

Lord of All: Fortunes, Family & Fears

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[0:00] And as you can all tell today, today is a special week, right? I'm sure you know that we have something special to celebrate this week. And obviously it's that we're so old braiding that we're back in the book of Acts.

Come on. Who's excited for Acts? Actually, exactly. I love that. I guess. So we've been going through the book of Acts last year and Acts is all about this one truth. The book of Acts is all about this one truth that Jesus, the son of God, died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

And that reality changes everything. And before Jesus ascended to heaven, he commissioned his disciples saying, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. That's in chapter one of Acts. And throughout the rest of the book of Acts, we see these words fulfilled.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the word of God, chapter after chapter grew and increased. The gospel spread across continents, across ethnic divides, across the whole world, to the point that 2,000 years later, we're here as English speaking people in Hong Kong, worshiping the same God.

[1:13] And now in November, we left off in Acts chapter 18 and we took a break to talk about some other things. But today, rather than going forward to chapter 19, we're going to jump back briefly, a few pages back to chapter 17 and recap a bit.

And that's because, yes, today is a special day. Today is a special, this week is a special week because we, of course, are celebrating Chinese New Year. We're entering the year of the horse this week.

And to most people in Hong Kong, Chinese New Year is the biggest holiday of the year. It is the biggest holiday of the year in Hong Kong. The most important holiday. And James preached on Acts chapter 17 a few months ago.

But we're going to revisit today because I think Acts 17 contains one of the best examples in the New Testament of a Chinese New Year sermon. Acts 17 is, in fact, a Chinese New Year sermon. What do I mean by that? In Acts 17, Paul addresses Greek people living in Athens. He's not talking to Chinese people. He's talking to Greek people in Athens.

[2:19] But he gives us an example of contextualizing the gospel. That's the truth. Jesus is Lord of all. The gospel is relevant to every people in every culture.

And our job is just to show that truth. We don't make the gospel relevant. The gospel is relevant to all peoples at all times. And Paul gives us an example of this, of contextualization.

He preaches the gospel in a way that's understandable and relevant to the context. In Athens, Paul looked for a connection to the Greek culture. And he found that in an altar dedicated to the unknown God.

He uses that altar as a hook to point them to Jesus. He uses what he sees in their culture. This unknown God persuade them that actually Jesus is better than all their idols because Jesus is Lord of all.

And he's a God worth worshiping. In Acts 17, Paul found this unknown altar. But today, I'd like us to imagine, instead of in Athens 2,000 years ago, let's imagine if Paul were here in Hong Kong in 2026, in the year of the horse.

[3:27] Rather than standing at the Areopagus, imagine Paul were sitting there next to you at Tuning Fan, at Tun Bai, at the table with all your aunts and uncles celebrating Chinese New Year.

What would Paul say in that situation? Okay, he's dressed in red, wearing a shirt like this. He reaches for the Poon Choi.

He grabs the dried oysters and the Fat Choi with his chopsticks. Paul's going around watching you say, Not because you want to wish them that, because you just want the Lacey. He sees you doing that. What would, as he sits around this big table, watching all these things, hearing these greetings of prosperity, what would God, what would Paul say to our culture celebrating Chinese New Year?

And I believe that Paul would have the same message for us in Hong Kong as he did in Athens. And that is that Jesus is Lord of all. Now, of course, he would use different words because we're in a different culture.

[4:28] But he would say the same timeless truth, that Jesus is Lord of everything. And we all need to repent and put our faith in him. Now, today we'll look at a few major, three major themes of Chinese New Year.

Fortune, money, family, and fears. And as we head into Chinese New Year this week, we'll see that Jesus is Lord of all these things. He's the Lord of all fortunes, Lord of all families, and Lord of all fears.

And we're going to read from Acts 17 now. So let's stand as we read the word of God together. I'll invite Wesley, Wesley Choi, to read from us from Acts chapter 17.

We'll read from verse 16 to the end of the chapter. And we'll read what Paul actually said in Athens so that we can think, what would Paul say to us in Hong Kong today? Let's flip to that.

