

"Jesus - Logician & Apologist"

Dallas Willard

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"Jesus - Logician & Apologist" (audio) [1:09:44]

[Dallas starts after an intro from BigThinking.org]

Introduction [0:00:43]

The way that Jesus works with people ties in with our work in Apologetics.

The heart of Apologetics** - We often think of it as a public ministry. That's perfectly alright. On the other hand, when you come to the nature of the operation, you see that it is also primarily an intensely personal kind of ministry.



[** Willard — ["Spiritual Formation - Apologetics & Knowledge"](#)]



[** Willard — ["Apologetics"](#) Grace Church, So CA, 1990]

[See [The Allure of Gentleness Study Guide & 7 Session Course](#)]

I Peter 3:8-15 - The Charter of Apologetics

8 "Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble minded: 9 not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For He that would love life, And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips that they speak no guile 11 And let him turn away from evil, and do good; Let him seek peace, and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication: But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil. 13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? 14 But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; 15 but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear*..." (ASV) (NASB - * "gentleness and reverence")

The context is a context of suffering. Peter has a lot to say about suffering.

This particular passage is a beautiful teaching.

v. 9 - *"Not giving evil for evil...give a blessing instead."*

Blessing is a ground you stand in. Same thing can be said for forgiveness. That's why Jesus so often brings up forgiveness in praying and answers to prayer.

v. 13 - *"Who to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?"*

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Actually, there are a lot of people who can do that. Peter is taking a deeper theme - who can really get at you if you are zealous for what is good? As you do that you are standing in a place it is true that you are perfectly safe because God is standing with you, no matter what happens to you.

v. 14 - *"Even if you suffer, you are blessed."*

Suffering for the sake of righteousness is a blessing. That's one of the Beatitudes. Peter did not think this up on his own.

In that blessing, you do not fear their intimidation. We are not troubled. You have put Christ in a special place in your heart. Sanctify Christ as Lord. He is in charge of whatever the situation may be.

v. 15 - Be ready to explain to others. *"Make a defense."* (ASV) As our translations often do, they reflect a mentality.

"Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you." (Older version)

A.B. Bruce - *Christianity Defensively Stated*

That makes the hair rise on the back of my neck because I am not a great one for being defensive. I think the older version, *"be ready to give a reason."* Sometimes the reason acts as a defense. The purpose here is to help people understand something. They have a problem on their hands. Maybe they have been inflicting suffering on this person and this person is standing there blessing them...not through gritted teeth but generously loving them. As they look at that they say,

"This is a hopeful person. Where did that hope come from?"

"Give an account for the hope that is in you with gentleness and reverence." (v. 15)

I think that characterizes apologetics in the manner of Jesus. I think Peter picked this up from watching our Lord. One of the things we might miss if we aren't careful is watching how often Jesus gives an answer to a question to help people out who are really in a mental bind.

II Corinthians 10 - A Teaching About Grace

[7:35]

"Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! 2 I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete." (NASB)

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Grace - (def.) *"God acting in our lives to accomplish what we can not accomplish on our own."*

Paul is involved in a church battle. Paul did not try to be overwhelming. The word went out on Paul that he was a weak speaker. He is giving the rap on Paul as a speaker - *he really was not impressive, his bodily presence was weak, but his letters are powerful*. Paul understood, learning from Christ I think, how to carry out these matters of personal encounter. He tried to avoid of being in a position of crushing people.

v. 3 - *"Though we walk in the flesh [we live in the natural world with natural abilities], we do not war in terms of the flesh. The weapons of the warfare are not of the flesh."*

Remember, Grace is... (def.)

"God acting in our lives to accomplish what we can not on our own."

The effects of what Paul does are beyond him. The weapons, as it were, he is using in his battle are divinely powerful for the destruction of strongholds or fortresses. He knows that those strongholds and fortresses are primarily strongholds of ideas, perceptions, assumptions and these are the framework that imprisons the minds that he is dealing with. When he is confronting issues, He does not count on his ability to accomplish what he needs to achieve. There is somewhat of a paradox in what we think about. **We do our best but never trust our best.** Our faith is not in our best. Our faith is God acting with us. That spirit of entering into the work of apologetics, I think, is absolutely crucial. When we step into the realm of apologetics, we are not exercising our cleverness and trying to engineer our way. We are acting in dependence upon God that He will slip into the minds of the people we are talking to. Suddenly they will see things differently, that there will shifts. If they are locked into an emotional complex of some sort, which will always have at least a running accompaniment of ideas. In apologetics situation, you are almost always dealing with emotional issued. They will always come out in terms of questions that have assumptions. What Paul is used to is watching those assumptions dissolve, sometimes right in front his eyes, sometimes later, and to know that it is the power of God that does that. I think those are essential things when we think about the work of the apologist.

