

When Monday Comes

Another View: The God We Keep in Reserve

Paul stood in Athens, surrounded by people who were, in his words, “**very religious.**” They had temples, philosophies, debates. Even an altar labeled: “To an unknown god.”

At first glance, it feels distant, ancient. Different from us, not relevant. But the more you look at it, the more familiar it becomes. Because we may not build altars like that anymore—but we are still very good at keeping a **God in reserve**. We believe, but not completely. We trust, but with a backup plan. We say - “I believe in God...” “I’m spiritual...”

But sometimes that belief becomes a way to **cover all the bases** without ever fully committing. Just in case.

*I’ve caught myself doing that more times than I’d like to admit...trusting God—but still keeping something else in my back pocket. **And in that moment, I realized, I’m not that different from the people Paul was talking to.***

Paul walked into a city full of thinkers—people who loved to debate. Some believed in gods who didn’t get involved. Some believed life was just fate to endure. Others believed they could reason their way into righteousness. Each one had a system; each one had an explanation. But underneath it all ... they were still searching for **hope**.

And the truth is, nothing has really changed Everyone worships something. Maybe not statues, but we all have places we go looking for:

- identity
- meaning
- security
- help when life gets hard

I was talking with a young man the other day, successful by every measure. Good job. Nice home. Financially secure. And yet he said something simple and honest: “I have a great life, but something is missing.”

If Paul were to spend a day in our cities—riding along, looking around—what would he see? Billboards, advertisements. Endless messages telling us: “If you just had this, you’d be enough.” Stadiums filled with passion. Office buildings built on ambition. Institutions we trust to give us answers, security, even life itself. Not altars of stone, but **modern shrines of hope**.

Because we don't just keep a God in reserve—we also build places where we quietly place our trust: success, money, knowledge, health, relationships, control. Places where we say: “If God doesn't come through, I'll lean on this.”

But Paul does something bold. He looks at that altar, “*To an unknown god*”, and says: “**What you worship as unknown... I am going to proclaim to you.**” And then he makes it clear: This is not just another option. This is the **Creator God**—the One in whom: “*we live and move and have our being.*” The One who is not far from us. The One who made us... and knows us.

And Paul reminds us of something we often avoid: Our time here is limited. Everything we build—everything we chase—everything we depend on apart from God... **won't last**. Not the buildings, not the systems, not even our own bodies. And maybe that's the point. We were created this way so that we would: **search for God... reach for Him... and find Him**. Because sooner or later, we discover: Every other hope runs out.

But the story doesn't end there. Because the God Paul proclaimed is not distant... He stepped into our world. Through Christ, God didn't just give us something to believe in—He gave us **someone to trust**. Someone who: meets us in our searching, sees the emptiness we try to cover, and offers us something nothing else can **forgiveness, peace, and a hope that doesn't end at the grave**. This is the hope we were searching for all along. Not success, not security, not something we build. But a Savior who came to us, when we couldn't find our way to Him. So maybe the question this week isn't just: “Where am I placing my hope?” “But: “Am I still keeping Jesus in reserve... or am I finally trusting Him as my only hope?”

Because faith isn't just about what we say we believe. It's about who we trust, when everything else falls short.

And here's the good news: You don't have to have it all figured out. You don't have to clean everything up first. You just have to stop reaching for everything else... and turn toward the One who has already reached for you. Because in the end, we don't need more options. We need one true hope. *I've learned the hard way—backup plans make poor saviors.* And maybe faith isn't about having the perfect argument... or winning the right debate...

We don't have to argue for our hope; we just have to live like it's real. Because when it is, people can see it.

Walking it Out This Week

Take a few quiet minutes sometime this week - no rush, no pressure just pause and be honest with yourself – no right or wrong answers.

1. What is weighing on me the most right now?
2. When I feel uncertain, what do I reach for first?
3. What am I hoping will “save” this situation?
4. Where do I sense fear trying to take over?
5. What would it look like to trust God with just the *next step*?
6. What is one small way I can turn toward God this week instead of away?

Simple Prayer for the Week

God, I don't have all the answers right now. But I believe You are here.
Help me trust you with what I can't control. Give me strength for the next step
and peace for this moment. Remind me I'm not alone.
Amen.

Faith Between Sundays

Monday — Name What’s Real

(Psalm 55:22) *“Cast your burden on the Lord...”*

Take a quiet moment and ask:

What is weighing on me the most right now?

Don’t fix it—just name it and give it to God.

Tuesday — Notice What You Reach For

(Matthew 6:21) *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

When stress hits, pause and ask:

What am I turning to first?

Just notice it—no judgment.

Wednesday — Pause Before You React

(Proverbs 3:5–6) *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart...”*

Before reacting to something stressful:

take one breath

say: *“God, help me trust You here.”*

Thursday — Take One Faith Step

(James 1:22) *“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.”*

Take one step forward:

- make the call
- have the conversation
- ask for help

Friday — Let Go of One Thing

(1 Peter 5:7) *“Cast all your anxiety on Him...”*

Ask yourself:

What am I holding onto that I can’t control?

