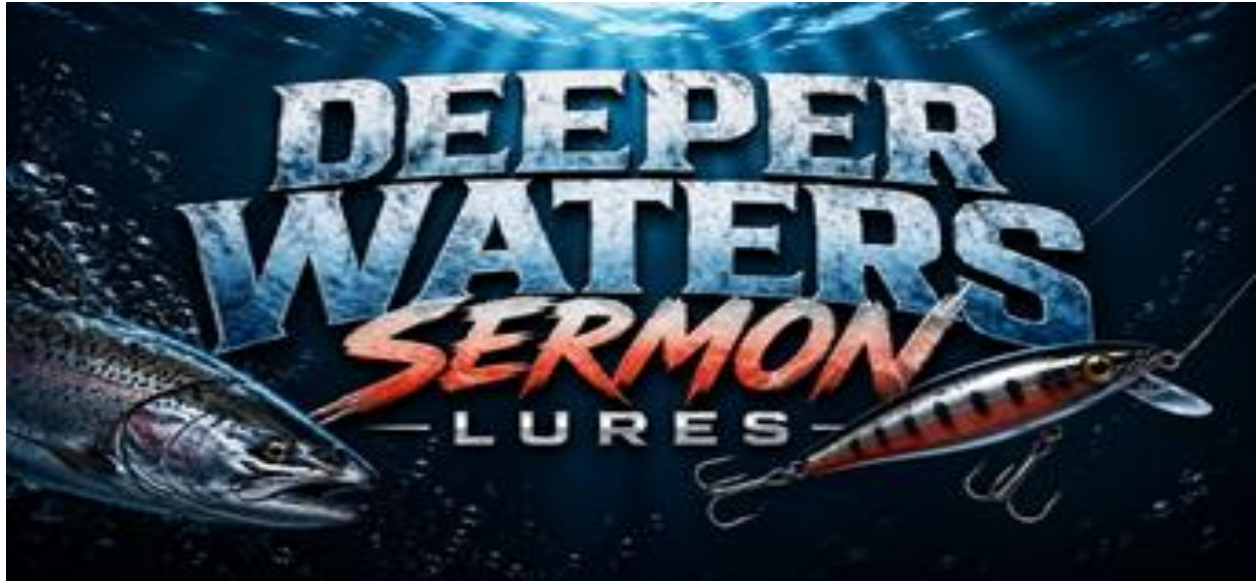




KNOW IT!

Paul's message on Mars Hill shows how Christians can share their faith with grace, humility, and understanding in a world full of competing beliefs. Instead of condemning the Athenians, Paul builds a bridge by starting with what they already know—their altar “to an unknown God”—and then reveals the God who created all things and is near to all who seek Him. The sermon reminds us that Jesus Himself modeled this bridge-building love, meeting people where they were and offering compassion, forgiveness, and new life. In a culture often marked by negativity, division, and doubt, we are called to respond with hope, encouragement, and truth spoken in love. With God's help, we can help others know the God they don't—or the God they won't—by living as people who build bridges rather than walls.

READ IT!

- **1 Corinthians 9:19–23 — “Becoming all things to all people”** Paul describes his willingness to meet people within their own cultural frameworks so that he might help them encounter Christ. This is the clearest parallel to his Mars Hill strategy of building bridges rather than barriers.
- **John 1:14–18 — “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”** Jesus enters our world, speaks our language, and reveals God's grace in a way people can understand. It's the ultimate example of God meeting humanity where we are.
- **Matthew 5:14–16 — “You are the light of the world”** Jesus calls His followers to shine with compassion and truth in the midst of a skeptical or hurting world—an invitation to be bridge-builders who help others see God's goodness.

- ***The Diary of Anne Frank* (Anne Frank)** Anne’s reflections reveal a courageous belief in human goodness despite overwhelming darkness. Her posture of hope and empathy reflects the sermon’s call to respond to negativity with bridge-building love.
- **“The Road Not Taken” (Robert Frost)** A poem about choosing a different, often harder path—much like choosing to build bridges instead of walls. It lifts up the courage to take the path that leads toward understanding, compassion, and transformation.

WATCH IT!

- **The Chosen (2019–present)** A widely beloved series portraying Jesus meeting people exactly where they are—outsiders, skeptics, the wounded, and the spiritually confused—and inviting them into transformation. Its relational, compassionate approach mirrors Paul’s strategy in Athens.
- **The Shack (2017)** Though a few years older, it remains highly popular and centers on God meeting a grieving man in his pain, dismantling misconceptions, and revealing divine love in a way he can understand. It reflects Paul’s approach of revealing the God people long for but do not yet know.

The Book of Acts (RightNow Media – multiple teachers) Several newer studies on Acts highlight Paul’s Mars Hill message, emphasizing cultural engagement, respectful dialogue, and sharing Christ in ways that build bridges rather than barriers. These studies directly reinforce the sermon’s central theme.

LIVE IT!

- **Practice “curious listening” with someone who believes differently.** Choose one conversation this week where your goal is not to correct or convince but to understand. Ask gentle questions, listen without defensiveness, and look for shared values—just as Paul began with the Athenians’ altar “to an unknown God.”
- **Build one intentional bridge of kindness.** Identify someone who feels distant, overlooked, or difficult to connect with—at work, school, or in your neighborhood—and offer a small act of encouragement: a note, a prayer, a check-in, or a simple kindness. This mirrors Jesus’ bridge-building with the Samaritan woman and the woman caught in adultery.
- **Name and pray for one person who needs to meet God’s love.** Write down the name of someone who is searching, skeptical, or hurting. Pray daily that God would open a door for compassion, conversation, or witness—not through pressure, but through presence and love.
- **Speak truth in love once this week.** Romans 12 and Acts 17 both show that truth and kindness are not opposites. Look for one moment to offer a gentle, hopeful word about your faith, God’s character, or Christ’s love—without judgment or argument.