Truth and Logic

[12:55]

Our perception of that will be helped when we understand that we are working with truth and with logic, and we are working as it exists in our

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context and in the minds of the person. Sometimes the logic is bad logic and sometimes the logic is good. Sometimes we need to help the person but rarely do we need to help the person think by forcing them to come down in a certain place. I think the work of the Apologist is best when we evoke a person in such a way that they think the answer is coming from them. I don't think that is a formal rule of any sort, but it is something we should aim at and can aim at. We do our best and we trust God to work in the mind of the person we are working with.

Apologetics

[14:00]

I think we start out assuming Apologetics is a "helping ministry". We are going to help people. That is the situation that Peter is describing. I think it is the situation that Paul is describing. We have come to help people offload assumptions and false ideas that have them imprisoned. I think it is very hard to do justice to the extent that our lives run on a set of ideas. Ideas are general, often vague representations of how things are and how they must be. They are quiet elusive. They are not the same things as beliefs. Ideas are more like ways of interpreting things and arriving at beliefs.

An illustration for example.* Evolution in the University context [15:00]

Evolution is not so much a belief but an idea. If in fact if you try to approach it as a belief, you will rarely get anywhere. But, if you understand it is less a belief than a general way of interpreting things which is a way I explain an idea. An idea is wide spread, it develops historically. You can not get at those by trying to refute them. You have to understand their function and then you can get people to think about them and I think also God can work in the context of that mind enabling people to begin to think, *"Maybe this way of interpreting things is not as adequate as I thought."* Then you've gained a big step for the person. Now they are going to start working. They will wake up in the middle of the night and start wondering. In many respects in reference to that kind of apologetic work, what we are aiming at is to get people to start wondering about things.

Read Augustine, Luther, CS Lewis, and so on, what you'll find is that it was a little question that began to undermine their ways of interpreting things and eventually led to a dam break or avalanche and suddenly the whole scene changed.

* CS Lewis conversion - How Lewis puts it when got in the side car he was an atheist and when he got out he was a theist. Someone might be inclined to attribute that to the driving of brother. Actually when you look into the story, you see that was the dam break, that was the avalanche. Suddenly

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there was a reorientation. I think once we understand the position of ideas, we are in a better position to begin to work with God in resolving difficulties.

The Ministry of Jesus

[17:45]

When we observe the ministry of Jesus as he tries to help people, then I give a list. In each of these cases there is a question and that question comes out of an ideational setting.

*** Matthew 11:1-6 - John the Baptist**

"Are you really the one or should we look for another?"

John had announced the Messiah. "Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." Jesus had not done that in the way John was thinking about. John is now in prison and soon to be parted from his head. He's is thinking, "How could this be?" He had a picture of deliverance that the Messiah was going to bring. You know the background of this, and you know what a powerful force it was.

In Acts 1 they are still asking the wrong question, "Jesus, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus answers John's question in a peculiar way. When you look at it, you realize He is answering, "Yes, the Kingdom is here." He sends John's people back to tell him about the manifestation of a greater Kingdom and help him understand the issue is not the one that he thought it was. He responds to a question. He gives a reason that gives a different answer to that question and helps the person involved shift their sense of what was going on.

That brings up another point that I should bring up at this juncture. I think the work of the apologetic is for people generally, not just for unbelievers. Many people who are genuinely committed to Christ have serious questions that are blocking their progress in faith. One of the things we want to be sure is to listen to those questions. I would almost say that if we were to carefully listen to those of who are already professed believers and answer them convincingly, we would do a great deal more than we think for those who are not believers because we would enable faith to blossom in the church. I know it sounds terrible and please forgive me, but often when we stand to address our congregations, we are often facing a wall of unbelief. Our problem is that we profess many things we don't believe. I am not thinking these are hypocrites. They are doing the best they can with what they have.

For example, they profess faith in the Trinity but they don't make any sense of it. And so, as a result, it really is not a portion of a hearty faith. We need

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to understand that the ministry of Apologetics is not just for those who don't believe but for those who already believe as well, as well as for those who don't.

