

ECHO CHURCH

No Games. No Gimmicks. Just God.

SERMON NOTES

HIM

Acts 17:28 NKJV

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Sermon Scriptures

“for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’”

Acts 17:28 NKJV

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

Colossians 1:16–17 NKJV

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

Genesis 2:7 NKJV

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

Proverbs 3:5–6 NKJV

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Colossians 3:3 NKJV

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5 NKJV

Opening Scripture

“for in Him we live and move and have our being.”

Acts 17:28 NKJV

The believer's life is not simply helped by God. The believer's life is held in God. This message is about bringing the believer back to the center. Not their struggle. Not their plans. Not their pain. Him.

Because if we lose Him, we may still have activity, but we lose life. We may still have movement, but we lose meaning. We may still have identity, but it will be built on the wrong foundation. Life does not make sense until it is lived in Him.

Introduction

We live in a generation that is constantly asking people to define themselves. Define yourself by what you do. Define yourself by what you have, who accepts you or what you survived. Paul stands in Athens, in the middle of a culture filled with idols, opinions, philosophies, and spiritual confusion, and he brings all of life back to one declaration. In Him we live and move and have our being.

Paul is saying that before you define yourself by anything around you, you need to understand the One who created you, sustains you, and gives your life meaning. This is not about God being part of your life. This is about God being the source of your life. This is not about fitting God into your plans. This is about finding your life inside of His purpose. This is not about living near Him. This is about living in Him.

Historical Context

Acts 17 places Paul in Athens, one of the great intellectual and religious centers of the ancient world. Athens was known for philosophy, debate, temples, idols, and curiosity about spiritual things. The people were not uninterested in religion. In fact, they were deeply religious. But their religion was scattered, confused, and disconnected from the knowledge of the true and living God. Acts 17:16 says Paul's spirit was provoked when he saw the city given over to idols.

They had altars everywhere. They had gods for different needs. They had spiritual language and religious systems. They had philosophical ideas. But they did not know the true God. Then Paul finds an altar with an inscription that read, **To the Unknown God**. That altar becomes Paul's doorway. He tells them, in essence, that the God they do not know is the God he is declaring to them. He does not dwell in temples made with hands. He is not served by human hands as though He needs anything. He gives life, breath, and all things. He is not far from us.

Paul is not preaching to people who have no religion. He is preaching to people who have religion without revelation. They have altars, but not intimacy. They have spiritual curiosity, but not covenant relationship. They have gods they built, but not the God who built them. That is why this text still speaks to us. Because it is possible to be around the things of God and still not be centered in God. It is possible to know songs, scriptures, services, and schedules, and still be trying to live from your own strength and define your being by something other than Him.

Key Thought

The danger of idolatry is not just worshiping the wrong thing. It is trying to live from something that was never able to give you life. The Athenians had idols, but the idols could not give breath. They had statues, but the statues could not sustain them. They had altars, but the altars could not define them. Today our idols may not be made of stone. Sometimes they are made of success, approval, comfort, control, image, ministry, or ambition. But Paul's message confronts every false center. You do not live in them. You do not move in them. You do not have your being in them. You live, move, and have your being in Him.

E1 In Him We Live

"For in Him we live."

Acts 17:28 NKJV

God is not merely the giver of blessings. He is the source of life. Before God gives us assignment, He gives us breath. Before God gives us responsibility, He gives us life. Before God asks Adam to work the garden, God breathes into him. Genesis 2:7 says the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. Man does not become alive because he is formed. He becomes alive because God breathes.

That means the shape was not enough. The body was not enough. The structure was not enough. The potential was not enough. He needed breath. You can have structure and still need breath. You can have a platform and still need breath. You can have the appearance of life and still need the source of life.

Anything God forms still needs what God breathes.

That is why we cannot reduce God to help. God is not just helping us live. God is the reason we live. Sometimes we say God helped me get through it, and that is true. But Acts 17 pushes us deeper. It is not just that God helped you get through it. It is that God sustained your breath while you were in it. You lived through what should have broken you because your life was not in the hands of what attacked you. Your life was in Him.

Application

This means the believer has to stop treating God like an emergency contact and start honoring Him as the source. We do not come to God only when life gets hard. We come to God because life comes from Him. Prayer is not just crisis management. Prayer is breath returning to its source. Worship is not just a song. Worship is the created thing honoring the Creator. Obedience is not God trying to control your life. Obedience is life staying connected to the One who gave it.

You cannot be fully alive while disconnected from the One who gave you life.

E2 In Him We Move

"For in Him we live and move."

Acts 17:28 NKJV

Movement without God can create motion without meaning. Paul says we do not just live in Him. We move in Him. This deals with direction, decisions, obedience, assignment, pace, and alignment. Movement is not just about going somewhere. Movement is about being governed by the right source. Because it is possible to move fast and still be out of alignment. It is possible to be productive and not be purposeful. It is possible to be successful and not be surrendered. It is possible to have open doors that God never told you to walk through.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

Proverbs 3:5–6 NKJV

Notice the order. Trust Him. Do not lean on your own understanding. Acknowledge Him. Then He directs your paths. Many believers want directed paths without surrendered hearts. We want God to bless movement He was never invited to govern. But Paul says our movement is in Him. That means before I move, I seek. Before I decide, I surrender. Before I build, I listen. Before I speak, I obey. Before I go, I acknowledge Him.