Then release it—even if it’s just for today.

Saturday — Look Back and Notice

(Psalm 46:1) *“God is our refuge and strength...”*

Where did you see:

- strength you didn’t expect?
- peace in a hard moment?

That’s not accidental.

Sunday — Reset Your Hope

(John 14:18) *“I will not leave you as orphans...”*

You don’t have to carry everything alone. Come Back, refocus, begin again

Prayers For the Week

**Think of these as:
“prayers you can whisper in the middle of the day”**

Monday — Name What’s Real

God, here’s what’s really weighing on me today... (you know it already)
I don’t want to hide it or carry it alone. Help me place it in Your hands.
Amen.

Tuesday — Notice What You Reach For

Lord, I see how quickly I turn to other things when I feel stressed.
Help me turn to You first. Teach me to trust You in the moment, not just afterward.
Amen.

Wednesday — Pause Before You React

God, Before I rush ahead or react, help me slow down.
Give me a moment of clarity...
and the wisdom to trust You here.
Amen.

Thursday — Take One Faith Step

Lord, I don’t need the whole plan—just the next step. Give me the courage to move forward and trust that You are already there.
Amen.

Friday — Let Go of One Thing

God, there are things I’m holding onto too tightly. Today, I release them to You, even if I must do it more than once. Help me trust you with what I can’t control.
Amen.

Saturday — Look Back and Notice

Lord, Thank You for being with me this week. Open my eyes to see where You showed up, even in small ways I might have missed.
Amen.

Sunday — Reset Your Hope

God, Thank You for a new beginning. Help me let go of what I’m carrying and place my hope in You again.
Amen.

From the Pew

Every story matters. Not just the big, life-changing moments, but the quiet ones too—the small steps, the honest struggles, the times you saw God show up in a way you didn't expect.

The best stories of faith are sitting right here among us.

Different journeys, different struggles, different ways God is at work.

And sometimes, hearing someone else's story helps us see our own a little more clearly.

If you're willing, we'd love to include your story in an upcoming *When Monday Comes*. Simply share it with our administrative assistant. It doesn't have to be polished—just honest. (*Stories can be a few sentences or a short paragraph.*)

What I Know

The more I get to know Jesus the more I realize I need to know.

It is a constant learning.

I am more amazed everyday.

He has dried my tears, when I was hurting and in pain.

He held my hand when I was facing a trial.

He has encouraged me; calmed me in a storm, directed me.

He has gotten me on the right path when I headed in the wrong direction.

I have faced so many mountains.

I struggled, but He helped me get to the top.

Through the pain and loss & discouragement - He was there.

He is my friend - There is no better one.

He died for me because He loved me.

Shared with permission by Jean Finnegan

Stories like this remind us of we're not walking this alone—thank you.

The Day an Electric Fence Brought Me Back to Earth

There was a time in my life when I thought I was impressive. And I knew it. I was a young guy traveling around to farms, demonstrating portable satellite systems, back when that kind of technology felt like something straight out of Buck Rogers. Out in the middle of nowhere, I could bring in TV signals to places that couldn't even pick up a basic over-the-air station.

I'd roll in with my setup—dish, equipment, even a generator—and before long there'd be 50, sometimes 100 farmers gathered around. I'd start talking about megahertz and gigahertz... geosynchronous orbits... apogee and perigee... signals traveling 25,000 miles through space.

On one visit, I set up in a farmer's driveway next to a pasture with a few horses. I went through my whole demonstration—laying it on pretty thick—figuring I was showing these farmers what the future looked like. Honestly, I thought I was the smartest person in the field. When I finished, I leaned back against the fence, ready for questions. What I didn't know, never having spent much time on a farm, was that electric fences don't stay constantly charged... they pulse. And apparently, I leaned back at just the wrong moment.

The next thing I knew, I was picking myself up off the ground, wondering what in the world had just happened..One of the older farmers walked over, looked at me, and said: "Well... that young man knows a lot about microwave... but doesn't know a darn thing about electric fences."Then he pointed over at the horse and added: "And I think that horse might be a little smarter than him... it knows not to touch it." That'll bring you back to earth in a hurry.

What I came to realize over time is that those farmers I thought I was impressing were some of the most intelligent people I've ever met. They understood machinery... weather... soil... animals... finances...and they lived with a level of awareness I didn't have yet.

It also took me a while to learn something else: Just because you know something ... doesn't mean people will believe you.

Even when I was showing them TV pictures coming down from space, there was still a sense of: “Alright... but let’s see.” And honestly, that wasn’t stubbornness. That was wisdom.

I remember one time being sent out to fix a satellite system that wasn’t tracking correctly. I traveled a full day to get out there. I was ready to troubleshoot angles, arcs, and all the technical details. When I arrived, the farmer had already fixed it. Not only fixed it... but improved it. He had modified the mount and motor controls in a way that worked better than what we had designed. I took what he did and later incorporated it into the next batch of antennas we manufactured.