*** Mark 2 - Jesus and the Lame Man**

[22:30]

Jesus has really set some questions buzzing in the heads of the people who were there. These are folks who were watching. Jesus had watchers all the time. He said to a man who was in need of healing, "Your sins are forgiven you." Wow, this put the watchers to thinking, "Who is this man?" There's the question. Profound question and great text for sermon preaching. "Let me tell you about that!" There's your sermon. You answer that question, "Who is this man who forgives sins?"

Jesus gives them an answer in terms of what is easier to do. Is it easier to say, "*Your sins are forgiven*" or "*Take up your bed and walk?*"

Now actually, their head was wrong in many respects. It is harder to say, "*Your sins be forgiven.*" You have to be God to do that, don't you? But, in their minds, and in the minds of people standing around, saying to a person, "*Take up your bed and walk*" is harder because now if it is going to happen, it is going to happen right out there in the public. You can say, "*Your sins are forgiven*" but no one will know it.

Jesus responds to the question, "Who is this man?" by doing something, It didn't satisfy to all the people who were watching. It gave them something to work on that they could make progress with, they could think about it. Some when one way and said, "This man casts out demons in the power of the devil" so it did not convince everyone. But it was an answer that would allow them to make progress with their question if they wish to. That's a big progress in our work is to recognize we can help some people and can't others. We have to accept that, and that's part of the understanding we don't do this work in our strength. We have to leave the outcome up to God.

I give you also the case of **Simon the Pharisee Luke 7:36-50** [25:40]

His question was raised by the fact that here is a case where Jesus is supposed to be a prophet, and here is a woman who was disgraceful, and she was in a rather moist way, working over his feet with tears, and worshipping Him. Simon is saying, "If this man were a prophet, that wouldn't be happening because He would know who this woman was, and if he knew who this woman was, he would not let this woman touch him." That's a set of questions.

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Now Jesus answer and tells them a story. Because time goes by so fast, I won't go into it. I hope you will work that through how did Jesus respond to Simon the Pharisee? Simon had a legitimate question for his framework but the problem was that his framework was all wrong.

Really, the work of Apologetics mostly goes after the frameworks, the general ideas. If we can succeed in loosening up the framework, there may be more work to do, but normally the process of thought will answer the question, but we have to be able to loosen the framework. I think that's really the great task and this is how this and that is how Jesus works. Jesus works in a situational context. I would say, above all, apologetics is intensely personal situation. To me that means it is not the same as evangelism, and it's also not the same as soul winning. Let me take time to distinguish those.

Evangelism — There is time for evangelism.

[28:10]

Proclamation of the Gospel and others related things. It breaks over into teaching but it not the same.

Jesus' Ministry: Proclamation, Manifestation & Teaching (Matt. 4:23 & 9:35)

When he sent out his first shock troops, they proclaimed and manifested, but they did not teach. Teaching is hardest. To teach you have to really understand what you are doing. You don't to proclaim and you doh't to manifest. You can manifest the presence of the Kingdom in your life if you simply have the faith to step out and do it. John Wimber calls it, "doing the stuff".

When it comes to teaching, that requires genuine understanding. When he sent them out the first time, he didn't tell them to teach, He told them to manifest. Proclamation is like putting up posters. "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." You announce it. You proclaim it.

Soul Winning [30:25] is different from evangelization and is wrongly confused with it. Soul winning is helping people come to a decision. That's an important work and we need people who know how to do that. They are people who are capable of watching and speaking to others, and not necessarily driving them into a hole but helping them through the process of coming to an open confession of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

Apologetics is neither one of those [Evangelism or Soul Winning]. Having said that, I do want to acknowledge that very often they run together. One should be alert to all of the differences. If you do evangelism apologetically,

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that will mess up the works. You will not proclaim because you'll be thinking about questions and trying to answer questions. Many people confuse evangelism with soul winning and people won't do evangelism because they think it is soul winning and they don't know how to do that. We need to think carefully about those three things and understand the situational nature of apologetics and work with that.

