

Friends of the Chapel Weekly Scripture Study

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2026

New Testament Reading

Acts 17:16–31

English Standard Version Scripture Text

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 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. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

Paul Addresses the Areopagus

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 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, 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. 26 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, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 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.’

29 Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. 30 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 by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Historical Context

Acts 17 records Paul's visit to Athens, a center of philosophy and religious pluralism. Distressed by the city's idolatry, Paul engages both Jews and Gentiles, eventually addressing the Areopagus, where he proclaims the true God to a philosophically sophisticated audience.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verses 16–17 – Paul is provoked by the idolatry in Athens and begins reasoning in the synagogue and marketplace.

Verse 18 – Philosophers engage Paul, curious about his teaching concerning Jesus and the resurrection.

Verses 19–21 – Paul is brought to the Areopagus to explain his message.

Verses 22–23 – Paul begins by referencing the Athenians' altar to an unknown god.

Verses 24–25 – God is proclaimed as Creator, not confined to temples or dependent on human service.

Verses 26–28 – God sovereignly orders history and is near to all people.

Verses 29–31 – Paul calls for repentance, declaring that God will judge the world through the risen Christ.

Theological Themes

- The proclamation of the one true God
- Engagement with culture and philosophy
- Repentance and judgment
- The resurrection as proof of authority

Epistle Reading

1 Peter 3:13–22

English Standard Version Scripture Text

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Historical Context

Peter encourages believers facing hostility to remain faithful and prepared to give a defense for their hope. He points to Christ's suffering and victory as the model and foundation for Christian endurance.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verse 13 – Doing good generally leads to blessing, even in difficult circumstances.

Verse 14 – Suffering for righteousness is a blessing and should not produce fear.

Verse 15 – Believers are to honor Christ and be ready to explain their hope with gentleness.

Verses 16–17 – A good conscience and righteous conduct put false accusations to shame.

Verses 18–20 – Christ suffers once for sins, bringing salvation and proclaiming victory.

Verse 21 – Baptism symbolizes this saving work and appeal to God through Christ’s resurrection.

Verse 22 – Christ is exalted at God’s right hand with all authorities subject to Him.

Theological Themes

- Witness in a hostile world
- Suffering for righteousness
- The saving work of Christ
- Baptism and resurrection hope

Concluding Reflection

The Sixth Sunday of Easter highlights the call to faithful witness in a complex world. Paul demonstrates how to engage thoughtfully with those who do not yet know God, while Peter encourages believers to stand firm in hope even amid suffering. Together, these readings remind the Church to proclaim the truth with clarity, courage, and humility.

Thoughts to Consider 05/10/26

1. What can we learn from Paul’s approach to sharing the gospel in Athens?
2. How can we connect with people who have different beliefs while remaining faithful to the gospel?
3. What does it mean to be ready to give a defense for our hope?
4. How should believers respond to opposition or misunderstanding?
5. How does Christ’s resurrection strengthen our confidence in faith and witness?