Acts 17. Do you have that up? Yeah. In Athens.

[5:28] While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

Some of their Epicurean and Stoic philosopher also conversed with him. And some said, what does this babbling wish to say? Utters that he seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus saying, may we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting. For you bring some strange things to our ear.

We wish to know therefore what these things mean. Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said, man of Athens, I perceive that in every. It's okay. In every way, you are very religious for as I pass along and observe the objects of your worship.

[6:50] I found also an altar with this inscription to the unknown God. What therefore you worship was unknown. This I proclaim to you, the God who made the world and everything in it.

Being Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temple made by men, nor is he served by human hands. As though he needed anything since he himself give to all mankind life and breathe in everything.

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.

That they should seek God and perhaps feel their way towards him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each of us. For in him we live and move and have our being.

As even some of your own poets have said, for we are indeed his offspring. Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone.

[7:50] An image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlook. But now he commands all people everywhere to repent. Because he has fixed the day on which he will judge the world in righteousness.

By a man whom he has appointed. And of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.

But others said, we will hear you again this. So Paul went out from their midst, but some men joined him in belief.

Among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Demetrius and other with them. Thank you.

This is the word of Lord. Please take a seat. So what we just read, that was Paul in Athens. That was what Paul said to the people of Athens.

[8:49] But let's go back to the dinner table. What would Paul say if he was sitting there celebrating Chinese New Year with all your aunts and uncles? And now at this point, I need to admit, I'm not really an expert on Chinese New Year.

I'm Chinese, but I grew up in Toronto. And in fact, I just bought this shirt from Taobao two weeks ago. It's the first one I've ever owned. But my background is while my parents were from Hong Kong, I was born and raised in Canada, in Toronto.

So I'm Chinese Canadian. And we celebrated Chinese New Year growing up. We would eat together, but it wasn't the biggest deal to us. So now I'm just rediscovering my culture.

To prepare, I had to do some research. I had to look around, ask around to learn about my culture, just like Paul did in Athens. He would have been familiar with Greek culture, philosophy, but he still had his eyes open.

As he went around, he actively looked and observed at their culture to find this point of connection. That's what it says in verse 23. He intentionally did all that. And maybe you're in the same boat as me, where Chinese New Year isn't a big part of your tradition.

[9:53] Some of us here aren't Chinese. You might, or even if you are, you might not be celebrating Chinese New Year with your family. But as Christians in Hong Kong, if we are to go and scatter, to reach those around us, it helps for us to be familiar with the biggest, most important holiday in Hong Kong.

It helps to know our culture so that we can reach our city with the good news of Jesus Christ. Okay. So that's, that's why we're looking at Chinese New Year today. Now in Athens, Paul saw that they worshiped the unknown God.

They worshiped, they had this altar to the unknown God. What do we see looking around that we worship here? What idols do we have in this city? This isn't exactly in Hong Kong, but a few months ago, Jojo and I went up to our favorite massage place in Shenzhen, a 10 out of 10 spot.

We were, we were getting a foot massage and we were chatting with the masseuses to pass the time and also to practice our broken Mandarin to get a free 45 minute Mandarin lesson out of that same time.

Now at that point, we were talking and it came up that I was a pastor. So we, we were chatting about the faith, about Christianity. And so I asked him, Nina, how about you?

[11:06] What do you believe? Okay. And I expected him to say, Oh Buddha or nothing, but without skipping a beat, he said, Tian, I believe in money.

I worship money. That's what he said to me. There was no shame, no hesitation at all. And he said it, he just said it as a fact. I worship money.

And honestly, I think he simply admitted out loud what a lot of us, what most of us in Hong Kong feel silently deep down. Paul pointed to the unknown God in Athens.

In Hong Kong, I think we look to a known God and that God is money. That thought that if I work hard enough and save up enough to buy that flat, then I will be set.

My life's going to be good. I'll be happy. I can provide for my family and I'll be happy. That's what a lot of us here believe. And this, this becomes most clear at Chinese New Year.

