Disciples Church

A Firm Foundation – Lesson 4

Week of April 25th, 2018

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Presuppositional Apologetics lecture 4:**

**Non-Christian worldview and the Christian worldview**

Welcome-Pray

We are going to begin with the definition of Philosophy-The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline.

Col 2:8 8See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

When you trust yourself as the ultimate standard you end up with tricky philosophy and empty deceit. You do this because your philosophy is according to human tradition and the elemental spirits of the world. The non-Christian worldview is committed to its independence from the one true God. They are therefore incapable of “certain knowledge.” This involves more than simply theological or religious matters, it actually affects every aspect of their life.

1. **The Structure**

The specifics of the non-Christians philosophy come about because of their character. In Ephesians we see a clear description of this:

Eph. 4:17-19 17Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

The unbeliever lives in futility because their character is enslaved to sin and they remain in denial of the Creator-creature distinction. They rely on themselves as the ultimate standard and therefore prove themselves to operate in the futility of their mind. This is why Paul said in our opening verse not to allow anyone to take you captive by philosophy and empty deceit.

Paul is not saying here that philosophy is bad, he was probably the most philosophical Apostle there was. Rather scripture is calling man-centered philosophy empty and deceitful. Here is what that means. Philosophy that is based on an allegiance to independence (from God) claims to have truth, but it cannot.

You see when man becomes the ultimate standard, the same man who is extremely limited in what they know, then it comes to reason that anything man doesn’t know could prove what they think they know to be wrong. Since the unbeliever maintains their independence then what they reveal is that they can never actually have any certainty of truth. None!

Ultimately despite the good things an unbeliever may contribute to our world the one thing that empties their contribution is that they are committed to independence and therefore their contributions are deceptive. The unbeliever’s philosophy is based upon their loyalty to the tradition of man and the elementary principles of the world. This is why Paul said their philosophy is according to man and not according to Christ. You see all non-Christians reject Christ every time they assert to be independent, therefore they cannot be fundamentally right for they have rejected the only source of truth.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Even people who seek to be neutral “Christianity could be true or it could not” reject the claim of Christ as the unquestioned Lord! God demands complete loyalty to His word.

What Jesus says is truth, therefore to deny Him is to hold to falsehood at the root of your beliefs.

Since the unbeliever’s philosophy rests on their independence this makes them the ultimate standard. If you are your own ultimate standard for truth and knowledge your foundation is ridiculously faulty. When you build your house on a faulty foundation it falls. The commitment to independence and to self as the ultimate standard is so fundamental in the non-Christian philosophy that no matter how hard they try to claim that they use some other standard, even those other standards rest upon their commitment to independence and themselves as the ultimate standard.

So here’s what I mean, most atheist will say they appeal to reason or the majority view etcetera. But when you ask them according to what standard can those things be ultimate, they eventually will have to say “because **I have decided they are.”** You see even the **other views** they claim to be **relying** on can only be their so called standard if they have decided it to be. So actually it is they themselves that are their ultimate standard. This is what it means to be committed to independence. You see non-Christians try to support their **commitment to independence** founded upon their **commitment to independence** and that is a viscous circle. There is no solid ground beneath this view. That’s what happens when you build your philosophy upon traditions of men.

1. **The Dilemma**

An important part of the biblical defense of Christianity is seeing the Dilemma in the non-Christian worldview or philosophy. You see when the non-Christian claims for certain that there is no God or that if there is a god it is unknowable they are declaring to have truth and know it for certain, however by denying the one true God what they have done is actually revealed their inability to have any truth certainly.

Let me explain this a little more clearly. The atheist claims to be certain about God not existing, however if God does not exist the unbeliever cannot know anything for certain. I’ve literally watched unbelievers say that they cannot know anything for certain, **except** that they know for certain that the Christian God does not exist. When asked how they know this for certain, but cannot know anything else for certain, they really have no reply. This is something for the Christian to pay attention to when giving a defense for your faith. All unbelievers will show you their inconsistencies if you pay attention.

If and when you unmask this inconsistency it is a great opportunity to point them toward why they are inconsistent and must be inconsistent. The fact that the unbeliever is made in God’s image is an unescapable truth. This means the unbeliever will live like they are made in Gods image (holding certain moral beliefs and convictions, believing their senses are reliable and that there is uniformity in nature, believing they can know truth for certain) while simultaneously claiming that God does not exist, the world is random, there’s no such things as right or wrong and therefore contradicting their own proposed world view.

