

We believe discipleship is a direction  
not a destination.



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# Evangelism in a Skeptical World

Week 12

# 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



# *Religious Epistemology, Apologetics*

## **Moving People from Hostile to Loyal**

Chapter 10



# *Religious Epistemology, Apologetics*

## Religious Epistemology

Chapter 10



# Do You Believe

- Why do you believe what you believe?
  - Do you believe
    - The earth is round?
    - Your spouse loves you?
    - George Washington lived?
    - Julius Caesar lived?
    - Jesus lived?
    - God exists?

# Why?



# Epistemology

- Epistemology is the study of knowledge
  - Why do we believe some things and not other?
- When applied to religion it is called
  - Religious Epistemology
- This section will cover the basics of this



# Which are True

• Which of these truth claims are true?

• Two plus two is four

TRUE

• Washington is the capital of

TRUE

• An MRI scan shows the carti

I'll get a second opinion

• I live in Houston

Close enough

• I know a good coffee shop in

Opinion

• I make good breakfast tacos

Debatable

• I love my wife

Prove it



# God Loves You

- Where does
  - God loves you
  - Jesus is the son of God
  - Jesus died to save you
- Fall in the spectrum of truth?
- Can you verify them with logic? Scientific method?
- Or do they rely on trust, testimony, personal experience?





# How to Choose to Believe Someone

- We must decide to trust a person
  - But how do we decide?
    - Logos: what I say
    - Pathos: the way I make you feel (your emotions, passions)
    - Ethos: the way I live (my character)
- Which of these plays the greatest role in your trust?



# Which are True

- Logos/Pathos/Ethos
  - Two plus two is four
  - Washington is the capital of the United States
  - An MRI scan shows the cartilage in your knee
  - I live in Houston
  - I know a good coffee shop in my neighborhood
  - I make good breakfast tacos
  - I love my wife

Logos

Logos

Logos/Pathos

Pathos

Pathos/Ethos

Pathos/Ethos

Ethos



# Religious Truth Claims

- Paul appeals to pathos, ethos, and logos (1 Thess. 1:5)
  - “Because our gospel came to you not simply with words [**logos**]
  - but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction [**pathos**].
  - You know how we lived among you for your sake [**ethos**]”



# What Does This Matter

- If we think our friends don't believe because
  - Of a lack of facts
    - We should feed them more facts (Logos)
  - Their hearts are closed
    - We should feed them more Emotional/Power stories/examples (Pathos)
    - Show them proof in our actions (Ethos)



# We Need Both

- We need to treat people holistically (as a whole person)
  - Mind (Logos)
  - Body (Ethos)
  - Emotion (Pathos)
- We need all of these to connect with people
  - The issues is the church, traditionally, focuses on Logos



# The Role of Community

- Our Community plays a large role in what we believe is true
  - If you are born in
    - India you would be Hindu
    - Indonesia you would be Muslim
    - In the USA Christian (This is definitely changing)
  - Also, you are a secular humanist because your society is secular humanist



# Our Community Beliefs

- Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius
- The MRI scans show that your knee needs an operation
- I am your father
- I didn't kill him
- I love you



# I Trust the Bible

- With this, we as a Christians community, trust the Bible
  - The eyewitnesses to Christ
    - What He said
    - What He did
- I trust the testimony of the apostles
- But not everyone does
  - But can they trust what you say?





# The Role of Facts, Evidence, Data

- Facts play a role in determining our beliefs
  - But they play a secondary role
- People tend to shape the “facts/data” to fit their preconceived worldview
  - Aka: Confirmation bias, motivated reasoning
- We assume our logic guides our beliefs
  - But our emotions guide where we go
    - Think of Spock from Star Trek



# What Would It Take

- Archeologists found the bones of Jesus Christ?
  - Would this change your belief in Jesus?
    - (No one actually has to be clear. Just a thought experiment)
  - What evidence would change your mind?
- Take into consideration a non-believer
  - Jesus rose from the dead!
    - Yeah-right!



# Example

- What would it take for you to change your mind?
- The concept here is with enough evidence
  - At some point you can no longer hold to your belief
  - The overwhelming evidence forces you to change
    - But where is that breaking point?



