

EVANGELISM FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

God-Centered Evangelism

I. The Grace of God’s Love to Sinners

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Q. How do vv. 14-15 relate to the verse above?

“God-centered evangelism is a way of life. It does not advocate a method but encourages a knowledge of people and how to apply a macro gospel to the conscience. Witness should be natural, educational, and bold. It is something we are, not just something we do. ‘Personal witnessing’ is the phrase that best describes the evangelistic life to which all of us are called.” – Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth*

| Me-Centered | God-Centered |
|---|---|
| VIEW OF GOD Point of contact with non-Christians is love (God loves you). God's authority/ownership is blunted. | Point of contact with non-Christians is creation (God made you). God has ownership rights over your life/destiny. |
| Love is God's chief attribute. | Justice and love are equally important attributes of God |
| God is impotent before the sinner's will. | God is able to empower the sinner's will. |
| The persons of the Trinity have different goals when planning/accomplishing salvation than when applying it. | The persons of the Trinity work in harmony—salvation is designed, accomplished and applied to the same people. |
| Conclusion - <i>God is a friend who will help you.</i> | <i>God is a king who will save you.</i> |
| VIEW OF HUMANITY Fallen yet has the ability (or potential) to choose the good/God | Fallen and unable to come to God by own will power. |
| Seeks truth but lacks correct facts. | Mind at enmity with God; none seek God. |
| Needs love, help, friendship and a new life. | Needs new nature (mind, heart, will), regeneration. |
| Needs salvation from consequences of sin—unhappiness/hell | Needs salvation from guilt and enslaving power of sin, hell. |
| Conclusion - <i>Humanity is sick and ignorant.</i> | <i>Humanity is spiritually dead and lost.</i> |
| VIEW OF CHRIST He exists for our benefit. | He exists to gather a kingdom and receive honor and glory |
| His death more important than his righteous, law-keeping life | His death and life both key to fulfilling our obligation to God |
| Emphasizes his priestly role—Savior. | Emphasizes his priestly, kingly and prophetic roles. |
| Conclusion – <i>Submission to Christ’s lordship is optional</i> | <i>Submission to Christ's lordship is necessary for salvation</i> |
| VIEW OF RESPONSE TO CHRIST Invitation waiting to be accepted now. | Loving command to be obeyed now. |
| Our choice is the basis for salvation. God responds to our decision. | God's choice is the basis for salvation. We respond to God’s initiative. |
| Appeal is made to the desires of the sinner. | Truths are driven home into the conscience of the sinner. |
| Assurance of salvation comes from a counselor using the promises of God and pronouncing the new believer saved | Assurance of salvation comes from Holy Spirit applying Biblical promises to the conscience, effecting a changed life. |
| Conclusion - <i>Sinners have the key in their hands.</i> | <i>God has the key in his hand.</i> |

III. The Intolerance of Tolerance

A. Old View of “Tolerance” = “to allow or to permit, to recognize and respect others' beliefs and practices without sharing them, to bear or put up with someone or something not necessarily liked.” (*Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*)

1. Permitting or allowing...
2. ...a conduct or point of view one disagrees with...
3. ...while respecting the person in the process.

B. New View of “Tolerance” = “To be truly tolerant...you must agree that another person’s position is just as valid as your own...You must give your approval, your endorsement, your sincere support to their beliefs and behaviors.” (McDowell and Hostetler, *The New Tolerance*, 22)

Q. What is the one view that the ‘new tolerance’ cannot tolerate? What is the irony?

Q. How do Christians have the greatest opportunity to demonstrate how to be truly tolerant (that is, truly loving)?

*“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;⁶ **it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.**” (1 Cor 13:4-6)*

“To [endorse religious diversity (pluralism)] would mean the death of Christianity. A Christianity that loses its hold on the exclusive claims of Christ ceases to be Christianity at all. However, although Christians cannot cherish religious pluralism they must tolerate it...By tolerance I mean allowing other people to hold and to defend their own religious convictions. Tolerance does not mean that everyone has to agree with everyone else. That would not be tolerance at all. The word tolerance itself assumes disagreement...”

Intolerant Christianity cannot be defended...Jesus said, “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.... Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:39, 44-45). If that is the kind of love Christians should have for violent enemies, they should have even more love for people who simply hold a different philosophy of life...True Christianity thus preserves a powerful combination that is found nowhere else: tolerance and truth. ...[Our pluralistic culture] idolizes tolerance while it eliminates the truth, although curiously it also tends to be intolerant of people—for example, Christians—who have strong religious convictions. Ultimately Christians reject the demand of philosophical pluralism because they prize both tolerance and truth.”

– Philip G. Ryken, *Is Jesus the Only Way?*, 13-16.

If you love a person, you will not act indifferently toward dangerous or destructive beliefs or behavior simply to avoid offending him or her. Yet the new tolerance demands just that sort of indifference.

Tolerance says, “You must agree with me.” Love responds, “I must do something harder; I will tell you the truth because I am convinced that the truth will set you free.”

Tolerance says, “You must approve of what I do.” Love responds, “I must do something harder; I will love you, even when your behavior offends me.”

Tolerance says, “You must allow me to have my way” Love responds, “I must do something harder; I will plead with you to follow the right way, because I believe you are worth the risk.”

Tolerance seeks to be inoffensive; love takes risks. Tolerance is indifferent; love is active. Tolerance costs nothing; love costs everything. (McDowell and Hostetler, *The New Tolerance*, 95)