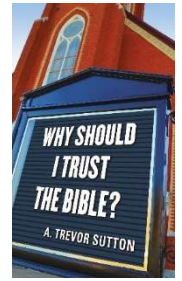


Christ the King Lutheran Church *Why Should I Trust the Bible?* A. Trevor Sutton



Session Seven – Claim: the Bible is so old that it could not possibly speak to contemporary culture.

Pastor Rob Morris

The more things change, the more they stay the same. According to Ecclesiastes, "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun" (1:9). Don't believe it? Here are some instances of there being nothing new under the sun:

- Ancient Greek physicians and philosophers, such as Hippocrates and Aristotle, wrote about the struggles of acne. They proposed treatments for pimples that relied on sulfur, honey, and other peculiar remedies. This means that teenagers in Athens probably spent way too long in the bathroom examining zits, washing their faces, and lathering up with sulfur and honey. ...

- Way back in about AD 397, Augustine of Hippo wrote about making up stories to impress his friends...

There is nothing new under the sun.... Much of daily life in antiquity is conversant with daily life today. (120-121)

Although the Bible is an ancient text-with many writings extending long before the time of Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Augustine- it has extremely timely and relevant verses. There are a number of verses in Scripture that people identify as speaking loud and clear to contemporary culture today. These verses are well known by many people and highlighted as particularly relevant because their inspirational words convey timeless wisdom:

- Love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).
- Do not be anxious (Matthew 6:34).
- "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

As long as people have love in their hearts, fear for tomorrow, and a longing to make sense of the ever-passing present moment, then these verses of the Bible will speak to contemporary culture. These verses are standards when it comes to greeting cards, wedding readings, and social media posts. Whether people know the Bible or not, they are often familiar with these verses. (121)

Nevertheless, there are more than just a couple of verses in the Bible that still speak to contemporary culture. It is not as though a small portion of Scripture is relevant to contemporary culture while the bulk of it is outmoded, outdated, and out of style. The entire Bible-every chapter, every verse, and every word-speaks loud and clear to contemporary culture... The Bible is eternally relevant as it constantly speaks God's commandments and promises, the Law and the Gospel:

Law: The Bible contains God's clear instructions for holy living. There is no uncertainty about God's will for how you are to live your life because it is clearly articulated by God's Word. You do not need to look into your heart or up at the stars to determine what is right; you simply need to look to what God has declared to be right...The Law incessantly speaks divine truth into hearts of falsehood. has always and will always shine a spotlight on the darkness of sin. This means that the Law is eternally relevant to your life. As long you have a penchant for sin, you will need the Law of God.



Gospel: The Bible is not merely a handbook for holy living. The Bible is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God speaks hope into your ear and salvation into your heart. God sings new songs of joy into the dirge that is your past. Scripture declares God's unending promises to you. The Law reveals your sinfulness and makes clear your need for a Savior. The Gospel reveals that your Savior has come in Christ Jesus. (122-123)

The ancient Gospel of Jesus Christ contains present power for this very moment:

Despair. Contemporary culture struggles with profound despair. Nihilism is a philosophical ideology claiming that life is essentially without meaning, purpose, or value. This belief in a meaningless existence has resulted in a culture of despair. What is the meaning of human life if it is nothing more than a random assemblage of chemicals, confusion, and chance? What is the point of anything if the planet Earth is just a chunk of rock floating in an infinitely tiny part of the universe? ... Into this meaningless mind-set, the Gospel proclaims God's eternal purpose and plan for salvation. Life has eternal value; Scripture clearly states that God values life so highly that He is willing to do anything—anything!—even shed His own blood in order to redeem life from the clutches of death. Life has eternal purpose; the Bible clearly conveys God's plans that human creatures are to live in community and harmony with the rest of creation and with Him. The Bible is a powerful antidote to the despair of contemporary culture: "Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2).

Sickness. Long ago, people suffered from sickness and disease. Today, people still suffer from sickness and disease. Despite all of the advances in medicine, there is still the constant threat that cancer, diabetes, miscarriages, and infertility will bring an end to life... The Bible speaks of God's power to form living creatures out of dust and bone (Genesis 2:7, 21), of Jesus' power to heal broken bodies with mud and spit (John 9:6-7), and of the Holy Spirit's power to restore life to lifeless bodies (Romans 8:9-11). The Bible proclaims the eternal health of the Divine Physician to a world full of sickness...

Evil. Contemporary culture denies the existence of God and the authority of Scripture. Nevertheless, people today readily agree that evil exists in the world. Terrorism, racially motivated violence, and widespread genocide provide proof of the reality of evil. It is not hard to find someone willing to admit the presence of evil. It is hard, however, to find someone with an adequate response to the problem of evil... Far better than anything else in contemporary society, Scripture offers a truly honest assessment of evil and depicts a comprehensive response. Unlike many other religious texts, the Bible actually takes evil seriously. It depicts the profound depravity of a fallen creation and tells how God will not rest until evil is adequately vanquished. God does not respond to evil with legislation, education, or medication; God responds to evil by giving His own life on the cross...

Death. As with all the previous issues, contemporary culture has no adequate response to death. Death has plagued all people, in all places, at all times... It is a perennial problem for which contemporary culture has no permanent solution. Contemporary culture simply does not know what to do with death. [examples]... Scripture has much to say to contemporary culture on the topic of death. The Bible does not deny death. Rather than pretending it is not an issue, God's Word is a head-on confrontation with death... The Bible reveals how God put death to death through the cross and the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus interrupts funerals by raising the dead back to new life. Through faith in Him, God promises to interrupt your death when He raises you to new life: "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). (125-128)

Excursus: Example of cautionary fairy tales