[12:07] Chinese New Year is a celebration of fortune to have good fortune. Fortune is woven into almost everything in our celebrations. Think about the most common greeting you'll hear a hundred times this week.

Gong Hei Fa Chui. What does that mean? Literally, it's, it's a blessing of wealth. It literally means I wish you wealth. I would, may you be rich. I wish you wealth and prosperity. And it's not just Gong Hei Fa Chui.

What comes next? Lai Xi Dao Loi. Right? Where's my red pocket? Show me the money. That's, that's why we say all these, these greetings for the red pocket. See, I'm no expert on Chinese culture, but if there's, I learned one thing as a Chinese kid.

It's this. Has to be Lai Xi. That's when we receive red pockets filled with money from all our aunts and uncles. That's the only thing I cared about Chinese New Year growing up. And before we get Lai Xi, what do you have to do?

You have to say a few lucky sayings, these blessings. And a lot of them are focused on wealth. A lot of them are focused on wealth. Lai Ni Ni Yau Yu. May you always have more than you need.

[13:11] May every year, will you have a surplus every year? Wishing you good fortune, good profit. A lot of these are focused on fortune. And it's understandable why Chinese New Year is so

focused on wealth.

When we think about the history of our people, back when we're an agrarian society, you didn't know when you're going to have your next meal. Because life was dependent on just how good the crops were.

That's why people looked every year for, for fortune. And you didn't, yeah, you wouldn't know if you had a good harvest. And that mindset perhaps carries forward to today. In Hong Kong, when rent is crazy high, when the economy is not doing well, forget about saving enough to buy a flat.

Maybe we still carry forward that mindset today. Now, what would Paul say if he heard that worship of money at the dinner table? I think Paul would say to us, there's a better God to worship.

If you, even if you just cared about your fortune and wellbeing, there's a better God to worship than money. Because there is the one true living God who holds the whole world in his hands and is Lord over all our fortunes.

[14:19] If we look at verse 23 here, Paul brings up this unknown God. He says, I found also an altar with this inscription to the unknown God. Scholars say that the Athenians, they put up altars to unknown gods in part because of fear.

They believed in many gods and worshiped many gods, but were afraid that they might miss one of the gods. They would, they would, they would be unaware of one of these gods and unknown God and be cursed with bad luck.

They were afraid of overlooking an unknown God. They were insecure about their fortunes, just like us. And at the core, because at the core of what we're searching for is to be happy, to be loved, to have our needs met.

Search of the good life, the Athenians worshiped unknown gods. On the other hand, we grasp for unknown security, always reaching, but never finding that security we're looking for.

If we're looking for that in money, because when we put our trust in money, the economy can slow down. Bitcoin can drop 40%. And we were reminded tragically that even real estate can't be trusted to last forever.

[15:24] Look at verse 24. On the other hand, we have this in verse 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.

There's this Lord who made heaven and earth. The Athenians worshiped many gods, but Paul says to them, there is actually one true God and he made everything. The sun, he made it. The moon, he made it.

The earth, he made it. Stars, he made it. He made the whole world and everything in it, no exceptions. And as creator of all, he is also Lord of all. He is the one who is sovereign and has predestined and determined boundaries.

And a lot of times for all of us, he's sovereign over all the things that he's made. These other gods you look for, they can't help you because what authority do these gods have?

What power do they have to help you? They didn't create the world. They're not the Lord of all the world who made the world and everything in it. And even if these gods were real, they're limited only to their domain.

[16:21] If you worship Troy son, because you want money, that's, that's all he can give you. If you worship Guangun, Guangong for protection for your business, you can tell I'm not, I'm not really fully Chinese, but if you worship Guangong for protection, he can only look over your business.

These gods can only help you in the area of expertise. They have to stay in their lane. And if we worship money, Nathan reminded us last week, we can't take anything with us when we die.

Naked, you were born and naked, you will return. We can't take our jobs with us when we die. We can't take our house, our car, our portfolio and our stock market. Even if you promised your dollars, your doctor, a trillion dollars on your deathbed, they would be unable to lift a single finger to help you.