Jesus, when he sent His people out, did tell them some things to do on how you would do the work. He gives them some really good advice. He tells them to be, "Be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves." I think we need to pay attention to that in apologetic work. What is the wisdom of the serpent? You rarely see a serpent chasing down it's prey. The wisdom of the serpent is timeliness. It is watching for the right time. To do that, you have to be attentive, you have to have great faith in God, great reliance on him, so you won't begin to try to make things happen. You watch, and primarily what you do is to watch to identify the question that is in the mind of the individual, whether Christian or not. Those questions are what you have to respond to in the work of the Apologist. The "innocence of the dove" has to do with we don't use any sort of manipulating techniques. We are perfectly straightforward. We never try to mislead.

At USC, for example, we have problems with groups that will come in, more often than not are Christian. They will put out appeals that do not let the incoming students know that this is a Christian approach. They have the idea that they can get the hook in and then later on reveal that what they are interested in is evangelism, soul winning, and apologetics. I have really tried to discourage that. I don't think there is any place at all in apologetic work, evangelism, or soul winning, for anything but what is most clear, straightforward approach. I think that is what Jesus is saying, "we want to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Beyond that to teach concretely from our own lives. What we know in experience as well as systematic inquiry and study the Bible, and all the other things, and always related back to our experience. When we do that, we get the proper situational context for helping people with their questions. I think that talking in terms of our experience in relationship to questions.

For example, talking about talking about how those questions have effected us is one of the keys to helping people with their own questions. By going inside of us, people are able to go into their own insides and not be looking outward trying to fend off someone who is trying to submerge them in something that they are not at all sure is something they want to have.

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The Situational Nature of Apologetics

[36:00]

I am going to broaden that in a moment. The situational nature of apologetics - that is dealing with questions that are really there in the minds of the persons we are talking with and trying to get back of that to get the ideational structure that gives rise to the questions. As for example, Jesus did with John the Baptist. He tried to shift the understanding that gave rise to the question. John misunderstood what the Kingdom was, and because of that he had a question. He works from the inside trying to shift that. It follows from the situational character of Apologetics...if I'm right. By the way, I may be wrong. We are going to stop here in a little while and you can help me get it right.

We listen carefully. I would say this - apologetics is a helping ministry. We are trying to help people. It is a loving ministry. We do it out of love. Because it is a loving ministry, it is a listening ministry. You really do listen. Here is one of the places where the gift of the Spirit exist. One of the gifts is knowledge. Sometimes we need to, as we listen, be praying, *"Lord, help me know, give me guidance as to what is the real problem here."* The presenting problem is rarely the real problem. The real problem has to be identified by the work of the Spirit. That is something the Spirit does the work for us. We listen carefully. Sometimes you can't do that on one occasion. You listen, and try not to solve the problem on the spot, but rather to say, "When can we meet again?" In the interval, be prayerful and thoughtful, maybe send a note to the person. Nowadays we have email. Communication and meeting again will be a way of carrying on the process of Apologetic work.

One-on-one apologetics has to be a Spirit led process of diagnosis. We really want the person to know that we are on their side. We are not against them. We are not trying to quash them or in any way manipulate them. We want them to know that we believe in a God who works with them. We have to be careful not to be in a position of closed mindedness, not listening, the idea that our task is to persuade these people, to win a war. Rather, we are with them. That's where logic comes in so importantly.

Jesus Use of Logic with Questions

[40:15]

I believe that is one of the things that can be most helpful in our work in apologetics. Not just one-on-one but even in the more general sense. I will speak of it in just a moment.

When Jesus was engaging with people, He often would ask them questions that would lead them into what we call enthymemic thinking*. The

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enthymeme is one of the most important devices in reasoning with people. An enthymeme is an argument that has something left out. Sometimes it can be the conclusion, or a premise. The power of the enthymeme is that it engages the reasoning of the people who are listening. They are challenged to fill in the blanks. When they fill in the blanks, that comes from them, not from someone over here that's trying to manage them. It is their conclusion. It has a an all together difference on how they respond because now they are having to deal with a conviction which actually is their own. It may be something quite uncomfortable. [* Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, 183]

One of the classic passages that you see this in is the passage where Jesus has been dealing with the Herodians, or the Pharisees and the scribes in a manner that was so characteristic of Him, He had totally left them out of gas with no answers. [Matthew 22:42-46] And so then in effect, he says, "*Now let me ask you a question.*" Sometime we can ask a question that really needs to be asked and then allow them to work on the answer. His question, you will no doubt recall, "*What do you think of Christ? What think ye of the Messiah? Whose Son is he?*" Of course, they had the answer, right? "*David's Son.*" So then, very skillfully, Jesus takes the passage out of Psalm 110. "*The Lord said to my Lord, 'sit beside me until I make your enemies a footstool.'*" And He said, "*If the Messiah is David's son...*"

