up** - Panel discussion.
- C. **Slide9 ALL New CM Newsletter** - If you'd like to receive CM update weekly on Friday... **scan the QR code** by the info booth, **simply fill out name and email.** Also the time to beat is **11 seconds** (held by Dan & Kristyn) **& you'll be in the CM hall of fame.**
1. If you received 1 this Friday, **then** you're already signed up.
- D. **Slide10 Ro Nepal Bibles!** - *Unbelievable.* In only 14 months of meeting our unreached people group in Nepal. **All of the Muslim committee members are asking for 100** Nepali Language Bibles **& 150** Mega Voice/Audio Bibles.
1. **Want to help? Bible \$14. Audio Bible \$20.** Between \$4-5,000 total. **Earmark Bibles for Nepal,** put in offering box. **Or online on giving page/dropdown.**

II. Slide11 **Intro:** *Unknown god* [or *polytheistic anonymous*]

- A. Last week we traveled w/Paul 200 miles So, to Athens Greece. ***His spirit was provoked within him when he saw the city was full of idols*** (10,000 pop/30,000 idols).
1. As he shared about **Jesus** the Athenians were intrigued & wanted to hear more. **Even after 800 yrs of Gk Mythology & 500 yrs of Gk Philosophy... they were still searching.**
- B. **Slide12a Atheist/no god. Agnostic/no knowledge** (belief there simply isn't enough evidence to tell *whether there is a god or not* **&** if there is *what if anything do they want from us*). [note: *know* in 19,20]
1. Some put **agnostics** in **2 categories:** **A closed agnostic** (we don't know, can't know, **&** *I like it like that*). **An open agnostic** (we don't know at present, **but** we could know in principle if only we could discover how, **&** *I would love to know if we could*).

2. Slide12b The 1st we could also call *inconsistent agnosticism*, since it professes **absolute certainty** that we **can't** know something, **which is a problem because...how do you know for certain that you can't know something :**)

3. The 2nd we could also call *consistent agnosticism*, being **agnostic** about **agnosticism** itself. **Thus** Paul imagines it's someone in this 2nd category who put up this altar **to an unknown god**. In fact Paul begins & ends with **ignorance** & what God is doing about it.

C. Picture you're in Athen's looking at 30,000 idols. What would you **do** or **hope to see done**? Take a **sledge hammer** to the idols? **Boycott** all Greek Food?

1. How about we follow Paul's lead...**let your spirit be touched** (16). **Look around**. **And** let the Spirit show you **your bridge** into their lives.

a) *Let's listen in...* **READ Text.**

III. Slide13a **5 STEPS OF EFFECTIVE WITNESSING** (22-31) *just principles, nothing rigid*

A. Paul speaks **eloquently & clearly**, **not about philosophy or culture** but **about God & His Son**.

1. **Sharing w/others**: many think, **I might not have good answers**.

No, you just need to be armed w/**some good questions**. 1 question is like, **putting a rock in their shoe** for them to **think about** the rest of the day.

B. 5 STEPS OF EFFECTIVE WITNESSING

C. Slide13b **STEP1 - Find a Positive Place to Start** (22)

1. Start where **they** are, **you guys are obviously very religious**. [in theology the *sensus divinitatis*/sense of divinity]

a) Built into mankind's *own nature*, you have **a God sensitivity**. (there are no **true Atheist** in that sense)

2. He didn't blast them with a mean spirited, **you grecian pagan Idolaters!**

a) Most people have something in their background about **religion** that makes a **good starting place**.

D. Slide 13c **STEP2** - Use the **Familiar** to introduce the **Unfamiliar** (23)

1. To the unknown god - I would like to tell you of the *unknowable* God, who has made Himself *Knowable*. [Our God is Incomprehensible, *yet* Knowable]
2. What he does here is *builds a bridge* that would hopefully *span the gap* between their *ignorance* & the *truth* of Christ.
 - a) Paul basically says, *You Athenians have given me a text. I start where you leave off.*

E. Slide 13d **STEP3** - Clearly Present God (24-28a)

1. He is **Creator**, so He can't be **contained**. (24 *does not live in temples*)
 - a) One persecuted Christian said...when authorities were threatening to tear down their church, *you can pull down our steeples, but you cannot pull down the stars. He made the world & everything in it* (24).
2. Slide 13e He is **Self-Sufficient**, so He has **no needs** (25 *as though He needed anything*)
 - a) The main thing that God was doing in Athens was *shaking his head in sorrow and warning* of imminent judgment.
 - (1) Nice temple to Athena, *but* God doesn't live in temples.
 - (2) I see all the local people were *bringing sacrifices & offerings* to their gods and goddesses, *but* this is the wrong way to God. *It is He who gives us everything, not the other way around.* [He gives us life & breath. He makes a way for payment of our sin. He gives us Jesus. He gives us forgiveness & salvation] *What are you going to do for Him who needs nothing?*
3. Slide 13f He is **Intelligent**, so He has **a plan**. (26,27)
 - a) The turning point in our lives is when we *stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is.*¹
 - b) **Feel/grope** - Paul uses a word only used **once** in Classical Gk, in the 9th book of **Homers *Odyssey***. It's a well-known story of **the Cyclops** (the one-eyed giant). *The Cyclops had captured Odysseus and his men, but Odysseus got the*

¹ Patrick Morley in *The Seasons of a Man's Life. Leadership*, Vol. 17, no. 3.

