

We believe discipleship is a direction  
not a destination.



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# Evangelism in a Skeptical World

Week 5

# Course Outline (12 Weeks)

- ~~Week 4 Ch3 How to Craft a Gospel Presentation~~
  - ~~How to present the Gospel, then and now~~
- **Week 5 Ch4 Evangelism to Postmoderns**
  - Modernism and Postmodernism
- **Week 6 Ch5 Contextualization for Evangelism**
  - The Gospel and Culture



# Course Outline (12 Weeks)

- **Week 7 Ch5** Contextualization for Evangelism
  - How to Interpret Culture, Thoughts, Themes, Story
- **Week 8 Ch6** Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics
  - Enter, Challenge, Fulfill
- **Week 9 Ch7** Storytelling the Gospel
  - Styles of Learning, Story-telling



# Course Outline (12 Weeks)

- **Week 10** Ch8 How to Give Evangelistic Topical Talks
  - What is a Topical Talk and how to give one
- **Week 11** Ch9 How to Give Evangelistic Expository Talks
  - What is an Expository Talks and how to give one
- **Week 12** Ch10 Religious Epistemology, Apologetics
  - Moving People from Hostile to Loyal



# *Evangelism to Postmoderns*

## **The Age of Modernity (1600-1980)**

Chapter 4



# The Modern Period

- There are six essential features that define the modern period per Don Carson
- **Knowledge begins with “I”, the ego**
  - I determine if something is true
  - I use my senses, see, touch, smell, taste
  - To do this I must be objective/neutral
  - I also must reject other knowledge
    - Church, authority, tradition, family



# The Modern Period #2

- **The noetic structure**

- All knowledge is built upon previous proven truths
- Its like building a pyramid
  - One truth on top of another truth
- There are bedrock truths that do not change
  - If they do, then everything built on them will collapse



# The Modern Period #3

- **We discover new truths if our methods of knowing are neutral, detached, unbiased, and reliable**
  - For example: I conduct a scientific experiment
    - As long as my method is correct
    - Whatever comes out is truth





# The Modern Period #4

- **Modern age believed that certainty of knowledge was possible, attainable, and desirable**
  - This means it is possible for us to know all truths
  - This was encouraged in the 1800's because
    - There were so many new “discoveries”



# The Modern Period #5

- **Naturalism is the worldview that *matter* is all that exists**
  - It also means miracles/supernatural can not exist
    - I can't see, touch, or experiment on them
  - This also means there is no such thing as God
    - I can't see, touch, or experiment on God
  - If it can't be explained or proven it is not real



# The Modern Period #6

- **The modern age believed that truth is universal**
  - For all peoples
  - At all times
  - In all places
- If butter pecan ice cream tastes good to Texans
- Then it will taste good to South Koreans



# *Evangelism to Postmoderns*

## **The Age of Postmodernity (1980-Present)**

Chapter 4



# Postmodernity

## Epistemological

Relating to the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion.

- What is Postmodernity
  - It depends on how you define it (very postmodern) 😊
- For our purposes we will define it as
  - A reaction against the epistemological assumptions of modernity
- What has changed in the features of the modern period?



# Postmodernity #1

- Postmodernity recognizes the subjectivity of the individual
  - I, the knower, am subjective
  - I am **not** neutral, detached, objective
  - I **am** subjective, biased, and influenced
  - Context determines meaning



# Postmodernity #2

## Noetic Structure

The sum total of everything a person believes plus the relationships between those beliefs.

- **The noetic structure of postmodernism is coherentism**
  - Instead of one truth building on another (modernism)
    - Each truth is free floating and tied to other truths
      - These truths are bound by
        - Culture, Language, Tribe, Family
  - “You have to be true to yourself”
  - “Who am I to impose my beliefs on you?”



# Postmodernity #3

- **All method is biased and subjective**
  - We are not a blank slate coming at “truth” unbiased
  - Our starting point, culture, family, religion
    - Will determine our conclusion
  - “We construe the evidence to fit our worldviews.”
  - Does this effect how we interpret the Bible?
    - Maybe, there are several denominations in the US
      - Is this because of or culture, family, language?





