

A Bigger Problem

Previously I have written about problems I have when talking to others about Jesus. I hope I have not left anyone with the idea that the problems are all mine. Most of you realize that my problems are not uncommon. We all have problems when it comes to telling people about Jesus and the salvation we have because of Jesus.

Other than my friend that I mentioned previously, there are other people in my life that also need to know Jesus. I know that prayer is one of the keys to this problem but it is not the whole solution. There are other skills and disciplines that I need to be effective. The Bible tells us to be prepared to give an account for the faith we hold (1 Peter 3:15). Take note I am not referring having good doctrine. That is like me praying the words "God bless my friend" and thinking that is all the prayer my friend needs. Giving an account means we need to know the reasons that we believe. Can you give a reasoned answer if someone was to ask you to explain how you could possibly believe in Christian myths? How about why Jesus is the only way or why your belief is better than those of a Buddhist?

Part of this problem is that we are told that we do not have a reasonable argument for our faith.

We are taught that science will explain everything.

We are told that all religious beliefs lead to God and enlightenment.

We are informed that religion is "OK if you need that sort of a crutch".

Today, the Christian is not supposed to come from a position of strength in an argument. Science is thought to have demonstrated that our faith is meaningless because science will

provide the answers to everything proving that God does not exist. Philosophy has proclaimed God to be dead. Our beliefs are old fashioned, biased dogmas and we rely on emotion, targeting people's weaknesses.

Unhappily, we have fallen into their trap. We act like the Bible is information only. We act like it is not adequate to stand up against "modern" science and beliefs. While I do not believe this, sometime I find myself defensive about God, Jesus, and the Bible.

The fact is we can have a very clear and reasoned answer for what we believe.

Here are some facts.

Science has known for about 100 years that it will never answer all the questions. There is more certainty in this than in gravity. (Read Stephen Hawkins's "A Brief History of Time", while it is not Christian and it is 25 years old he is talking about God's creation and he is honest in identifying science's limits).

The philosophers, who proclaimed God to be dead, all died, many with their lives in ruins, some by suicide. None of them have even been rumoured to be coming back from the dead or given any knowledge of what comes after death.

Most of the wars in history have not been caused by religion. The main causes are usually wealth, trade and land (sounds familiar).

To the contrary, the ideological wars of the 20th century, the Russian communist revolution, the Second World War (Nazis), the Chinese communist revolution and Cambodia, to name a few, all had as their main sources of philosophy, the same philosophers who pronounced God to be dead.



By Chris Copley

These wars have killed more people than the rest of the wars in known history.

The point here is not to rub our communities' collective noses in these facts, but point out that much of the criticism that is levelled against us when we talk about our faith, is based in urban mythology.

The other side of this coin is that we do have reason for what we believe and the reasoning is good. It is solid and has stood the test of time. Our shame is that we do not know how good it is. There have always been Christians who are scientists and philosophers, many of them are held in high regard by the secular scientists and philosophers.

Look at Blaise Pascal as a classical example, and John Polkinghorne as a modern example of scientists, philosophers, and theologians. While we may not agree with all their beliefs we should respect their love of Jesus, his word and his people. Read about them and you will start to see some of the strengths of our argument.

Science and Philosophy are not the enemies. They are disciplines whose practitioners will either succeed or fail based on their own methods, honesties, and prejudices. Strangely enough both are suffering under the disillusionment of the times.

People are losing confidence in them. They have promised a better world and they are coming up short, very short. In fact most people can see that things are going backward.

So what is our solution?

Pray, definitely! Read the Bible, yes! Prepare ourselves with a reasoned answer for our faith, absolutely!

I am a Christian because, at a young age, Jesus became real to me. I could not deny that he was real and had a claim on me. From that time on he has been real. He has taught and shown me things, once I even think I heard his audible voice. He has changed me, he is still changing me, and I am better for the change. Forty years on from my decision to follow Jesus there are still things I am learning, there are still changes he is making and he is still forgiving me when I make a mess of things. He has taught me how great a heritage we have in the Christians who have gone before us.

He has taught me to see through much of the foolishness of the world.

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