The unbeliever who has rejected the only source of truth is left in a pickle. For them to claim truth of any sort, to hold any solid view, they must do so in total disregard for their limited knowledge and rebellion against God. On the other hand if the unbeliever is honest with his view and says you can’t truly know anything then he reveals his conundrum. By making this claim the unbeliever is making a truth statement. So for them to say you cannot truly know anything, you must ask can you know that truly? Are you certain you can’t be certain about anything?

This view cannot exist logically, it presents too many fallacies. But this is the pickle I’m referring to.

I want to show you three ways in which the unbeliever does this.

1. Regarding God

An atheist would hold that they are absolutely certain there is no God. However in holding this view they must ignore the fact of their limited knowledge and investigation of the universe. So they must either hold with certainty that they have exhaustive knowledge of all things or give up their certainty that God does not exist. Or the third answer which is where they remain is that they will stay inconsistent. For the agnostic the same problem exists. The agnostic will say God may exist but he doesn’t know for certain. They claim that God has certainly not made himself known and called men to recognize and submit to him. The agnostic is absolutely certain that God’s existence is unknowable. You see where this leaves them. The unbeliever cannot deny or claim ignorance of the existence of God without revealing the folly in their rebellion against God.

1. Regarding the external world

The unbeliever often appeals to uniformity in nature as a presupposition for their beliefs.

The problem is that with their limited knowledge what they don’t know may prove that our world does not exhibit uniformity in nature. Perhaps they would find that it is total chaos and tomorrow is nothing like today.

When the unbeliever claims that uniformity in nature is their foundation for certainty about a belief they claim to have, they commit a fallacy called begging the question. They claim that the future is like the past, but they use the “fact” that the past was like the future (in the past) to demonstrate TODAY that the future will be like the past. You see they assume that because something shows uniformity that it always will they are essentially assuming their answer. This is also called a circular argument however the foundation for this argument is an arbitrary “it just always has so it always will” making it a very vicious circular argument.

The problem again lies in the fact that what they have not studied and learned could prove them wrong. Again without an all-knowing God to reveal this they cannot be absolutely certain. It is impossible. Now on the other side of this coin there are unbelievers who stay with total uncertainty, the world is chaos there is no order we cannot be certain about tomorrow or even the next minute. But here again lies the issue, to be totally certain that there is no certainty is a contradiction and inconsistent. One more example.

1. Regarding Man

Since the unbeliever will not acknowledge God as the creator of man they must explain man some other way. Man may be thought of as a god or as simply another animal. Man may have value or not have value. Whatever the case the unbeliever will either be absolutely certain about their views on man while ignoring the fact that their limited knowledge does not allow for this, or they will be absolutely uncertain about man ignoring the fact that this claim is self-contradicting and cannot be true.

This conundrum exists because man cannot escape the truth that God exists and has revealed truth to us. We are made in His image and since He is truth we are truth bearers and so we will and must have truth. I’ll dive into this more in my second part tonight so let’s wrap this section up.

No matter what the unbeliever’s beliefs try to do they cannot avoid the inconsistency of being absolutely certain and absolutely uncertain simultaneously. This really brings into light what happens when you deny God and try to claim independence. This is why the scripture says man in this state is left to the futility of their mind.

Eph. 4:17-19 17Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

When it comes to apologetics we are dealing with unbelievers and their way of thinking. We should maintain a biblical view regardless of the view of those with whom we are defending the faith. The usual thought is well I don’t believe the bible so you need to convince me without the bible.

Listen if you are a believer and you do believe the scripture to be the word of God then taking this path and giving up your ultimate standard of truth for lesser standards would be utterly foolish. As Voddie Bauchum put it *just because someone says they don’t believe in my sword doesn’t mean I put it down and fight with my hands. I say stab them with your sword with the word and they will either acknowledge its existence or bleed out in their futile thinking.* We never lay down our ultimate standard and place the unbeliever on God’s throne to judge God. That is not the way a Christian should do apologetics.

Now this view of the unbeliever is not totally comprehensive but all non-believers must have an answer for these things and they are unable to unless they return to their dependence upon God.

