

What is Apologetics?

- Apologia (ἀπολογία)
- Means “defense”
- 1 Peter 3:15 - “in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...”

Evidential Apologetics

- Appeal to evidences to show the validity of Christianity
- Natural theology

Presuppositional Apologetics

- Presuppositional Apologetics is a school of Christian apologetics that believes the Christian faith is the only basis for rational thought. It presupposes that the Bible is divine revelation and attempts to expose flaws in other worldviews. Everyone has philosophical presuppositions which inform their worldview. This approach essentially seeks to show that Christianity makes the most sense of reality.
- It is from a Reformed perspective, so a common driving notion is that man is totally deprived, including his mind. So, rationalizing toward God cannot happen. God’s irresistible grace must draw him. So, there’s no or little adherence to natural theology.

Classical Apologetics

- It is like evidential apologetics in its reliance on evidence, yet it differs in its two-fold approach. You first establish the existence of the theistic God then you show the validity of Christianity.

TACTICS

Jesus’ apologetic (Matthew 22:41-46)

- “Jesus asked them a question, saying ‘What do you think about the Christ?’”
 - He finds out information about their belief, really intending to listen (though He already knows.)
- “Whose son is he?”
 - He points the question where He wants to take the conversation.
- After they answered, He asks another question, refuting their point, and asks a final question to put the nail in the coffin.
 - “‘If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask Him any more questions.”

Jesus and Pilate (John 18:28-38)

- “Are you the king of the Jews?”
 - Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”
 - Pilate is asking this question in regards to what the people who brought Jesus to him are saying, but Jesus makes Pilate consider the question for himself.
- Jesus makes pointed remarks, ending with his answer, “For this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

- Pilate, considering this for himself, replies “What is truth?”
- Jesus didn’t even have to answer. Pilate already knew. Jesus wasn’t guilty.
 - There is a beautiful portion in Frederick Buechner’s book “Telling the Truth,” where he mixes this passage into modern day and brings it all to life. It is my favorite part of any book I have ever read.

Pilate asks the question we all must consider. And what we’re considering in this session. We’re going to learn how we arrive at truth, and if there is anything such as truth. We’re also going to see and practice some tactics just like Jesus.

One simple tactic will help you better minister to people because it requires you to really listen and it will bring more power to the points you are seeking to make. They can be found in an outstanding book by Greg Koukl, “Tactics.” He calls his main tactic “Columbo.” Essentially, it is asking questions rather than making points.

Asking questions does several beneficial things. First, it requires you to listen. Secondly, it makes them come to conclusions on their own. Which is more impactful, you telling something to someone, or them telling themselves? Asking pointed questions allows you to listen and helps people arrive at the conclusions on their own.

We will practice it here as we start to evaluate truth. We are going to see that, truth is not a subjective matter of faith but an objective matter of fact.

An important step in discovering truth is identifying what is false. An easy place to start with this is in evaluating what are called self-defeating statements. A self-defeating statement is one that fails to meet its own standard.

In the book “I Don’t Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist” by Norm Geisler and Frank Turek, which is where a lot of information you will hear me tell you in several of these sessions comes from, they refer to the refuting of self-defeating statements as the Road Runner Tactic. They say this because you can refute a whole claim and even worldview with a simple statement, or even better, a simple question. Let’s practice. Think of a question to ask to refute each one of these self-defeating statements.

- I can’t speak a word in English.
- I cannot think.
- You cannot be certain of anything.
- I am skeptical of everything.
- There is no such thing as truth.
- There is no way to know that anything is true.
- All religions are true.
- I cannot express myself in words.
- I came to the conclusion that I know everything intuitively.
- I do not exist.

We've just seen a little about how to refute some false claims, but what about truth? How can we know first if there is truth and secondly how to find what it is? There is the claim that all truth is relative. This is called relativism. "What's true for you is true for you and what's true for me is true for me." For the question we will get to about God and religion, it's like saying "God" is at the top of the mountain and all the different religions are just taking different paths up the mountain. I had a conversation with a dear friend one time where this person said, "I have good friends who are atheist, Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, and Born-Again Christians. They are all good people." I told this person my area of concern is not in where they agree, but where they disagree. Each makes fundamental claims about God and eternity that are completely different and many times contradictory. And many of the worldviews claims the other worldviews are wrong. Contradiction about within relativism yet many are blinded by it. They can't all be true when they claim others are false.

So, to help us evaluate truth, here are some truths about truth. (These are taken from "I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist.")

Truth is discovered, not invented.

- It exists independent of anyone's knowledge of it.
- Gravity existed prior to Newton.

Truth is transcultural.

- If something is true, it is true for all people, in all places, at all times.
- $2+2=4$ for everyone, everywhere, at every time.

Truth is unchanging even though our beliefs about truth change.

- When we began to believe the earth was round instead of flat, the truth about the earth didn't change, only our belief about the earth changed.

