Sermon: **I found an altar on which is written, “To an Unknown God”** (Acts 17.23)

TV programme, Bones: experts use knowledge to discover the identity, and what happened at/before death. To them it is science; to everyone else it is a mystery.

We have been trained to search for answers, or trust in experts who’ve found them.
How does this apply to God? Are we the experts? Or do we only see God as a mystery? Or both??

Paul faced the city council in Athens. Athenians were typically interested in philosophy – trying to make sense of life. Paul comes across as an expert, TEXT. He explains what was a mystery.

Note the council members were not particularly impressed, only one of the council (Dionysius) believed.

Very rarely do folk come to faith by being persuaded from a rational argument – though it can happen.

Trouble is that God is not provable in the normal sense of proof.

Paul talks about a God chosen man who is to be a judge of all, proving this by raising this man from death.

Clearly this is no proof to the Athenians - it just sounds like nonsense. So talk of God can be for many today.

I like a good whodunit, struggling to work out who & how & why. These books end with all the answers, confirming or otherwise what you guessed. But life (and God) is not like that. You can struggle all your life trying to make sense of God’s existence, love & purpose, the reality of heaven & life after death.

You might be sufficiently satisfied, but none is ever proved in the scientific sense. What should we do?

[1] Rest in God as mystery.

There is something of God that is beyond our ability to understand – this is reassuring! God is a mystery.

In most scientific fields the ‘experts’ say “the more we know, the more we realise how little we know.”

For us we need to hear that it is OK not to understand God, or everything about God.

[2] Faith. Faith is not proof. Faith is not based on proof, it is based on trust, and hope.
Those who do not believe talk about evil in the world where God is almighty, about suffering from natural disasters, about the reality and finality of death, as arguments against God. Many Christians hide from these uncomfortable things.

True faith comes when we hear these arguments and doubts, feel their force, and yet believe, because we trust other evidence, as we talked about with the children earlier.

TEXT - God may ever be something of An Unknown God to us. That’s OK. *But live as though it was true!*