So why would we want to worship such a limited God? Why worship such an uncertain God who will disappoint you whenever the market moves? Instead, we have the privilege of knowing the living God who is Lord of all.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. That's what it says in Psalm 24. Everything belongs to him. And also every other God in Hong Kong is needy. Ancestors, they need you to feed them or they get upset.

[17:41] Spirits need you to burn incense or they curse you. In the Chinese New Year, there's all these superstitions surrounding fortune that put a weight on our shoulders. You have to be careful.

Don't clean your house. Don't sweep the floors. Don't take out the trash because you might accidentally get rid of good fortune. You can't cut your hair or else you'll cut the fortune away. If the God of money demands you to sacrifice your time, your health, your family to climb the career ladder, the stock market says, if you think about me, focus on me, worry about me, maybe you'll strike it rich.

There are taskmasters who say, feed me and maybe I will bless you. Maybe, just maybe, I will bless you. But the living God is different. Verse 24 says, God does not live in temples made by man. In verse 25, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. You see, God doesn't need anything from us.

He freely gives everything to us. And yes, there are commands in the Bible. There are things that God asks us to do, but he doesn't need anything from us. He doesn't require us to serve him.

[18:53] Even last week, as we spoke about making disciples, God could raise up sons of Abraham from stones. That's what he says. He doesn't need us to speak. He just invites us into his mission.

Every breath we have is from God. He's the one who gives us life and breath and everything to every single person. That's also even to those who don't acknowledge him, who don't even ask of him.

God has given us the breath that we have to even question God. He has shown us already so much grace. He's not a God who is served by human's hands. There's nothing that we can do to earn from God.

Everything we give to God is his already. His heart, God's heart is just for us to know him and enjoy him. He gives to us freely, even to the point of giving us his own son.

He simply wants us to sit at his table, call on him as father. And so for us, why would we want to worship idols that will enslave us, that disappoint us, that can't satisfy us when we can instead look to the God who gives us life and breath and everything.

[20:03] And also when we see this worship going on in our city, how can we point people to our God, the God who gives us everything? As a start, even the simplest thing we can choose to is to avoid glorifying money.

It can be as simple as replacing the blessings of wealth. Gong hei fa choi. With, there's said phrases that point to God's grace. Ji-yan mun, uh, mun yut.

Sorry, I can't pronounce it. Ji-yan mun yut, is it? Yep. And that's, that's just the simplest thing. Um, but more than that, more than just with our words, let us, let us show what we are putting our trust in.

Right? Right? It's not just our words. If we trust in money and just say different words, people will see that. But let us put our trust in God and show that.

Right? In the dinner table conversations, when the economy comes up or when your uncle asks you, there's always this uncle asking about your job and salary. Let your faith come out that God has been good with me with that promotion.

[21:15] And not just to say that, but to really believe it. He is the God who gave me life and breath and everything. Every good thing I have comes from him. Or if it's, I still can't find a job.

Let us show that I, I, I have God. I'm satisfied in him and he's more than enough. Let's remember the God who made the world and everything in it. He's the Lord of all fortunes.

Now we've, we've talked about the red pockets. Let's also talk about the people sitting around the table. Family, family. Chinese new year is all about family. If there's anything more important than fortune and money at Chinese new year, it has to be family.

That's the most, the most important event in Chinese new year. The most important meal of the year. That's tuning fine. This reunion dinner where family, immediate family get together and have dinner together.

That's the night when the whole family gets to matter together. It doesn't matter if you're busy. It doesn't matter if you have disagreement and conflict with one another. That's everyone gets back together.

[22:17] Chinese new is about family. And now that puts some of us in a bit of an awkward situation because I know for some of us, following Christ came with a cost.

It wasn't an easy decision because following Jesus sometimes put us, puts us at odds with our family. It can be seen as a betrayal by our family because we have to give up the gods that they follow.

That can come up in the context for us in ancestor worship. And I think it's beautiful in Chinese culture that we respect and honor our parents and elders. But this week, some of us may be asked and may be forced to draw a line with our families regarding ancestor worship.