Beliefs cannot change a fact, no matter how sincerely they are held.

- Someone can sincerely believe the world is flat, but that only makes that person sincerely mistaken.
- "Facts don't care about your feelings." -Ben Shapiro

Truth is not affected by the attitude of the one professing it.

- An arrogant person does not make the truth he professes false. A humble person does not make the error he professes true.

All truths are absolute truths.

- Even truths that appear to be relative are really absolute.
- For example, "I, Jacob Haywood, feel warm right now" may appear to be a relative truth, but it is actually true for everyone, everywhere that Jacob Haywood had the sensation of warmth today.

Why Should Anyone Believe Anything?

Everyone has faith in something. What you believe has the utmost importance. You could be building your entire life on a lie, contrary to reality. And it matters for eternity.

Relativists say, "It doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you believe something."

- We don't live with this notion. We live as if absolute truth exists except in matters of morality and religion.

- Think if we actually lived this way. Relativism is ultimately unlivable.
- “It doesn’t really matter what medicine you take, as long as you believe it will help you.”
- Beliefs don’t trump facts in the real world, so why should people think they do when it comes to religion?

Why do people believe what they believe?

“People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive.” -Blaise Pascal

1. Sociological Reasons
 - Parents, friends, society, culture
2. Psychological Reasons
 - Comfort, peace of mind, meaning, purpose, hope, identity
3. Religious Reasons
 - Scripture, pastor, priest, guru, rabbi, imam, church
4. Philosophical Reasons
 - Consistency, Coherence, Completeness

The only way to test what is correct is to use sound reason and evidence (philosophical reasons).

- David Hume (*Empiricism and Skepticism*)
 - The Principle of Empirical Verifiability
 - Propositions can only be meaningful if they meet one of the two following propositions:
 - Those that are true by definition
 - Those that are empirically verifiable
- Immanuel Kant (*Agnosticism*)
 - There is no way to know anything about the real world.
 - You never know anything in itself.
 - You only know the thing to you after your mind and senses form it.
 - Phenomena
 - Noumena

How can the philosophies of Hume and Kant be refuted?

- Hume - You can only know something if it is true by definition or empirically verifiable.
 - *Is that true by definition? Is that empirically verifiable?*
- Kant - You cannot know anything for sure. You cannot know the real world.
 - *Do you know that for sure?*

Just think about the claim that you can’t know truth. It is inherently self-defeating. “The truth is that I am absolutely certain that there is no such thing as absolute truth.”

So, Hume and Kant are proven wrong, so what? That doesn't mean we have evidence for the existence of God.

- The road runner tactic can only reveal that a proposition is false. It does not provide positive evidence that any particular claim is true.

- How is truth known?
- It begins with the self-evident laws of logic called first principles.
 - The Law of Identity. ($A = A$)
 - The Law of Noncontradiction. ($A \neq \text{not-}A$)
 - The Law of the Excluded Middle. (*either A or not-A*)

Although we use these first principles to help us discover truth, they alone can't tell us whether or not a particular proposition is true.

Take this as an example:

- All men are mortal.
- Spencer is a man.
- Therefore, Spencer is mortal.

That is a logical statement. Here is another logical statement:

- All men are four-legged reptiles.
- Zachary is a man.
- Therefore, Zachary is a four-legged reptile.

Now, this is logical, but is it true? No. The conclusion is false because a premise is false.

An argument can be logically sound but still be false because the premises of the argument do not correspond to reality.

- So, logic only gets us so far.
- Logic can tell us than an argument is false, but it cannot tell us by itself which premises are true.

Here is how we arrive at truth. We use deduction and induction.

- Deduction
 - The process of lining up premises in an argument and arriving at a valid conclusion
- Induction
 - The method of drawing general conclusions from specific observations

The question must be asked, If you don't know something 100%, can you still be certain that it's true? Yes, beyond a reasonable doubt.

- You can't be 100% certain that all men are mortal. You haven't witnessed every man die. But, induction informs your certainty.

So, what does this have to do with knowing the truth of God and Christianity?

- Observation and induction help us investigate the ultimate religious question, “Does God exist?”

So, are there observational effects that give evidence to the existence of God beyond a reasonable doubt? Yes. Come back each week for these next few sessions and you will see *some* of them.

The question of truth in religion and morality matters to the highest degree in our lives and in the world.

- *“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” -A. W. Tozer*
- *“Regardless of what the real truth is concerning religion and morality, our lives are greatly affected by it today and perhaps even for eternity. Those who cavalierly say, “So what? Who cares about truth in morality and religion?” are ignoring reality and are blindly skating on thin ice. **We owe it to ourselves and others to find the real truth, and then act on it.**” –from *I Don’t Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist**

By the end of this class we will undoubtedly arrive at the conclusion that Jesus has already told us: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”- John 8:32