Let me interrupt here, that was the background idea that when the Messiah came, he would fit in the pattern of David. Who was David? David was the great Warrior. He led to the expansion of the nation of Israel geographically and had ruled over all of the surrounding territories. That's what they had in their minds. That's what he means when the Messiah comes, what's he going to be like? Their answer was, he is going to be like David. His response was as a question. "*If that's true, how does David call Him Lord. No Jewish Father calls his son Lord.*" Right? Now, he doesn't tell them that. He asks a question. And he lets the process...

Those of you who know your New Testament and the early period of the church, will unhesitant that pattern of reason which Jesus goes through becomes the standard part of the teaching in the early church because they had the problem of reinterpreting the Jewish experience and expectation of the Messiah in a way that it would make clear that Jesus was the one. Jesus using logic helps people come to the conclusion.. That's very different from using logic to hammer someone into submission.

I think there case, and I will say a word about this quickly and you can something. There is a time to stand up and argue like a thrashing machine. Some of us, not all of us, some of us have the calling. I think all you will

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know William Lane Craig. Bill is so powerful now, many campuses can't anyone to debate with him. He's not a mean man. He's a sweet human being. But, he just knows the deal. After all, he does have the best case to argue. For a long time, you know, people would show up to argue with Bill and they would think, "Here's another yokel" and they would come in, no preparation, they were going to run through the stuff they know, and he let's the air out of all the balloons as they pass by and the person stands there with nothing to say. That's embarrassing, especially if you have a Ph.D and some people think you are something. There's a time for that. There's a time for that.

We do have the case for it, but we want to judge very carefully or we will only be preaching to the choir. We will confirm those who already believe and leave those who do not believe more angry and hostile than they've ever been before. I think that's Jesus way of doing it. I think that's what Peter did, I think that's what Paul did. We need to rethink the Sermon on Mars Hill. I think it is a mistake to call it a sermon. It was a very thoughtful, gentle, thoughtful approach into the inside of the minds of the people he was talking to. He didn't start out with Moses. When he went to the synagogues, he started with Moses. The questions that were generated by that. When he goes to the Greeks, he starts talking with them about the gods as they understand them, and idolatry, and so on. He talks about it from the inside and lets' them do the reasoning. There's an element of proclamation there.

From my own background which was terribly so anti-intellectual, I've heard so many preachers say, "He tried philosophy and he failed." Well, we should all have such failures. There was a larger context. If you go to Mars Hill today you will recognize the main street is "The Avenue of Paul the Apostle". Not bad after two hundred years. [two thousand] The effectiveness of our teaching is illustrated by Paul. He knew what he is doing, He was trusting God.

Apologetics on the Larger Scale

[48:30]

I think when the attitude is concerned, when we write books, speak to groups, go on university campuses, perhaps we live there and we speak, we need to have the same spirit of Jesus in what we do. Remember, the spirit of Jesus does does not mean intellectual mush. It means strict, logical rigor combined with humility and sweetness of spirit with a willingness to listen.

This is the final thing I will try to say here...

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~ Debates - I like to approach it when someone says will you come and debate such and such. I say I will come and we will have a cooperative inquiry. The reason I do that is because I think that if I go to expect them to have an open mind, I better not go with a closed mind. I go with the attitude, *"At least it is possible I might be wrong and might learn something."* Having that attitude does not mean that I am the least doubtful about what I present and what I believe. It does mean that I'm there to listen. if I'm not there to listen, I don't think I can expect them to be there to listen. That troubles a lot of people, and that's one reason I want to say here at the end we can discuss that.

Openness of inquiry is what people, especially in the university setting, pride themselves on doing. Now, unfortunately, they are not open. They tend to be terribly close minded. The idea that the university is a place where people are rational is a sad untruth. People are just about as irrational there as they are at truck stops or any other places in culture.

Specific Topics

[51:05]

~ Is the "Bible" a source of knowledge? It happens to be one I do a lot of work in the universities. What I am up against is a lot of people who have not seriously read the Bible have heard a lot of myths about it from Ph.D's and academic gowns and all sorts of things like that.

~ "Evolution" - Relativity of Truth. I've got a whole list here.

