***Acts 17:22-23 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.***

Not long ago, I was watching a video on Instagram. In the video, the young lady, obviously not thirty yet, shopped and scoured thrift stores for RETRO styles. She marveled over floral print shirts, floppy hats, bell bottom jeans, while she wore converse sneakers and talked about her Volkswagen Bug. Her followers made comments like Rad, Sick, Retro Vibes, and all the while I waited to see something old fashioned. Ecclesiastes 1:9 says *That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun.* Solomon knew – the things of this world are fleeting, vaporous things. Youth passes, beauty fades, strength fails, but Faith in God, always new, always fresh - with us through every storm and season. He Is, Was, and Is To Come. That is why He says simply, “I Am”.

In our scripture, we join Paul in the midst of the Areopagus. Verse 22 starts *Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus.* The Areopagus, or Ares Hill, is a rocky outcrop overlooking Athens Greece and it’s also the name of a court or assembly of the leading religious, political, philosophic, and educational leadership of Greece. This is the place for the movers and shakers, the learned and enlightened of Athens in that day. As Aristotle and Socrates before him, Paul stood in midst, but he sees idolatry. They’re worshipping objects, knowledge, and self, always seeking something strange and new for their ears.

In our time, people talk about being enlightened, seeking something strange to tickle the ears. Christianity is so Retro, old fashioned, outdated. The modern gods are the selfie stick, followers on social media, and likes, Eastern philosophies and ancient religions. Many worship youth that passes, outer beauty that fades, and fleeting strength that fails – spending so much time seeking the next self-help fad or the next fad diet or the next big thing. Truly, humans don’t change… there is nothing new under the sun.

Verse 22 finishes - *and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious.* Paul perceives that these men are very religious. The problem is not their dedication, but their direction. He sees misplaced priorities and misdirected enthusiasm. The Pharisees had that same issue.

People today have this same issue. There’s nothing new under the sun. The issue is often not dedication but direction, priorities misplaced, enthusiasm misdirected. Like Martha, so busy doing. Jesus tells us in John 4:23 *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.* Mary sought to worship and then let her honor and service flow from that worship.

Verse 23 starts *for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship.* The objects of your worship. Paul passes through to get to the council and he sees objects, meaningless things. He sees false gods, graven images, distortions and distractions of God’s truth. I can only imagine how heartbroken he is, longing that they hear real Truth.

When the Holy Spirit passes through your life, my life, what are the objects of worship He’s heartbroken over? Are we so married to our earthly distractions that we forget our eternal destination? Have we become so religious that we’ve lost relationship? Something to think about

Verse 23 finishes *I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.* Paul came to the Areopagus to present the Gospel, but the Areopagus had another reason for receiving him. One of the functions of the Areopagus council was to hear new things and make a determination: is this new thing acceptable to our society? Paul saw an altar as he was passing through and considering the objects of worship. An altar to the Unknown God. Paul is saying – the Unknown God is unknown no more – I’m about to proclaim Him to you and, in Him, real Truth will reach your ears.

We must never be party to God becoming the Unknown God to this world. If God is unknown, it’s because we did not proclaim. If He is seen as Old Fashioned, it’s because we allowed Him to grow stale and His light to burn dim in our hearts. We cannot control Him being the Unaccepted God. Many reject Him. They can say, “He is the Unaccepted God of my heart”, but they must not be able to say, “He is the Unknown God because no one proclaimed.” Acceptance is between God and the individual. Proclaiming is on us.

Likewise, we may let objects of worship crowd God into being the Unprioritized God, but, once we know of Him, we can no longer make the claim that He is the Unknown God. Once we know of Him, we must choose to seek and know Him.

This week, let’s be Old Fashioned and proclaim God. Let’s be fresh and enthusiastic, making known the Great I Am! He who Was, Is, and Is to Come! Let’s commit that God may be the Unaccepted God by many, but He will never be the Unknown God to those we’re brought into the midst of to bear witness. Let’s make Him known to someone this week.