That you might have to say, I won't offer incense. I won't burn money for them. Not because you don't love them. Not because you don't respect them. Because you have a greater love and respect. You worship God alone.

Following Jesus could put us at odds with our family because in Hong Kong, in Asia, sometimes there's this idea that Jesus is a foreign God. In Hong Kong, many people see Jesus as a Western God.

[23 : 25] He's the God of British missionaries, of colonists that brought their religion over. He's not a Chinese God. He's an imported foreign God. That Christianity is just for guailos and chuxing who grew up overseas and went to international schools.

Imagine Paul is at this Chinese New Year dinner and his uncle says, what are you talking about? Chinese people worship Chinese gods. Western people worship Jesus, Western gods.

We don't worship Jesus here. That's not what we do. That's not our tradition and culture. How do you think Paul would respond to that? Well, in fact, we don't have to imagine because Paul was in the same situation in verse 18.

In verse 18, it says, what does this babblers wish to say? Some said, what does this babblers wish to say? Others said, he seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities.

He's preaching foreign gods because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. That's what they said of Paul. They thought that, the Athenians thought that Paul was preaching a foreign God. And this is Paul's response in verse 26.

[24 : 31] God made from one man, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined a lot of periods and the boundaries of their dwelling places. That's God's.

That's, that's Paul's response. What he's saying is the God who made heaven and earth and everything in it. That same God made every person.

He made every nation, Chinese people, Korean people, British, Canadian, South African, Indian, Jewish, Greek. God made us all. He made all of us. He's the, he's the father of every nation.

He's the Lord of all the families of the earth. And in verse 28, Paul hammers home that point by quoting something from the culture. He says, as even some of your own poets have said, for we are indeed his offspring.

So there Paul, he, he, he remembers a quote from one of their, their poets, their philosophers, perhaps that God is that he is. Uh, we are indeed his offspring to point out that there is a God who made us all.

[25 : 35] That's what the Greek poet says. What about the Chinese? Some of our own poets have said, when you drink water, think of the source. Remember your roots.

Never forget where you come from. If we honor our parents, that's good. If we honor our grandparents, that's good. But if you stop there, you haven't gone back far enough. If we truly care about tradition, if we truly care about our ancestors, go beyond your father, go beyond your great grandfather.

If you trace your family tree and ancestry far back enough, we all arrive at one man, Adam. And go back one generation who made Adam. God did.

As we read out of the dust of the earth, he breathed life into Adam and made him in his image. God is our father. We're all created by him. We're all made in his image. He is the one who gives us life and breath and everything.

So true filial piety doesn't just stop after a few generations. If we are to honor our parents, much more are we to honor our father in heaven. Don't forget where you came from.

[26 : 42] Christianity isn't a foreign religion. Following Jesus doesn't mean breaking tradition. He is actually, in fact, the true Chinese God, if we go back far enough, it's just that we've all turned away from him.

So if your aunt asks you, why are you worshipping a Western God? Remember he made us all. He's the God of every nation. And if God is the creator of every nation, then he also deserves the

worship of every nation.

Look at verse 27. God planned that they should seek him and perhaps feel their way to him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us. Last week, we read about the mission of God, that we're part of God's mission to make disciples of all nations.

And that means making disciples near and far. We are to make disciples here in Hong Kong at Chinese New Year at our dinner tables. But also God cares, calls us to care for the nations, to be Christ's witnesses.

As it says in chapter one, to the ends of the earth, to make disciples of all nations. And James quoted John Piper last week, missions exists because worship doesn't. Point is that worship is the fuel of missions.

[27:48] We go out to make disciples because God deserves the worship. And right now there are places in the world, around the world who don't know Jesus, who have never heard of Jesus, who say, yeah, we worship the earth.

We worship the sun. We worship all these things that God created, but we don't recognize Jesus, the one who made us all. How does that sit with us? How does that sit with us?