When I approach those, I can not approach them with the attitude, *"I am not going not to listen to anything you say"* because that's precisely the attitude I have to get passed in them.

If you walk up to someone and say, *"The Bible is a reliable source of knowledge about the most important things in human life."* No, the Bible is a myth book. It is something people have engineered to control people. The whole thing that lies back of "The DaVinci Code" spins off the myth that the Bible is an authoritative construction for purposes of repression. Who gets repressed? Women. Of course, they do. Other stories that are not along the orthodox lines get repressed. It is hard to say to people, "the reason the Gnostics did not hold up very well was because it did not work, not because some people repressed their gospels. It's because it did not work."

We have to understand that the intellectual world that we address is in fact an authoritarian myth structure. There is a lot of truth in it. We have to address that and thank God for the truth that is there. That belongs to him

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too. When we approach it, we have to approach it I believe, more that just saying in the spirit of Jesus - logical, sweet, listening and loving, all that's important. We do have to approach it in terms of finding a common ground from which we can honestly talk to one another about truth that is in the Bible and that is in Jesus Christ.

I'm going to stop there because we are going to be out of time and I really want you to have time to say something.

~ ~ ~ End of Teaching @ 54:00 ~ ~ ~

~ ~ Q & A

Q - [Inaudible]

A - [54:45] What do you put into "confrontational"? What do you mean, "confront"? I think that's the issue here. What do you do when you confront? You Argue? That would mean you listened and responded, if that's confrontation, I am confrontational. [More inaudible.] It is often done with hostility, closed-mindedness, even fearfulness. Confrontation can be done in a way that is counter-productive for the purposes of Christ. I don't think Paul ever did that. Look at other passages, *"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but he must be gentle."* You can confrontational without striving. You can be confrontational and be gentle. That takes a lot of work to do that, because you see, in our world, many people think if you are gentle, you are not serious. If you are not hostile, maybe you don't believe what you say. I believe that is precisely what Paul talks about when he talks about "flesh". If you mean by "confrontational" stating what you believe, giving your reasons why the other side's view is not true, I am for it. I think Paul did it.

Q - Does passion give authority? [56:40]

A - I'll would have to disagree with that. I may be wrong. I don't think passion gives authority. I would never encourage anyone to do it in the spirit of the Muslims I know. I would never do that. For example, as a young man, a young pastor, I use to hear, "Would it be wonderful if Baptists were as zealous as Jehovah's Witnesses." I think that would be an unmitigated tragedy if were like that. Again, I may be wrong. My wife assures me. There is a place for passion. Jesus was sometimes passionate. Paul was sometimes passionate. But I think the general teaching of both of them is: Be solid, be clear, be firm, be unyielding, do your best, and let it stand. In my context of the university, what I find is people expect you to be passionate and stupid. The other side of your comments about how Europeans respond, I agree with entirely. Their problem is not a lack of passion. Their problem is they don't believe anything. I think when you look at it, that's the deeper issue.

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Q - [58:23] I would like to talk about what you said about manipulation. I often heard Christians using the argument of unpredictability of Jesus' second return in generating a sense of urgency for people to respond. I have been using it myself. I am not sure to what extent it is manipulation and what portion would you use in winning people for Jesus. In what context would you use the argument of the fact that Jesus may come tomorrow and the person needs to decide as soon as possible?

A - [59:25] I think that's an important thing to say to people. Anytime you straight forwardly say what you believe to be true, that is not manipulation. You may be referring to the fact that some people think when you talk about, Jesus may come at any moment, they are trying to instill fear in people and get them to give in out of fear. We are not in charge of fear. I would say if it causes people to be fearful, sometimes it is appropriate to be afraid. If what I believe about Jesus is true, and I were living life on my own, and unprepared to meet him, I would be afraid. I would say if at some point you are trying to generate fear just to motivate people, I would not do that. I think that is manipulation in a bad sense. If you are telling them something like, "your house might burn down", and they buy an insurance policy because of fear that their house might burn down, that's a good reason to buy an insurance policy. It's just when you try to use emotions alone to get people to do things. My own view is that we are not in the business of getting anyone to do anything, even at the level soul winning. We are not trying to get people to do things. We are helping them do something, but we are not trying to get them to do it.