# Emotions Over Mind

- With this in mind
  - We need to win over the emotions first
  - And then the mind
- We tend to do this in the wrong order



# *Religious Epistemology, Apologetics*

## **Dismantling Defeater Beliefs**

Chapter 10



# Cumulative Case Method

- Think of a lawyer in court proving a case
  - You don't just put the evidence on the table and say
    - THERE! Case Closed!
- You must show why the other sides case is wrong
  - Where the holes are
- Then present your case
- How it fits the facts better



# The Issue

- This method is not quick
  - There is no silver bullet to convert our friends
  - It takes time and a cumulation of things
    - Listening to them
    - Inviting them to activities
    - Being hospitable
    - Presenting a reasoned case for our belief



# The Issue

- AND it may not be you, a single evangelist, who leads them to Christ
  - Multiple people over time will share the gospel to them
- We are just a piece of the puzzle God uses in this friend's life





# Modified Presuppositional Apologetics

- Sam Chan uses what he calls Modified Presuppositional Apologetics
  - Presenting evidence alone will not typically be effective
    - The other person does not usually share my presuppositions
  - But when the presuppositions are discussed and dismantled
    - Reasoning of Christian beliefs become more believable



# Summary of Method

- Resonate: Describe, understand, and empathize with their presuppositions
- Dismantle: Show a deficiency or dissonance in their presuppositions
- Gospel: Complete their cultural storyline with the gospel



# The Big Example

- “I can’t become a Christian. Not if it means all that stuff in the Bible that says homosexuality is wrong. How can a loving God not accept people just for who they are?”
- What do you do with a statement like this?
  - Give up? They are never going to believe what I say
  - Open the Bible and point to all the places it says homosexuality is wrong?
  - Appeal to reasoning? It seems unnatural?

# The Big Example

- None of these arguments seem convincing to our friend
  - They don't share our presuppositions
    - I don't believe the Bible
    - Who says its not natural?
- So, what do we do
  - Resonate with their beliefs
  - Dismantle their worldview
  - Share the gospel



# Resonate

- We must demonstrate that we have
  - Heard their objections
  - Understood them
  - Empathized with them
- Until we feel the same emotions they feel, we haven't really heard their objections



# Resonate

- Why do they think it ought to be okay for someone to be gay?
  - What presuppositions must they hold to come to this conclusion?
    - How does it fit their cultural storyline?
    - What is so emotionally compelling about their point of view?
    - What is so morally repugnant and offensive about Christianity?

# Resonate

- One possible answer
- The gay debate represent the issue of **freedom**
  - The Declaration of Independence
  - UN's Declaration of Human Rights
- I have the freedom to find happiness on my own terms
- This a foundation of Western Enlightenment
- This means I have the freedom to be gay



# Resonate

- The gay debate represents a specific understanding of **love**
  - Being able to love and be loved is a need we all have
- So what does it matter what I do in the privacy of my own home
  - No one is getting hurt
  - Who are you to tell me what to do?





# Resonate

- The gay debate also represents the values of **tolerance and acceptance**
  - People discriminate against people of different races
    - We all know this is wrong
    - It is no different then those with different sexual identities



# Resonate

- Listen to all of this and don't think how to poke holes in their reasoning
  - It is their understanding of Love, Freedom, Tolerance
- A Christian's preaching against gay love represents
  - Hate, Intolerance, Bigotry
- It threaten to take away their freedom
  - Again this is all from the non-Christian perspective



# Resonate

- We need to try and feel their emotional burden
  - Remember this is what drives our outlook
- We need to be able to restate their objection
  - But restate it better than they explained it
- “Try to dig a deeper hole than the hole your friend dug for you so that your friend will be thinking, “I wonder how they’re going to find their way out of this!””



# Dismantle

- Now that we have articulated our friend's presuppositions back to them
  - The next step is to dismantle them
- We do this by showing them the deficiency of their presuppositions
  - Maybe there is a contradiction
  - Maybe they have assumptions the facts don't hold up



# Dismantle

- Let's look at freedom
  - US Declaration of Independence says that
    - “such freedoms and rights are self-evident.”
  - Are these really self-evident when not all cultures share our Western views on freedom?
  - The US Declaration of Independence also says
    - “Endowed by their Creator” (God)



# Dismantle

- Which god?
  - Not all god's believe in freedom and rights
- So where do we get our views on freedom, love and rights?
  - They aren't so self evident to everyone
  - So where are you getting your ideas from?
  - The Dalai Lama?
    - Until recently he opposed Western views on gay issues



# Dismantle

- What if our views on homosexuality and sexual freedom are nothing more than
  - A Western social construct that we're imposing on the rest of the world
  - Telling the rest of the world what to believe?
- Is this just another form of colonialism?
  - You need to believe what I believe and act the way I act
  - Are you any more intolerant than the next guy?