The issue is not whether you are moving. The issue is whether your movement is in Him.

Some movement is fear dressed up as wisdom. Some movement is ambition dressed up as purpose. Some movement is comparison dressed up as excellence. Some movement is anxiety dressed up as productivity. Some movement is people-pleasing dressed up as ministry. But movement in Him has a different fruit. It does not just produce activity. It produces alignment. It does not just create speed. It creates obedience. It does not just make noise. It carries weight.

Application

The believer must bring every movement under the Lordship of God. My relationships must move in Him. My decisions must move in Him. My money must move in Him. My ministry must move in Him. My family must move in Him. My calling must move in Him. My next step must move in Him. Because if I move outside of Him, I may arrive somewhere, but I may not arrive whole. Some people are exhausted not because they are doing too much, but because they are moving from the wrong source. When you move in Him, you no longer have to be driven by what wounded you. You can be led by the One who loves you.

Not every step forward is progress if it takes you further from dependence on God.

E3 In Him We Have Our Being

“For in Him we live and move and have our being.”

Acts 17:28 NKJV

The believer's identity is not self-created. It is God-defined. Paul does not just say we live in Him. He does not just say we move in Him. He says we have our being in Him. Being is identity. Being is essence. Being is the truth of who you are. This means the believer does not have permission to let the world define what only God created. Trauma cannot define your being. Success cannot define your being. Failure cannot define your being. People cannot define your being. Seasons cannot define your being. Your being is in Him.

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Colossians 3:3 NKJV

That means the truest version of you is not exposed to every opinion. It is hidden in Christ. This is important because many believers are trying to find themselves in places that cannot tell the truth about them. You cannot let rejection tell you who you are. You cannot let failure tell you who you are. You cannot let applause tell you who you are. You cannot let trauma tell you who you are. You cannot let your last season tell you who you are. You have to return to Him.

If your identity is not anchored in Him, every season will try to rename you.

Your being is not in what happened. Your being is in Him.

Application

This means the believer's relationship with God is not just about receiving things from God. It is about discovering who we are in God. In Him, I am loved. In Him, I am called. In Him, I am forgiven. In Him, I am restored. In Him, I am adopted. In Him, I am covered. In Him, I am sent. In Him, I am becoming. When I do not live relationally connected to God, I start looking for identity in unstable places. But when my being is in Him, I do not have to use the world's measurements to prove heaven's truth.

You do not discover who you are by escaping God. You discover who you are by abiding in Him.

E4 In Him We Return

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

John 15:5 NKJV

The invitation of this message is not just to believe that God exists, but to return to the life we were created to live in Him. Paul is speaking to people who are searching. Acts 17:27 says God did this so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. Paul says God is not far. The Athenians had an altar to an unknown God, but Paul says the God they do not know is closer than they think. That is grace.

God is not far from the person who has questions. God is not far from the person who has been confused. God is not far from the person who has been searching. God is not far from the person who has been religious but empty. God is not far from the person who has been moving but disconnected. God is not far from the person who has been surviving but not truly living.

The God you have been searching for is not far from you. He has been sustaining you while you were searching.

That is the beauty of Acts 17. Even before they knew Him, they were still breathing because of Him. God was present before they had understanding. God was sustaining before they had language. God was near before they had clarity. This message is an invitation to return. Return from self-dependence. Return from false identity. Return from anxious movement. Return from religious performance. Return from living around God but not in God.

Because the believer was never called to simply believe God is real. The believer is called to abide in Him. John 15:5 says He is the vine and we are the branches, and that the one who abides in Him bears much fruit, for without Him we can do nothing. That is not an insult. That is an invitation. Jesus is not saying you are worthless. He is saying you were never designed to be disconnected. A branch is not weak because it needs the vine. A branch is wise when it stays connected to the vine.

Application

The Athenians were religious, but Paul introduced them to the God who could be known. That is where many people are. They know church, but not Him. They know how to serve, but not how

to surrender. They know how to sing, but not how to abide. But in Him is relationship language. I do not just need His hand. I need His heart. I do not just need His blessings. I need His presence. I do not just need Him to fix my life. I need Him to be my life.

Dependence is not weakness in the Kingdom. Dependence is design.

Application

We refuse to live near Him while pretending we are living in Him. Near Him gives you religious familiarity. In Him gives you spiritual formation. Near Him lets you know the language. In Him changes your life. Not just His promises. Him.

In Him we live. In Him we move. In Him we have our being. Not in approval. Not in applause. Not in anxiety. Not in ambition. Not in what happened. Not in who left. Not in who stayed. The center is Him. The source is Him. The sustainer is Him. The identity is Him. The direction is Him. The answer is Him.

Quote

God was never meant to be added to your life. He is the One your life is supposed to come from.

Closing Point

Today the question is not just, do I believe in God. The question is whether I am living in Him, moving in Him, and finding my being in Him. If my life has been centered around anything else, today I return. I return my breath to the source. I return my steps to the Shepherd. I return my identity to the Father. I return my heart to the One who has never been far from me. Because I do not just need God around my life. I need my life to be found in Him.

Cross References

1. Acts 17:16–28 NKJV
2. Colossians 1:16–17 NKJV
3. Genesis 2:7 NKJV
4. Proverbs 3:5–6 NKJV
5. Colossians 3:3 NKJV
6. John 15:5 NKJV