Let’s turn the page to the **Christian point of view**

Col. 2:6Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

We just discussed the dilemma and unstable foundation of the non-Christian point of view. Now we will look at and contrast it with the Christian philosophy. First we will look at the character of Christian philosophy second we will discuss the relationship between the two points of view.

1. **The Structure**

First of all, unlike the unbeliever, the Christian is able to know truth and be absolutely sure about it because of their relationship with the truth giver. 1 Corinthians chapter 2 gives us a fantastic insight to this truth!

1 Corinthians 2:1And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,

4and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. 6Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

8None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—

10these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

15The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

You see Christians are made able to know and follow the truth of God’s revelation, therefore our philosophy is not according to independent human perspectives. We are actually able to have a philosophy that honors and glorifies God. We are able to do this because God has saved us, given us eyes to see and ears to hear, and removed our heart of stone replacing it with a heart of flesh. Since we are no longer enslaved to sin we are now able to see God’s revelation and we do not suppress the truth about God but rather see it, savor it, and realize our total dependence upon Him for all things including truth! Paul spoke about the unbelievers mind in Col. 2:8 but he goes on to talk also about the believers:

Col. 2:9 9For in him (Christ) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

You see the Christian acknowledges Christ’s preeminence and rule/authority over all things. In doing this we acknowledge our total dependence upon Him for truth, knowledge, and life itself. Every breath we take we are dependent upon Christ to receive it! By the way, this functional dependence is no different for the unbeliever, failure to acknowledge God does not remove the reality that He’s still the very reason anyone has life. Paul gives us three key ways from these passages that Christians get their philosophy according to Christ.

1st the passage reads “in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells”. Jesus is God, and He took on flesh, and philosophy should be based upon a commitment to God and His word revealed to us in scripture. God alone has exhaustive knowledge of ALL yes ALL things. God not only knows the universe exhaustively but He knows the past and the future exhaustively for He is outside of time and He has ordained all that comes to pass. God (to be clear the Christian God the only God) is the only source of exhaustive knowledge and therefore the only source of truth! He alone can teach man truth. Since Christ is God then we must be committed to Him for truth.

2nd “In him you have been filled.” It is only through regeneration and faith in Christ that we are filled and complete. We are only able through Christ’s work, to actually have the ability to know and receive God’s revelation. You see apart from a commitment to Him which only comes through His redeeming grace we are unable to have a true philosophy.

3rd The passage says that Jesus is the “head of all rule and authority.” Jesus is the ultimate authority. If you trust in any principle as more standard than absolute dependence upon God then you are calling that authority superior to Christ! There is no court or judge that you can take Jesus to, He is above all authority. If He was not perfect this would be scary however since He is good and the standard by which we measure good we can be excited about the truth that He is ultimate. You see whatever Jesus declares we accept without question.

We don’t get to say Hmmm… I don’t think I like that Jesus, I’d rather do it this way or I want things to be that way. This act would be futile because whether you like it or not He is ultimate. Christian philosophy has dependence to Christ at the foundation of it. This foundation is completely solid and the house on this foundation will never be moved. Haven’t you heard He who builds his house on the rock…

Now there is often misunderstandings when it comes to the foundation of total dependence on Christ. Many times this happens in regards to application of dependence in specific areas of life. Christ and your dependence upon Him for truth and life is not just applied to your time in church. The doctor needs Him for her knowledge in a hospital, the roughneck needs Him for their labor in the oil fields, the office manager needs Him for their ability to input data into a computer all day. This truth bleeds into every aspect of your life.

Isaiah 28: 23Give ear, and hear my voice; give attention, and hear my speech. 24Does he who plows for sowing plow continually? Does he continually open and harrow his ground? 25When he has leveled its surface, does he not scatter dill, sow cumin, and put in wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and emmer as the border? 26For he is rightly instructed; his God teaches him.

You see even the farmer is dependent. The main point is not that you can’t hold these professions and do them well, it is that you cannot give a reason for the tools you use even your own logic to do them apart from dependence upon Christ.

The Christian acknowledges this dependency because of God’s grace upon them and His saving work. This allows us to address all things according to this principle:

Col. 3:17 17And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Now don’t be confused, Christian philosophy is not just reading the scriptures and praying. Christians look at nature, we dig into life and we apply the broader instruction of scripture to all that we see and learn and do. The Bible is our ultimate standard of truth because it is our revelation from God who is our ultimate standard. However the bible doesn’t give detailed answers to every circumstance that could ever appear in someone’s life. What God’s revelation does tell us is to apply to our lives all that the Word has revealed and if things do not go the way we planned, it is because He has a different plan.

