

# 40 Days of Fitness

A daily devotional by Rev Garry Hardingham

## DAY 5 – The God I don't believe in

*Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.*

Acts 17:22-25

William Barclay is best known to many of us for his helpful Bible Commentaries on the New Testament. Writing in his Spiritual Autobiography, he tells of a great tragedy in life. Barclay's twenty-one year old daughter and her fiancé were both drowned in a boating accident. "God did not stop that accident at sea, but he did still the storm in my own heart so that somehow my wife and I came through that terrible time still on our own two feet."

One day there came an anonymous letter to Barclay. "Dear Dr. Barclay, I know now why God killed your daughter; it was to save her from corruption by your heresies." Barclay says in his book, "If I had the writer's address, I would have written back, not in anger, the inevitable blaze of anger was over in a flash, but in pity. And I would have said to him, as John Wesley said to someone, 'Your god is my devil.'" William Barclay, had he been able to write to the anonymous author of that letter, would have told him, "Your god is the god I don't believe in."

Juan Arias, a Spanish author, has written:

No, I shall never believe in the god who loves pain . . .

The god who "sends" people to hell;

The god who does not know how to hope;

The god whom only the mature, the wise, or the comfortably situated can understand;

The god who sometimes regrets having given us free will;

The god who is interested in souls and not in people;

The god who says and feels nothing about the agonising problem of suffering humanity; . . .

The god incapable of making everything new;

The god who has never wept,

The god in whom there are no mysteries,

Who is not greater than we are;

The god who is not love and who does not know how to transform into love everything he touches.

I believe in the other God..... And so do I!

### PRAYER

Lord God,

Save me from myself.

From my tendency to judge, to hate, to hurt.

Reveal yourself to me this day

That I might know you.

So that my eyes may be your eyes,

My ears maybe your ears,

And my mouth may be Your mouth.

Let me not so much speak to You

But to speak through You

So that the god I proclaim

Is the very God who has claimed me.

AMEN.