

Preaching Christ in a Post-Modern World

Notes on Lecture 8

Applying Christ: Getting Down to Earth Part One

By Tim Keller

Faith in the saving work of Christ is the only tool to dismantle sin in our lives.
We are sanctified by faith, not just justified by faith.

3 macro-strategies for applying a text

- 1) Critique religion as well as irreligion
- 2) Aim at heart motives as well as the outward behaviour
- 3) Look at the text through three application perspectives

- 1) Critique religion as well as irreligion

Say that the gospel is neither morality nor immorality. The gospel is the third way.

Religion says, "if I work hard on biblical principles God will bless me."

The gospel says, "God will bless me through trusting in his Son. This gives me power to work hard at biblical principles."

Functionally the churchman's heart tends to religion.

Reasons why this method is useful:

- a) Many professing Christians are not Christians
- b) We constantly need our practise aligned with our theology
- c) Some people who reject Christianity reject it because they believe it to be religion

If we preach: "immorality bad and Christianity good" people tend to think that Christianity is the opposite of immorality.

Moralism tends to stress truth over grace.

Immoralism tends to stress grace over truth.

Truth without grace is not truth. Grace without truth is not grace. Christ came full of grace and truth.

Religious people don't believe that the God of wrath has been propitiated. The religious man must keep on working to gain the blessing of God.

Immoral people don't believe that there is a God of wrath to be propitiated. Immoral people do not feel accountability towards God.

If we preach the gospel, we will offend the religious like Christ did: "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you." (Matthew 21:31)

In Galatians 2:14 Paul deals with Peter's racial pride. Paul does this by exhorting Peter to live by the implications of the gospel and not by quoting a rule. This is the best way of dealing with racism.

"The truth of the gospel is the principle article all Christian doctrine most necessary is it that we know this article well, teach it to others, and beat it into their heads continually." – Luther

Applying the gospel to discouragement:

- Moral approach: You're breaking the rules, repent
- Immoral approach: Enjoy yourself it'll be fine
- Gospel approach: If I'm downcast it's because something is more important to me than Christ

Applying the gospel to family life

- Moral approach: Obey the family values. In the moralistic mindset the family is important.
- Immoral approach: There's no need for family loyalty
- Gospel approach: If God is my ultimate Father than I am freed from being too dependent or hostile too my parents!

Applying the gospel to guilt:

- Moral approach: work harder to make yourself feel better
- Immoral approach: Loosen the standards so you don't feel guilty any more
- Gospel approach: If the real god of your life is to be a successful businessman and you don't become successful you will feel guilt without the hope of forgiveness. This is the god of the Pharisees- a god of wrath who wants to be satisfied by works that can never be propitiated. The real God has been propitiated in Christ.

TBC in Lecture 9