ILL: When I moved out of my parents’ house to go to college the bible didn’t tell me where to go, who to live with, which college to choose, or what to study. It did give me a more encompassing set of truths to use to make these decisions.

And if I had applied more of those prior to making my decision I may have had a more successful college life. I did not consider how I would glorify God when I picked a school, I did not consider temptation and my sinful struggles and then make the best decision, I did not search to see what churches were in the area and how I might get plugged in to one. Those truths though are found in the Scriptures and would have been greatly beneficial had I as a professing Christian applied them. I hope that helps!

For clarities sake though let me add this, if you experience something spiritual whatever that may be and it contradicts with what scripture reveals to us about God, then what you experienced was not true and cannot be accredited to God. This is typically the argument that a Mormon would give when digging into their beliefs. We prayed and felt a burning in our bosom that’s how we know our beliefs are true. I hope you guys see the problem there first of all it contradicts what scripture says so it is therefore false, secondly couldn’t anyone make that same argument? Once you make faith a subjective truth then anyone’s feelings can dictate truth and that would be a silly messed up world (that looks a lot like the one we live in). Truth is objective it is not based in our feelings.

Whatever experience you have or feelings you have must be laid at the objective truth of God’s word to see what is true vs. what we want to be true. I hope that’s a helpful clarity. Christian philosophy is not merely reading the bible and praying, it is rather living your life based upon the principles of God’s word!

So if God is our ultimate standard and an unbeliever asks us “why is God your ultimate standard?” What do we do now? Uh oh?

You see the thing with ultimate standards is they must be self-authenticating. Here’s what I mean, God and the Word are self-authenticating. The bible say’s God exists and reveals to us how and in what ways. God tells us (reveals to us) these truths through His word – the bible. You see it is self-authenticating. There is no greater standard to prove it than God. So we would answer the person asking by saying God has revealed this to me through His word and the Holy Spirits regenerating work in my heart. When they asked how I knew that was real or genuine I would say God’s word reveals that this is indeed the way He does it. Now if you were paying attention earlier this seems very similar to the unbeliever’s response to the non-existence of God. It is a circular argument right? God is real because God’s word reveals His realness and therefore this is a circular argument. So what makes it different from the unbeliever’s circular argument?

Awe now we are digging in! Our circular argument is based on God as our ultimate standard.

Remember if you have an ultimate standard it cannot be proved by a lesser evidence otherwise the evidence used is actually your ultimate standard. So when we point to God as our ultimate standard we don’t need to present an evidence, (this doesn’t mean evidence is bad--more on that later) it wouldn’t prove God because God is ultimate.

An ultimate standard cannot be PROVED by a lesser standard or else it is no longer the ultimate standard. – Stand and Picture illustration

Now I get it, the reason people want evidence for God is because they claim that they can’t see Him, they claim that there’s no way to observe him. Now when they do this what do they rely upon to prove God? They are relying on their senses. So once again they have become the ultimate judge, if I see Him then I’ll believe.

The problem is God claims something else, namely that through His creation the world knows Him and yet suppresses this truth. In reality the unbeliever doesn’t need evidence, the scripture says he has enough evidence, that’s why he’s guilty, the unbeliever needs to be shown that he already has the evidence because the alternative cannot make sense of anything in life. We will dig into this more later as well.

Ultimately the circular argument the Christian makes has a self-authenticating God as the foundation of it. The circular reasoning of the unbelievers relies on themselves as the ultimate standard and therefore it is a “Vicious circle” that cannot account for the reality they live in. Its foundation is arbitrary, it must be because it lies in them and they are incapable of true knowledge as we learned earlier tonight.

We Christians have a solid circular reason that provides all we need to exist in the reality we live in! Our foundation cannot be more ultimate and God possess exhaustive knowledge therefore we can have truth and know things certainly. We can have a moral standard that is objective (not based subjectively upon our feelings or limited knowledge) and ultimate. We also have an ultimate standard for truth that makes sense of all things and it does so because God is the almighty creator ruler and sustainer of all things. He is perfect and the standard by which all things are measured.