# Postmodernity #4

- **Certainty of knowledge is impossible**
  - Knowledge is conditioned by our culture, language, and traditions
  - There are no culturally neutral facts
  - Knowledge is made, rather than discovered
  - It is construed, rather than found
  - Knowledge is personal
  - **You have your truth I have mine**



# Postmodernity #5

- **It challenges naturalism**
  - Naturalism was/is seen as the enemy of the Christian worldview
    - It denies a creator
  - Postmodernity looks at science as biased
  - It opens the door to alternative areas of knowledge
    - Nontraditional medicine, astrology, acupuncture



# Postmodernity #6

- **There is no universal truth**
  - To have a universal truth imposes my truth on other cultures
  - There are objective facts but, those facts look different based on your point of view
    - Fact the US drop an atomic bomb on Japan
      - But the telling of that story will look different between an American and a Japanese person



# *Evangelism to Postmoderns*

## Christianity in a Postmodern Age

Chapter 4



# Postmodern Age

- **How do you engage in evangelism in a postmodern world?**
  - Do we change our message?
  - Our methods?
  - Can you even share the gospel in this context?
- We need to rethink the way we evangelize
  - There are things in postmodernism we need to reject
  - But there are things that will aid us in sharing the gospel



# Postmodernity Says/Believes #1

- **Tolerance is now the highest moral good**
  - We must tolerate all ideas
    - Truth is viewed as subjective and internal
      - Your truth is your truth, my truth is my truth
  - The only thing not to tolerate is intolerance
- Saying there is one and only one way to heaven
  - Is intolerant and evil



# Postmodernity Says/Believes #2

- **All religions are valid and essentially the same**
  - We all are worshiping the same God or gods
  - We just come at “god” from different cultures
  - Your god depends on how you were raised
    - Bible belt = Christian
    - India = Hindu
    - Middle East = Muslim



# Postmodernity Says/Believes #3

- **There are no absolutes**
  - All truths are the result of subjective interpretation
    - There is no privileged interpretation
    - Any claim to absolute truth is a use of power
      - And violence upon the other person
- Recall Star Wars: Episode III and Obi-Wan and Anakins conversation:
  - “Only a Sith Lord deals in absolutes”





# Postmodernity Says/Believes #4

- **Is unconvinced by proof or evidence**
  - Modernity says prove God is real with “provable facts”
  - If you prove Jesus rose from the dead
    - A modernist may believe everything else you say
  - But a postmodernist would not be moved by this
    - You proved it because you believe it
    - It doesn't make it true for me



# Postmodernity Says/Believes #5

- There is a diversity in the ways of knowing
  - Take the advertisement of Shampoo
    - Modernism shows you a doctor or scientist
      - This shampoo has been tested and found the best
    - Postmodernism shows you and athlete or influencer
      - I use this shampoo and it works great, fixed my dandruff in a week
- Your experiences matter not your authority



# Postmodernity Says/Believes #6

- Is open to the different perspectives of other cultures
- The issue:
  - The Caucasian male is in the traditional positions of authority
    - As father, doctor, or scientist
    - He was the one who had the privileged vantage point
  - So, we listened to him for the truth
    - Remember truth is relative



# Postmodernity Says/Believes #6

- In postmodernity, we welcome perspectives from different cultures
  - They can see things that we can't see
    - We are blinded by our cultural perspectives
    - They can broaden and enrich our worldview



# Postmodernity Says/Believes #7

- Ethics have become a barrier to belief in the gospel
  - When non-Christians think of Christians they see
    - Hate, Fear, Power, Violence, Intolerance
    - Christians are unethical because of their stance on
      - Birth control, Euthanasia, Marriage, ...
  - The other side see themselves as the ethical ones
    - They stand for, liberation, mercy, the oppressed
- Christians are the oppressors, non-Christians are for
  - Love, Justice, and Mercy



# *Evangelism to Postmoderns*

## Evangelism in a Postmodern Age

Chapter 4



# What Do We Accept

- As Christians we do not accept all that postmodernism believe
  - There is an absolute truth in God
  - Jesus is that truth
- But there is truth in postmodernism
  - We can know truth only through subjective interpretation
  - Our culture effects our understandings



# What Do We Accept

- As Christians we do not accept all that modernism believe
  - We can not know all truths
    - Only God knows all things
  - But there is absolute truth and that is in God
- Knowing that culture, community, and traditions effect our perception of truth
  - How can we better evangelize in a postmodern world?



