

# SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 24.08.25

**PREACHER: REV ADAM DODDS**

## Sharing Jesus in Our Culture

### BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

*BEING [HEART], **THINKING [MIND]** & DOING [BODY]*  
*[A PERSONAL REFLECTION]*

#### **Conviction of a Disciple:**

A disciple thinks missionally – discerning the times and engaging with culture through wisdom, truth, and grace. A disciple affirms what is good, challenges what is false, and seeks to share Jesus in ways that lead to real transformation.

#### **OVERVIEW**

In a world filled with spiritual confusion, social causes, and moral complexity, Ps Adam invites us to remember what matters most: whether or not the people around us come to know Jesus. Paul's sermon in Athens offers a vision for how we can share the gospel today. Paul preached with conviction but also with humility, intelligence, and love. The cross still holds the power for transformation, and our message to the world is still good news.

#### **ACTION**

**Step 1:** Do you truly believe it matters whether someone comes to know Jesus? How is that belief shaping your life?

**Step 2:** Where have you noticed religious-like passion in our culture (in politics, social justice, or personal identity)? How can you envision Jesus meeting people in those spaces?

**Step 3:** Is there someone in your life right now who needs you to affirm their searching and gently point them to Jesus?

# THOUGHT

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 17:16–34

There's a kind of passion in our world that feels religious, even when we don't use that language to describe it. People give their lives to all sorts of causes, campaigns - political and otherwise, and family values that they believe in deeply. Whether it's social justice, sustainability, equality, or self-expression, many live with an intensity that we could even call "sacred". And while those desires often point to something good, they cannot carry the weight of *ultimate* hope.

However, at the heart of the Christian faith lies a simple but life-changing conviction: It is of *supreme* importance whether or not someone comes to know Jesus. For a Christian, nothing matters more. This is not just about liking his ideas, agreeing with his teachings, but actually knowing Him; encountering his grace, surrendering to his love, and being transformed by his Spirit.

When we follow Christ and the example of the early disciples, we see that this conviction doesn't lead us to a place of arrogance; it leads to compassion. Because if the cross really is God's way of healing the world, that is, if it deals with the root of both personal and structural sin, then sharing Jesus is not about forcing faith on others. It's about offering hope in a way that meets people where they are.

Throughout history, God's people have found ways to do this with humility and wisdom. They've learned to affirm what is good in the cultures around them - aligning with the values that echo God's justice, beauty, and truth - and use those as touchpoints which can act as a bridge to the gospel - the Good News of Jesus. Meeting people where they're at is not about flattery or compromise, but it is about a love that listens before it speaks. True, Holy Spirit discernment knows when to affirm and when to challenge. The courage we see displayed in Paul's sermon in Athens (Acts 17:16–34) doesn't shrink back from truth, but it delivers it gently and with honour.

We live in a moment in time that desperately needs this kind of presence. One that doesn't demonise culture or retreat from it, but enters it with clarity, compassion, and conviction. A presence that believes, as the U2 lyrics say, "grace travels outside of karma". That teaches "good values" aren't enough without connection to the Vine, which is Jesus. That Jesus is the only true source of lasting change – not just for individuals, but for communities, cities, and systems.

We don't need to be afraid to speak of Jesus. But not as a doctrine to debate, but as a person to encounter. We can affirm what should be affirmed. We can name what needs to be healed. And we can carry the gospel not as a weapon, but as a treasure; something we share not to win arguments, but to love people as Christ loves them.

The cross and grace still hold power. And that we can truly know Jesus is still the most important thing we can share with the world.

# DISCUSSION

[A GROUP REFLECTION]

1. What stood out to you in Paul's approach in Athens? How does it challenge or inspire the way you think about evangelism?
2. Where do you see "modern altars" or "unknown gods" in our cultural landscape today?
3. How can our community embody a way of engaging culture that affirms, challenges, and lovingly points to Jesus?

# PRAYER

Jesus,  
You are worthy to be known and loved. Stir our hearts with compassion and conviction. Give us eyes to see where You're already at work in the culture around us, and give us courage to join You in it. Shape us into people who listen well, speak wisely, and point clearly to the hope of the cross. Let us be a community that worships You by sharing You—with humility, grace, and joy.  
Amen.