Now to the unbeliever it would seem that the Christian used his own reason to decide that Christianity was the best option and therefore the Christian would be as faulty as the ground **we** claim **they** are standing on. Now here is where theology and understanding what God has revealed matters. You see the Arminian could not argue against this unbeliever’s train of thought. However the Calvinist or reformed theologian is able to answer biblically and accurately by declaring with scripture that this since faith (belief in God) did not originate in the mind of the Christian it is therefore not based upon their observations making them the ultimate standard. Salvation was and is something God did and does!

Romans 9:16 so then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

John 1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Eph. 2:8 8For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

2nd Timothy 2: 24And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

The last passage simply highlights that God must grant us repentance or we cannot even come to a knowledge of the truth. As a quick note, this truth should remove all boasting or arrogance toward the unbeliever and it should cause us to be humbly heartbroken toward those who God has not yet saved. This must be the motivation behind our defense/apologetics, to share the gospel otherwise we have failed to obey the passage in 1 Peter. It would also be inconsistent to live as though we were the deciding factor and out of the same mouth claim that it was God who did it. So this truth should humble us completely. Now that being said, we do not stand upon our observations as the ultimate standard, rather we claim as the scriptures do that God had to give us eyes to see and ears to hear and therefore this was revealed to us by God. He is our ultimate standard and therefore we have a circular argument based upon the rock solid foundation of God and that is not a vicious circle. That’s a circle of supreme confidence!

I hope your beginning to see the difference of the Christian foundation and that of the unbeliever. Christian circularity insists that nothing is more ultimate than God and His word. The unbeliever must admit that there is nothing more ultimate than themselves. One is a vicious circle one is a solid foundation. Let me show you how God does this himself.

Hebrews 6:13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself,

Genesis 22:16 and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,

We have a clear example in scripture that God is ultimate and therefore even when He swore by something He had to swear by Himself for there was nothing greater to swear by. I hope this brings clarity!

We only believe and understand by the grace of God gifting us saving faith in His Son. This was not something we did, it was something He caused in us. Theology matters, it affects our doxology and that is why we are bringing this clarity to our church family that we may rightly defend our faith with hopes that God may grant us favor and allow us to present the Gospel to others dead in sin and that perhaps if it be His will many might be saved!

1. **The Answer**

Christian philosophy is totally dependent upon God to have true knowledge or certainty in knowledge. Since this is the case it is clear that we do not have the conundrum of the unbeliever. We are not certain and uncertain simultaneously. Our foundation is the all-knowing God so we can be certain of truths that are revealed by Him. Now do we have uncertainty about some things? Of course we do since we are finite--we do not share in God’s attribute of being all-knowing, but we have certainty about foundational things that cannot just be arbitrarily assumed. Like salvation and eternity and how we are to live in light of who God is. This is an amazing gracious gift Christian thank God for grace to save you and open your eyes!

The Christian can be certain of man’s knowledge as long as it depends on God’s revelation. The Christian’s certainty is not destroyed by what he doesn’t know. God can provide for man in the face of his finiteness because God is infinite and has infinite knowledge. Christian do you see how dependent you are upon Him to have any certainty whatsoever in this life?! So long as man depends upon God’s revelation for understanding God, the world, and himself, he will know truly, without fear of error.

On the other hand there is uncertainty for the Christian, we recognize that we are unable to fathom the knowledge of all things. Some of us can’t program our remote controls right!? There are things beyond our comprehension that God has not revealed to us and that’s a reality we live in but it is not a hindrance to the things we do know and need to know.

For example, in regard to spiritual things, the believer is unable to fully grasp the dual nature of Christ. Working through the doctrine of the hypostatic union is the best we can do at explaining it but the reality is there is mystery there. Our finite minds can only understand it so far. However we don’t throw it out as crazy because we can’t exhaustively understand it. We see that God has given us this much revelation of this truth and so we do our best to know and understand what He’s given and we trust that which we don’t comprehend. We know that this is no mystery to God and that it is true because He has declared it to be!

Depending on God is trusting Him in those areas in which we cannot have ultimate understanding. In this sense, Christians may be said to have Dependent Uncertainty.

So like we did with the unbeliever let’s look at how this applies to life regarding God, the world, and man.

1. Regarding God:

Christians have dependent certainty about God because He has revealed Himself in the scriptures and caused the Christian to believe in Him. The Christian also has dependent uncertainty in regards to God for we cannot have exhaustive knowledge of God. This in no ways diminishes our trust in what He has revealed and rather heightens our eternal future of knowing Him more and more as the true treasure of our hearts!