# Authenticity

- Modernism asks, “Is it true?”
- Postmodernism asks, “Is it real in our lives?”
  - When we share the gospel it must be in more than just words
  - We must live the gospel we share
  - We can say it, but if we don’t live it, it isn’t real
- But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct 1 Peter 1:15



# Hospitality

- Hospitality demonstrates that the gospel is
  - Real, Authentic, Believable, Attractive, and Livable
- Hospitality breaks down plausibility structures
  - Inviting people into your home exposes you to them
    - They will be able to see the real you
    - Christians really live like this?!



# Testimony

- Your testimony can be a powerful thing to postmodern person
  - Proofs and facts that a modern person seeks
    - Mean little to the postmodern way of thinking
- Your testimony is likely to be accepted as a valid source of knowledge
  - And it can not be argued against



# Using Stories

- We should use more stories in our evangelism
  - In modernism it was “Show me the facts, the data”
  - In postmodernism it is “Show me what it looks like”
- Stories also invite people into our world
  - They must suspend their disbelief to hear my story
- Luke 16:19-31, the Rich man and Lazarus



<sup>19</sup> “There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. <sup>20</sup> But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was lying at his gate. <sup>21</sup> He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man’s table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. <sup>22</sup> One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s side., The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. <sup>24</sup> ‘Father Abraham!’ he called out, ‘Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!’

Luke 16:19–24



<sup>25</sup> “ ‘Son,’ Abraham said, ‘remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.’

<sup>27</sup> “ ‘Father,’ he said, ‘then I beg you to send him to my father’s house—  
<sup>28</sup> because I have five brothers—to warn them, so that they won’t also come to this place of torment.’

<sup>29</sup> “But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’

<sup>30</sup> “ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said. ‘But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

<sup>31</sup> “But he told him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

Luke 16:25–31



# Using Stories

- After telling this story don't explain it ask:
  - “Is hell a real place or only metaphorical?”
  - “Why is the rich man in hell?”
  - “How do I make sure I don't end up in hell?”
- This story has A LOT of gospel truth to unpack



# Engaging the Arts

- If modernity was the age of the scientist
- Then postmodernity is the age of the artist
- This may be why C.S. Lewis is still so relevant and read today
  - From Mere Christianity to Chronicles of Narnia
    - One presents a logical set of arguments
    - The other a compelling story that speaks to our heart and imagination





# Explore Different Metaphors

- We have discussed different metaphors earlier
  - But it is good to remind ourselves of its importance
- Postmoderns don't see absolute right and wrong
  - So, we should discuss sin as
    - Self-righteousness, shame, being owned by whatever we're living for
  - And metaphors for salvation, restoration, peace, freedom



# Use Wisdom as an Entry Point

- The Bible has three major categories of knowledge:
- (1) Providence (how God interacts with his creation on a daily basis)
- (2) Salvation history (what God has done to save us, and what we must do in response to be saved)
- (3) Wisdom (how God has designed life to be lived, and how we can live according to God's design)



# Use Wisdom as an Entry Point

- God imprinted His wisdom on this world (Proverbs 8)
  - The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord
    - An appropriate fear
  - The wise person will live according to God's design
    - Faithful to spouse, Diligent worker
    - Peacemaker, Loyal friend



# Use Wisdom as an Entry Point

- Both the saved and unsaved experience the providence of God
  - It rains on both the good and the bad
- But the saved enjoy the knowledge of wisdom in a way that unsaved can not



# Use Wisdom as an Entry Point

- A Christian who follows Gods design
  - Should stand out as different, unique
    - Things should go well for the Christian
      - “Well” is not necessarily defined as “successful”
      - “Well” looks more like
        - Joy in your marriage, office politics are not an issue, being a trusted friend



# Use Wisdom as an Entry Point

- How is this used in evangelism?
  - It is an entry point into the gospel to discuss
    - Leadership, Ethics, Success
  - These things work better when you follow a Christian worldview
    - The Bible says we should act like (honorable, faithful,...), treat others like this (love, respect,...)
      - When we do this, this is the outcome



# Changing Our Teaching Method

- With moderns, we used to employ this logic:
- Truth, Belief, Practice
  - This is true
  - If it's true, then you must believe it
  - If you believe it, now you must live it



# Changing Our Teaching Method

- With postmoderns, a better teaching sequence is:
- Practice, Belief, Truth
  - The Christian life is livable
  - If it's livable then it's also believable
  - If it's believable, then it's also true





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Week 5