# Dismantle

- The goal here is show you can't have it both ways
  - We can't argue tolerance of your beliefs
    - And not be tolerant of others' beliefs
  - We can't tell others they don't have the right to tell us what to do
    - Then turn around and tell them what they must do





# Gospel

- We raised problems with their worldview
  - These problems stop them from what they truly want
- This is where we introduce the gospel to them
  - What does the Bible say about what they are seeking
    - The gospel fulfills their story better than...



# Gospel

- Back to the example
- “Where you and I differ, actually, isn’t in our view on gays. Where you and I differ is where we think we derive freedom, human rights, and love from.”
  - These freedoms, rights, and love that we have in Western culture
    - Come from the Bible



# Gospel

- The Bible teaches that God has made us in his image
  - That our worth and value—and our rights—are something given to us by God
  - Not given to us by a government or other people
- If we want to say marriage is being able to marry the person you love
  - The Bible supports this
    - It commands husbands to love their wives



# Gospel

- Right now the Christians faith is exploding in
  - South America, China, Africa
  - Why?
    - Because people are finding freedom, rights, and love
    - In Jesus
  - These people are not finding oppression and hate
  - It is the opposite for them
    - They find liberation, justice, and love



# Gospel

- The point here is if you see Christianity as oppressive
  - Maybe you have been looking at it through the wrong lens
    - A western postmodern lens
  - Why not read the Bible on its own terms
    - Not your terms, or the terms of your culture
  - You maybe surprised by what you find



# Gospel: Another Option

- “Where you and I differ actually isn’t on our views on gays but on who has the right to tell anyone what to do.”
  - The individual?
    - We screw up all the time
  - Society?
    - It gets things wrong
  - Mother Nature?
    - Depends on the animal



# Gospel: Another Option

- Is there something or someone that will show us
  - What we can and can't do in
    - Love, sex, and marriage?
- What if there is a God who made us and loves us
  - Does he have the right to tell us what to do?
- You can see how this could progress



# ***Religious Epistemology, Apologetics***

## ***Answering Today's Defeater Beliefs***

Chapter 10





# What about Other Religions?

- Resonate:
- The presupposition that we are blinded by our culture:
  - All religions do look the same
  - They all seem to say the same thing
  - Any differences could be explained by cultural starting points.
  - We should accept them as all true
    - Just different paths to the same God



# What about Other Religions?

- Dismantle:
- Demonstrate the dissonance in their presuppositions:
  - They can't believe both that others are blinded by their culture and that they themselves have not been:
    - To say that all religions are the same is to do the same:
      - Impose our cultural preferences (cultural relativism) upon them and make them say something that they themselves are not saying

# What about Other Religions?

- What would a Muslim say if you told them
  - The Hindu god and Allah were the same god?
  - It would not be good
- What give us the right to say we are right
  - And others are wrong
- Everyone is blinded by religion except those without it?
  - How arrogant!



# What about Other Religions?

- Gospel:
- “The real question is, ‘How can we know?’
  - What if it doesn’t depend on our trying to find God
    - But it depends on God’s finding us?
  - This is the Bible’s claim



# What about Other Religions?

- It's not a journey with many paths to the same God
  - But God's journey to us
- What if God actually talks and reveals himself in person to us
- What if God sent us his Son, Jesus, so we can know?"



# How Can a Loving God Send People to Hell

- Resonate:
  - Yes, hell sounds wrong
  - How can a good, loving, forgiving God send people to hell?
  - It sounds unfair and unloving
  - Who is God to Judge us for who we are?



# How Can a Loving God Send People to Hell

- Dismantle:
  - We can not believe there is a right and wrong
    - But expect God to be all inclusive
  - Well, if I were god, I would be more inclusive and let everyone into heaven
    - Would you let in the men who blew up the towers?
    - Child molesters?

# How Can a Loving God Send People to Hell

- Why not them? What is your criteria to let people in?
  - Whoever is good enough?
    - Well now your exclusive
  - Whoever is really sincere?
    - Graded by who?
  - As long as your real with yourself
    - Again, graded by who?





# How Can a Loving God Send People to Hell

- Gospel:
  - The gospel offers the best completion to their story
    - We base entry on right and wrong
    - The gospel bases entry into heaven on do you know Jesus
  - The scandal isn't that people go to hell
  - The scandal is God lets people into heaven that you and I would never let in



# Final Thoughts

- The conversion of a Christian is a journey
  - We, as the evangelist, help those journeying along the path to Christ
  - We may never see them cross the line
    - But we can help light the path for them
    - Or clear an obstacle from their path
- Never lose faith God can and will use you to help other on the pathway to Christ



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not a destination.



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# Evangelism in a Skeptical World

Week 11