I hesitate to speak of your context. In my context in the U.S., a great deal of the problem there is that ministers are in a position trying to get people to do things. It started out by trying to get people to come forward and profess Christ. Now they've got a congregation full of people and their job is trying to get them to do things. I really encourage everyone to just get out of that business. It isn't our job to try to get people to do things. It is our job to try to help people understand things, to see things. Sometimes they need help in making a decision. We can do that, that's good. And they need help in implementing. That is good too. We just have to get out of the business in trying to get people to do things, so that's where I say manipulation goes wrong.

Q - [1:02:05] I remember reading in Origen's an apologist of the early church, he was saving using the name of Jesus until the very last moment when he can do that because people had so many wrong understandings about Jesus. When you say, "I am a Christian", that is when people would turn away and leave.

"Jesus - Logician & Apologist"

Dallas Willard

A - [1:02:45] My way of thinking is that we should start with the questions that are in their minds. If that is a question like, "Well, these Christians" (in that generation), "they drink blood." They I would address that. I think in apologetics we start with... In evangelization, you say it clearly and loudly and let people begin to work on it. If my view of apologetics is right, you go with the questions which are in the minds of the people and you help them with those questions. That might not be at first anything to do with Christianity. It may be, "If there is a good God, why is there suffering?" Is there a god at all? If it was explicitly about Christianity, I would deal with that. If not, I wouldn't. I'd let it come up where it's relevant, appropriate.

Q - Could our approach sometimes be trying to instill or bring up the very questions that we think should be answered?

A - [1:04:05] Largely, that's what we do. We redirect the question in many, many cases and try to help the person ask the question that should be asked and should be answered. The cases I gave from Jesus trying to illustrate how I think it works are cases in point. They are asking the wrong question. "*Who is that man that he can forgive sins? God only can forgive sins.*" They had a question that arose out of their understanding of God. So...Jesus gave them another question, one that they could deal more adequately with, which is greater in their minds, to say unto the person, "Take up your bed and walk" or say "your sins are forgiven"?

Reframing the question is basic apologetic work. We must always be alert to it, because what we want to get to is a question that the person can own and begin to try to find an answer to, and then we can help them with that. Reframing the question is absolutely vital. That, by the way, is why listening is so important as a part of the apologetic ministry. It helps us understand the question that should be asked and what is deeper in the person's mind. I think this is a part of what Paul means when he says, "The weapons are not carnal". So very often we need what amounts to is a word of knowledge that comes from the Spirit to understand what the real question is. Sometimes the real issue is emotional and you need to be able to identify that. I like to ask, "What are you really suffering from? What has hurt you?"

So my response is yes, you are absolutely right. Yes.

Q - [1:06:22] Is there a case to be made that method and tone might differ in one to one situation, that being a part of the apologetic task, and another in the public arena and in the media, and that can be more confrontational, or maybe a little bit more down Bill Craig's manner and those two work together for the benefit and hope of the Kingdom?

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A - [1:07:00] My answer is yes, absolutely. I am very comfortable with the word "confrontation" if we are talking about issues. Especially in public work that is apologetic, you have to confront issues with issues. That doesn't mean you don't listen. If you have not figured out what the questions are in your audiences's mind, you'll be off over here in the air confronting issues which no one is interested in. You still have to listen. You have to know your audience. In that sense, public apologetic work is still situational but, of course, it is not the kind of careful one on one work that you would do with an individual. There, rightly or wrongly, it just seems to me that "confrontational" is not a good way. Honesty, thoroughness, I love those words. Be thorough, not avoiding any issues, helping people see where they might be wrong or where they are wrong, that's all good. Confrontational to me conveys a spirit that seems to me to be out of place with individuals, especially if they are not in a public role.

OF course, sometimes Jesus was confrontational, but you will rarely find anything that looks confrontational when He was working one on one. In fact, for example, with Nicodemus in John 3 was confrontational. He basically took Nicodemus by the beard and said, "You haven't the foggiest idea of what you are talking about." He came saying, "We know God. We know, we know, we know..." Jesus said, "No, you don't know." But He did that in a way that was gentle that led him out. When He is dealing in the Temple with phalanxes of Pharisees and scribes, man is He ever brutal. "Snakes!" he say then he goes into it. He is dealing with someone in an official role and also, that's Jesus and not me and I can trust Jesus to do a lot of things with which I would never trust myself to do. I think that's a long winded way of saying yes. Thank you very kindly for hearing me out.

~ ~ ~ End of Session @ 1:09:44 ~ ~ ~

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