For me, we just read that God is the one who gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And that provokes my spirit from him, through him, to him are all things, to him be the glory forever. He deserves the worship of every tribe, nation, and tongue. And we will care about global missions as much as we care about seeing Christ exalted to the ends of the earth. He deserves the glory from all his people.

He's not just God of the gathering and admiralty, but the God of all Hong Kong. And he's not just the God of Americans or the British. He's also the God of North Korea and Somalia.

[28:49] He's the God of the Poonoy people of Laos and the God of the Awan people of Pakistan. He's the God of all the families of earth, even the farthest, hardest to reach one where there's persecution, where they don't speak a language of the Bible.

He's God of all the nations and he deserves the worship. And may we be people who feel this conviction that we want to see Jesus recognized as Lord of all the earth.

He's the one who made the stars. He's, he made the Milky Way. All creation worships him. Everything. The whole universe sings his praise, except for on one little globe where people live. We rebel against him, but he deserves the glory. Worship is the fuel of missions. And when we come together as a family for tuning fine, this reunion dinner, it's not quite right when a family member is missing.

If there's an empty chair, that reunion is incomplete. And it's the same in God's family. For now, there are empty seats sat at his table, but he's the God who goes after the lost sheep, who goes to the farthest places to find that one lost sheep.

[30:01] He will fill those seats with people from every tribe, nation and tongue, even the least of these, even those in the most remote and dangerous places. And that's why we scatter. That's why we go and make disciples in Hong Kong and to the ends of the earth, because God deserves the glory.

And he will bring his whole family back. We look forward today. Revelation five, where people from every tribe, nation and tongue worship the lamb who was slain. Jesus is the Lord of all fortunes. He's the Lord of all families. And finally, when we look at Chinese new year, we see that Jesus is the Lord of all fears. He's the Lord of over all our fears.

Now think about the atmosphere at Chinese new year. What colors do you see? What sounds do you hear? Why is everything red? Why are there firecrackers?

Why all the drums and line dances, if you go to the temples and legend says it's because of this monster called mean. That's the, that's the Chinese word for year.

[31:03] And every year on new year's Eve, this monster would come out and devour all the crops and eat people, livestock and people. He would cause havoc. But then it's discovered that mean this monster is scared of the color red and of loud noises.

And that's what, why people stick red pieces of paper on their door, the fight, um, around the doors. And they set off firecrackers to scare off this monster lean. A lot of Chinese new year tradition is, is rooted in fear.

We fear this, perhaps this mythical beast, this dragon, we fear bad luck also. And that's why there's all the superstitions around what you can do and what you can't do.

Right? You can't cut your hair. You can't sweep the house. You have to eat fish or all these other things for good luck. And even if we don't buy these, those legends, even if you're not superstitious, we may also fear that uncle who never neglects to point out that you gained weight. Right? Why you, did you, did you eat a lot this year? Or the auntie who will always interrogate you. Why aren't you married? Why don't you have kids yet? Chinese new year is a holiday of fears. [32 : 14] And to that, Paul says, Hey, I see your fears. You, you should fear, but you fear the wrong things. There's a reason to fear, but you fear the wrong things.

We just read that God is the creator of every nation on earth, but look at how we treat him. Look at verse 29. It says being then God's offspring. We ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone and it's formed by the art and imagination of man. We take this glorious and infinite God and confine him to something we can see and understand. This could be literal idols. When we worship idols, make idols out of our hands. We're reducing God to something that we create the God who made us. We think that we can create back. These could be literal idols or perhaps the idol of money earned from our hands. The career ladder that we climbed. We are eager to look for joy and satisfaction in anything and everything apart from God. That's idolatry. That's, that's in all of our hearts. Now in Chinese culture, we, we respect our elders. Imagine this year. What if this year at Chinese new year at the family dinner, you walk up to your parents and your grandparents and you say to them in front of your whole family, I can take care of myself.

[33 : 38] I don't need you. In fact, you've never done anything for me. All you did was give birth to me in a world where there is suffering and hardship. I want nothing to do with you.

