

“Always Present – Look for God!”

[Please show the video, “*God is Here*” prior to the Prelude.]

[Please show the video, “*Even There*” after the Scripture Reading.]

Our Bulletin Cover, the New Testament Lectionary Reading from Acts, and the video (pause) all affirm God is always present! (PAUSE) That Scripture reported what the Apostle Paul taught the general populace of Athens, Greece. His presuming to teach them, as he did, was extraordinary itself, (pause) because the Greeks, especially the Athenians, were among the most highly educated in the then known world. However, that fact did not cause Paul any hesitation. Instead, the educated nature of the Athenian society, especially about religion, (pause) provided him a powerful opportunity (pause) to persuade them to accept and believe his instruction. (PAUSE) It is helpful to understand, Athens had many temples for a multitude of different supposed deities. Because they were very religious – had such emphasis on worshipping all the Greek gods,

they also had a temple for the god, whose name they did not know.

(PAUSE) The Temple of the Unknown God became Paul's educational tool, as he began to teach the Athenians about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(PAUSE) Among the insights, which Paul shared about the Unknown God, (pause) was the revelation God is always present! (PAUSE) The Apostle explained near the end of **verse 27**, "***God is actually not far from any one of us***". (PAUSE) The video we saw a few moments ago (pause) joined in teaching the amazing nature of our Divine Parent's Presence.

Such as, the message of the video included a number of examples of places where God was found – "I looked toward the horizon, I wandered far down winding roads, I climbed the highest mountaintops, and I journeyed through the deepest valley and (pause) my God was there."

(PAUSE) The testimony of the video (pause) also dealt with important human experiences (pause) and the presence of the Almighty, (pause) such as, "I tasted life anew and fresh" and (pause) "I felt the sting of pain and loss (pause) and my God was there." (PAUSE) The video also raised the

subject of God's Presence with questions – "Where can I go from Your spirit? Where can I hide from Your Presence?" (PAUSE) The author of the video answered those question and made the powerful point (pause) God is always with us (pause) by saying, "If I go up to the heavens – if I make my bed in the depths You are there." (PAUSE)

As others have also stated, when I have faced difficult situations or times, (pause) I have been greatly encouraged by my faith in God's Constant and Agape Loving Presence. Indeed, when I teach a Confirmation Class, (pause) part of the assignment for each Confirmand has been a part of their writing their Personal Statements of Belief. I asked them (pause) to describe how they have experienced the Presence of God. (PAUSE)

Have you had one or more experience of the Presence of God? (PAUSE)

When I give the Confirmation Class the assignment to share their own experience of the Presence of God, (pause) one way I suggest they might discover that experience (pause) is by thinking about occasions of great joy or great sorrow. (PAUSE) When one recalls such times of extreme

happiness or deep sadness, (pause) it is when we remember them – in such retrospect (pause) that a person is most open (pause) to recognizing (pause) how she or he has experienced God’s Presence. (PAUSE)

In the later portion of verse 26, the Apostle Paul’s teaching of the Athenians (pause) revealed God created the boundaries of human environments. Paul spoke of God’s reason for doing that in the first part of verse 27, “*He did this (pause) so that they would look for Him, and perhaps find Him (pause) as they felt around for Him.*” (PAUSE) Our Divine Parent wants humanity – you, me, and all people – to search for or look for God! (PAUSE) That is why the local church teaches their children through Sunday School and Confirmation Class. That is also why (pause) a local Pastor’s Call (pause) includes being the Teacher of the congregation. (PAUSE)

The following video provides some important insights (pause) about how we struggle with our calling and purpose. It presents the speaker’s experience of wrestling with God’s Presence in his life. [Please show the

video, “*Made for Something Great*”.] The question, “What was I created for?” (pause) is one which is always embedded in our minds. (PAUSE)

Difficulties and hardships led the speaker in the video (pause) to question his own existence and ask, “What was I put here for?” (PAUSE)

Somewhat conflicted about his life experiences, he also asked, (pause) “What is my estate?” (PAUSE) Then, the speaker realized, “I’m one of a kind (pause) and something created me. No, (pause) someone (pause) created me (pause) and that someone made me for a reason (pause) even though it’s clear the past years have been treason (pause) I still sense this drawing – this calling that even in the midst of my balling (pause) there is someone who died to pick me up (pause) someone who rose to fix me up (pause) someone who is coming back to lift me up (pause) and that someone is Jesus. (PAUSE) See, (pause) God made me for a purpose.”

(PAUSE) The Apostle Paul concluded his teaching to the Athenians about their Unknown God (pause) by pointing to that same Jesus, the Crucified and Risen Son of God. **Paul taught in verse 31, “*For He has fixed a***

day in which He will judge the whole world with justice (pause) by means of a man He has chosen. He has given proof of this (pause) to everyone (pause) by raising that man from death!” (PAUSE)

God has made each of us for a purpose! (PAUSE) The proof of this purpose (pause) is the death and resurrection of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. (PAUSE) Your, my, and all people’s purpose (pause) is to be agape loved by God and one another! (PAUSE) We are called to recognize our Divine Parent is always with us (pause) loving us. (PAUSE) We are to seek – look for God’s Loving Presence among us (pause) and to teach – reveal it to our children and others, (pause) so they too will be loved, forgiven, comforted, healed, and welcomed into the New Love and Faith Relationship with God. (PAUSE) Look for the ways God’s Loving Presence is among us (pause) and invite everyone to look for God (pause) in the way you and we (pause) teach and love one another (pause) and all people. (PAUSE) Amen.