1. Regarding the world:

God has created an orderly world and has promised to uphold it. This means that the Christian can count on the future being like the past according to His design. We can count on uniformity of nature because God causes it. The scriptures show us that God has created an orderly world and they tells us how to understand this world.

1. Regarding man:

The Christian can know about himself (dependent certainty) because God has declared us to be made in His image and has revealed truths about our depravity and our hope in His salvation.

**Let’s close by unpacking the myth of neutrality:** There are only two views in our world. There is the believer in the one true God and there is the unbeliever. The major hang up in regards to the myth of neutrality really has been born out of a man centered philosophy and unfortunately has heavily bled into the church today.

We live in a world that insists on “looking at the facts objectively” the real problem is this is impossible. You are either dependent upon the one true God for knowledge or seeking independence and therefore unable to be certain of anything. There is no middle ground. When the unbeliever asks you to set the bible down and just look at objective evidence they are asking you to step into their worldview while simultaneously claiming it as objective.

The problem is their worldview is very subjective and it is subjective to a mind that has denied any ability to know anything for certain yet holds itself up as the ultimate standard. Do you see what a silly game this is?

The unbeliever is not looking objectively at anything. They are looking at all things subjectively while they have given up any source of exhaustive knowledge and therefor they cannot have any truth certainly. It’s a crazy request and it is certainly not neutral it’s actually a request to step into their subjective worldview and place them on the throne of all things then plead to their abilities as if they had any way of discerning the truth they already know but suppress. Do you see how futile that would be?

There’s no neutral ground, you are dependent or independent. Jesus said;

Matt. 12:30 30Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Ultimately we must be clear that there is no neutrality between beliefs. I do not mean we don’t have things in common. I mean we cannot find a middle ground and agree to disagree in the sense that apart from the biblical worldview you cannot even give a reason for your reason. Jesus said it clearly you are either with Him or against Him no other option.

Sadly even many professing Christians today think this is possible. They argue for deism, and hope to convince the unbeliever so they can then argue for mono theism, and hope they convince the unbeliever so they can then argue for a triune God, and it goes on and on. The problem is they put the unbeliever in a position that God has said they have no ability in their unbelief to hold.

Now to be fair there are apologists who’ve had apparent success doing this, God can strike a straight blow with a crooked stick. However that doesn’t mean we should run out the door with crooked sticks and hope that God would use them. God has given us His word about the mind of the unbeliever and He has clearly shown us our desperate need to depend upon Him for truth.

The unbeliever says I need evidence, God said in

Romans 1:18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

If God has shown them sufficient evidence do you think you can do better? In fact God’s word here says they believe but they suppress the truth. One of the guys I enjoy gleaning from has a shirt that says “I am an A-atheist”, which mean I don’t believe in atheist because God has said they don’t exist.

Consider this last example: One of the many arguments that people have tried to make in order to prove that God is real is the resurrection. So they will say yeah I’ll set aside my bible and we can just look historically at this guy they called Jesus Christ and if I can prove he rose from the dead surely you will believe. But Jesus gave this very parable in the scriptures:

Luke 16:19“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ 25But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ 27And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— 28for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ 29But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

You see if they won’t accept the word of God, the very word that this well-meaning Christian puts down in an attempt to be on neutral ground with the unbeliever, Jesus Himself said they won’t believe even if someone rises from the dead. People may be convinced that Jesus rose from the dead but that doesn’t mean they must believe He’s God. Christians have many accounts of men being raised from the dead in scripture. If we don’t address the presuppositions that the unbeliever sees his world through we are simply trying to convince someone who already has enough evidence and is actively suppressing the truth with more evidence that they will continue to look at through their presuppositions.

ILL: Dead man believes He’s dead. I’ll be dead men do bleed….

You see appealing to the unbeliever with evidence does not help them address the main problem. They will simply view the evidence through their presuppositions and even if you convinced them that Jesus rose from the dead that doesn’t mean they have to believe He is God, nor savingly trust in Christ. This practice of neutrality will get us nowhere, we must address the root of the unbelievers issues based upon the solid rock of God and His word. We always do this in hopes of showing them their inconsistency and sharing the gospel with them!

Let’s pray!