You've never done anything good for me. Imagine you walk up to your parents, your grandparents and say that. That's disrespect. And that's what we do with God every day. When we sin, that's what we do. When we fail to love and treasure God as the one who gives us life and breath and everything. And instead work, look to, to work, money, relationships, anything else for our satisfaction.

That's sin. And because of sin, we have something real to fear. Verse 30 says, the times of ignorance, God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness. A day of judgment is coming rather than fearing bad fortunes and miss.

[34 : 38] We ought to fear the Lord. Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body and hell. If we spend our lives, worshiping money, serving unknown gods, disrespecting our father in heaven, we have every reason to fear and be terrified on judgment day.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But the good news is that God is incredibly patient with us. Verse 30 said that God overlooked our times of ignorance.

He has patience. He delayed the judgment for our sins. But not only that, here we see how we may be saved. It says that he will judge the world in righteousness by a man who he has appointed. And of this, he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. The man that Paul is talking about is, of course, the man, Jesus Christ. Jesus, the son of God. He was born of God, born of Mary, took our place on the cross, died in our place, died the death that we deserve, took the judgment that we deserve and rose from the dead.

See, God is not scared by a color. He's not scared by the bright color red. But when God sees the red blood of his son shed for our sins, he turns away.

[35 : 56] He forgives us. God isn't turned away from the sound of firecrackers, but he hears his son crying out on the cross. Father, forgive them. And he listens. There's nothing that can turn us from the wrath of God, except for the blood of Christ.

There's salvation in no one else. There's no other name given under heaven by which may be saved. We are saved purely by faith in Jesus, the son of God. And we have assurance of that because God raised Jesus from the dead.

We have assurance that Jesus will judge the world in righteousness. That's what he says. That's what Paul says. But we also have assurance that we are covered by his grace, that we have new life in him because Jesus rose from the dead.

And if Jesus rose from the dead, what should we fear? What is there to fear? We don't need to fear the economy. We don't need to fear our jobs.

We don't need to fear test results from the doctor's office, from professional exams, because Jesus took care of our greatest enemy, our greatest fear.

[36:56] If even death can't harm us, if we can trust God with our souls, what can we not trust him with? If we can trust God with our life, our souls, our eternal salvation, we can also trust God with our life here and now.

If God gave us even his own son, if he didn't hold back his only son from us, what else will he hold back from us? Nothing. Oswald Chambers put it like this.

When you fear God, you fear nothing else. Whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else. In Christ, we no longer have to be afraid of God.

We're not afraid of punishment, of judgment, but we fear him as the holy, transcendent, eternal God who made heaven and earth and yet somehow cares for us.

And when we fear God in that way, we don't have to fear anything else. All these fears go away. And so how will we respond? If Jesus is truly Lord of all, Lord of all fortunes, Lord of all families, Lord of all our fears, how does that change us?

[38:05] Look at how the Athenians respond. There's three reactions. In verse 32, it says, Now, when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, but others said, we will hear you again about this.

So some mocked, some just laughed at him. Second, others were curious. We want to hear more.

But third in verse 34, it says, Some men joined him and believed. Will you believe today?

Will you trust him today? And if you do, Acts is a book about scattering, going out, making disciples. We asked at the beginning, what would the apostle Paul say if he were seated at your Chinese New Year dinner?

But the reality is, Paul's not going to be there. Paul's not going to be at the table this week. You are. We are. We're the ones filled with the same Holy Spirit that provoked Paul to speak in Athens. You're the one that God placed at the table. And even if you don't celebrate Chinese New Year or your family is far away, you're alongside Paul in Athens. You're in a city obsessed with fortune, paralyzed by fears.

[39:16] Even if you're not at dinner with your family this week, let us keep our eyes open as Paul did to see our culture, the needs of our city. And if our spirits are provoked, if our spirits are provoked to see God worshiped, then we will speak.

We will speak and proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. So that the next person, the person next to us, the person around us can share in our joy.

So this week, we may see people that we only see once a year. We may see family members that we only see once a year. On your way to dinner there, pray, open your eyes.