Turns out... I wasn’t the only one learning out there. But here’s the part that surprised me the most. That electric fence moment, the one I would have gladly erased, actually made it easier to work with those farmers. In some strange way, it probably sold more satellite systems than anything I ever said. Because from that point on, I wasn’t just the guy who talked about satellites... I was the guy who got knocked flat by an electric fence, got back up, and admitted he didn’t know everything.

Years later, when I went back to that same area, people would still ask: “Hey... you touched any electric fences lately?” Even people who weren’t there had heard the story. And I think that’s when it finally clicked. It wasn’t what I knew that connected with people. It was what I was willing to admit I didn’t know.

It reminds me of Paul walking into Athens—into a city full of thinkers, debaters, and people who took pride in what they knew. Paul didn’t try to out-argue them. He didn’t try to prove he was the smartest person in the room. Instead, he met them where they were. He saw their spirituality, even though it was misdirected, and pointed them to the God they didn’t yet fully understand. And maybe that’s where this meets us.

Because as Christians, we can sometimes fall into the same trap I did in that field. We think: “I believe in Christ... so others should too.” And if we just explain it well enough, or know enough, or sound convincing enough, people will believe.

But faith doesn't usually grow that way. It doesn't come from winning arguments or proving we're right...or being the smartest voice in the room. It grows through humility. Through honesty. Through being willing to say: “I don't have all the answers... but I know God is where my hope is.”

And I have to admit... in some ways, that electric fence taught me more about electricity than my schooling ever did. It definitely got my attention. And maybe, in a strange way, it also energized my understanding of how God wants us to work with people. Not by shocking them into belief, not by overwhelming them with what we know...but by meeting them where they are, with humility, honesty, and a willingness to listen.

I'm not sure there's a verse in Scripture that says, “Thou shalt not touch an electric fence...” But there is something close: “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.” — 1 Corinthians 8:1 Those farmers didn't trust me because I sounded smart. They trusted me because I stayed, I learned, and I was honest about what I didn't know.

Maybe that's part of what Paul understood. And maybe it's something we're still learning today. Sometimes the smartest moment we have ... is when we realize we don't have to be the smartest person in the field—just the most honest.

Shared by Mark Widner

A Simple Reminder from God

Some weeks don't feel like a fresh start.

They feel like:

- bills you're not sure how to pay
- a doctor's report you didn't want to hear
- worry that keeps showing up at night
- the quiet question: "*What's going to happen?*"

If that's where you are... you're not alone.

It's easy in those moments to reach for anything that feels solid: **money, control, answers, backup plans.** And there's nothing wrong with doing what you need to do.

But here's the reminder: **It's okay to use what you have ... just don't ask it to be your savior.**

Faith doesn't mean pretending everything is okay. It doesn't mean you suddenly have all the answers. And it doesn't mean life will turn out exactly the way you hope. What it does mean is this: **You are not facing this alone.** Not just in a general sense, but **right here, in your situation, as it is today.** God sees it, God knows it, and He is with you in it.

When you're in the "bottom of the 9th" moments of life, faith isn't about fixing everything. It's about this: **Staying in the box and trusting God with the next pitch.**

So, this week, don't try to solve everything. Just take the next step. Say the next prayer. Face the next moment. Because your hope isn't in how this inning ends... **Your hope is in the One who is with you going through it.** Even when things feel uncertain even when the future of what we love feels unclear...

God has not stepped away. You don't need a perfect plan, just a place to stand, and God is already there.

A Simple Prayer for the Week

God,
I don't have all the answers right now.
Some things feel uncertain... and honestly, a little overwhelming.

But I believe You are here.

Help me to trust You with what I can't control. Give me the strength to take the next step, the courage to face what's in front of me, and the peace to rest in knowing I'm not alone.

When I'm tempted to reach for other things to carry my hope, gently remind me that You already are here already

Stay close to me this week, Lord...
and help me to stay close to You.

Amen.

Why the Church Calendar Matters

Right now, the church is in the season of Easter—not just one Sunday, but a season. Easter is a reminder that new life doesn't happen all at once. It unfolds.

The early church didn't just celebrate the resurrection for a day—they gave it time to sink in... to shape how they lived. That's what this season invites us to do too.

Not just to believe that Christ is risen, but to start living like it.
Maybe this week, that looks like:

- choosing hope when it's easier to be discouraged
- offering grace when you could hold a grudge
- or simply noticing where new life is quietly showing up around you

Because Easter isn't just something we celebrate, it's something we grow into.

What Is When Monday Comes?

*This space is here to help bridge the gap between Sunday and the rest of the week.
Faith isn't meant to stay in a pew—it's meant to show up in everyday moments.
These short reflections and ideas are meant to give you something simple, real,
and doable as you walk into your week.*