Cyclops drunk and *blinded him* with a sharp stake. Odysseus was trying to get his men out of the cave but Cyclops was *groping* around, *feeling* for his men.

(1) The Athenians were *groping* around for God. But what they need is *divine Grace* to *open their eyes* to be able to see the gospel.

(2) We know this only comes about by the Holy Spirit *and* by His gospel.

4. Slide13g He is the **Sustainer**, so we are **dependent** on Him. (28a)

a) Here he quotes from *Epimenides* (Cretan poet) – *for in Him we live & move & have our being.* also quoted in *Titus 1:12*

F. Slide13h **STEP4 - Be Relevant** (28b)

1. Here he quotes from **Aratus** (Gk. Poet).

a) **The entire poem:** Never, O man, let us leave him unmentioned. All ways are full of **Zeus** & all meeting-places of men; the sea & the harbors are full of him. In every direction we all have to do with **Zeus**; for we are also his **offspring**.²

(1) Showing them that **their own Poets** believe in a **creator-god**.

b) Paul takes this Poem about **Zeus** & reveals its true subject... **Christ**.

G. Slide13i **STEP5 - Make it Personal** (29-31)

1. Augustine said, *Idolatry is **worshipping** anything that ought to be used, or using anything that is meant to be worshiped*.³

2. **Repent** is a command – *it's not left optional*. Paul moves from philosophy to human responsibility.

a) If you *repent*, God is no longer your **Judge**, He becomes your **Savior**.

IV. Slide14a **3 RESPONSES (32-34)** *we get the same 3 today*

A. **1st - SOME MOCK** (32a)

1. Did you know it is **impossible** to talk about God **behind his back**?

² F.F. Bruce, Acts

³ Augustine, Leadership, Vol. 4, no. 4.

2. Did you know you **cannot** speak of God in His absence?

a) **Then**, to deny Him is to spite Him, ...to His face.

B. Slide 14b 2nd - **SOME DELAY** (32b)

1. They put it off *till later*. It might take another lunch or coffee.

a) Like shopping & you tell the clerk, *I think I'll be back to purchase this*, when you really have no intention on getting it.

C. Slide 14c 3rd - **SOME BELIEVE** (34)

1. One was **Dionysius** (Dia-NI-sius) a member of the Areopagus council. And Damris(e). And others.

2. The **gospel** wasn't very well received in **Athens** [Prob won't be on Paul's Highlight Films] **but** *wouldn't you want to fail as much as Paul!*

a) It was the **1st & last** mention of **Athens** in scripture. **And** we don't know of any **church** was planted there.

D. Look around who is in **your** marketplace?

1. **Poem** by **George MacLeod** (from Chuck Swindoll, Acts)

I simply argue that **the cross** be raised again at the center of the **market place** as well as on the **steeple of the church**. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not **crucified** in a cathedral between **two candles**: **But** on a cross between **two thieves**; on a town garbage heap; **At a crossroad of politics** so cosmopolitan that they had to write in Hebrew & in Latin & in Greek...And at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, & thieves curse & soldiers gamble. **Because** that is **where** He died, and that is **what** He died about. And that's **where** Christ's men ought to be, & **what church people** ought to be about.

V. Slide 15 **WRAP UP**

A. **Consistency** (*evangelistic consistency*) - Paul could be kicking back, **but** what he sees and feels makes him always...*about the gospel!*

- B. **Comprehensiveness** - from Creation to the end. His gospel presentation doesn't start with, *you're a sinner...but God is Creator*. Then, **imago dei**. Then, **the fall**. Then, **Christ**...His *work & His judgment*.
- C. **Contextualization** - Paul *sees* things, *perceives* things, *observed* these inscriptions.
1. He first found a point of **contact**, then a point of **conflict**. You **connect** with them then **share the gospel** with them.
 2. You talk to **90-year-old** different than a **teenager**, but you're presenting the same gospel. Parents know this, coaches know this.
 - a) You don't change your **principles** but you adapt your **presentation**.
You're not **adjusting the truth**, you're **adjusting how you apply** the truth.
 - b) Paul connected with them by quoting the poets. Today most teenagers are **disciplined by** Cardi B and Lady Gaga. By the So Korean boy band BTS, and Drake & Chris Brown. They're not reading Neitsche(a) & Kierkegaard. They're listening to **music!**
 - c) Older generations are being **disciplined by** Fox News, CNN, or MSNBC.
 3. **Be aware of: who** you're talking to, and **what they're trusting in**, and **believing in**, and **what their hopes are**, and **feelings are**.
 - a) Know the Bible and know people!
 4. First a point of **contact** and then the point of **conflict**. **Don't forget the conflict**. **Repentance** is needed, truth of **coming judgment** is necessary.
 5. Wherever you **begin**...we **end** with **Jesus Christ, and Him lifted high**.
- D. **Courage** - what I see in Paul is *compassionate courage*.
- E. Let's take Jesus to our Marketplace, & not leave him between 2 candles in a church.
- F. **Dear unbeliever:** our California *state motto* is **Eureka**, meaning, *I have found it*.
1. **We have found it...and** we want to **share it with you**. **Will you let us?**
Please ask questions. We aren't know it all's. When we don't know we'll be honest to tell you, & we'll do our homework and get back to you with answers. Let's walk together...towards Jesus!