Ask God, open your eyes to see the needs around you. When they talk about fortune and anxieties, we can speak peace. That I'm not worried because I know the one who gives us life and breath and everything.

He holds the whole world in our hands. Why should I be anxious? I don't need to worry about money. I have the Lord who made heaven and earth. When we see superstitions born from fear, we can speak hope.

[40:22] We see that they fear sickness, fear death. We know that there's a God who rose from the dead and we don't have to fear because he lives. We also will live. And when we're with our family, we remember that he's gathering people from every tribe, nation and tongue, including the people sat around the table with you.

And we have assurance that he will get the glory. He will not lose one of his sheep. And so let our spirits be provoked, not in judgment, but in love and gratitude.

We aren't provoked because we know we're right and they're wrong. We're provoked because we know that they're hungry and we know the only one who could satisfy their souls. We know the bread of life. And some may mock.

Some might not care at all. Some may be curious. But God might also grant some to believe. If we just seek his face. It's not up to God.

It's up to God, not us. After all, because he is the Lord of Hong Kong. He's the Lord of Chinese Newry. He's the Lord of all. The pressure is not on us. He is Lord. Let us simply be a people provoked for his glory.

[41:31] And go out this week with that in mind. Let's pray. Let's pray for that heart. Lord, you are the God who made heaven and earth.

You say, if I were hungry, I would not tell you because the world and all its fullness are mine. You're not served by human hands, but you serve us. Jesus was the one who knelt down and washed our feet.

You're worthy of the praise of all nations, every tribe, nation, and tongue. You're the one who's the only one who can satisfy our souls. But Lord, we repent because so often we forget.

We forget who you are. And Lord, we need you. Pray that you remind us. Remind us that you are Lord of all. You're God worth following. We thank you that you sent your son, Jesus.

Even when we turned away from you. Even when you ran away from your family. You chased after us. You reconciled us to you by your son's death on the cross. Thank you for the life that we have in him.

[42:33] And so this week as we go out, may our spirits be moved. Guide us by your spirit to show us the needs of the city, the needs of our family. Help us not to be afraid because we know that all authority in heaven and on earth is yours.

And you will get the glory. You desire the glory of our family and of all the nations of the earth. Help us, Lord, just to seek your will. Pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's sing that one more time.

And as we sing it this last time, let's, as Gabe was speaking and as we were praying this morning, let's just declare God's greatness with whatever we're holding.

As Gabe was sharing, I think there can be a lot of anxiety going into this week that personally, honestly, I don't fully understand. I think you know why just looking at me.

[43:43] But I think there can be a lot of anxiety, fear, uncertainty going into the week. Maybe you actually came in today from this past week or even the beginning of this year with a lot of anxiety, a lot of heaviness, a lot of uncertainty.

But as we sing, we still serve a great God. We still serve a God who deserves our praise, even in the midst of all of that.

And so let's sing it one more time, praising him with whatever we're holding, knowing that he is there with you in the midst of it.

And he still deserves our praises and that he still is great. God, we declare your greatness.

You are so, so good. Even when maybe life isn't so good, you are good. And when life is great, you are good.

[45:17] And so, Father, we pray that as we go into this week, whatever it holds for each and every person here, that your greatness would be proclaimed.

That as we were singing, that broken hearts, God, that they would be restored. That as we go into family dinners and times with family where there's inevitably brokenness and hurt and pain, that you would heal and restore, Father.

And that it's not because of ourselves, but that it can be pointed back to you and the work that you are doing in our lives.

And that it would be a testament to the work that you are doing. And that our families would say, well, what's going on here? And the only thing we can say is, it's because of the goodness of God and the greatness of God.

And so, Father, may you turn the fear and hesitancy, may you turn it into anticipation of what you are going to do. Not only what you're going to do in us, but what you're going to do in those around us this week, Father.

[46:35] And so we go out today with hope. We go out with courage and boldness, knowing the God that we serve. Knowing that we can trust in you.

That we can trust in your greatness. So we thank you, God. Pray it's all in your name. Amen. Amen.