



CHAPTER 7: THE GOSPEL AND THE POSTMODERN CONTEXT

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HOW DO WE THEN PRESENT THE
GOSPEL IN A POSTMODERN CULTURE?

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EXCUSE ME SIR

**DO YOU HAVE A
MOMENT TO TALK
ABOUT OUR LORD AND
SAVIOR?**

POSTMODERN CRITIQUE OF MODERNISM

- Grenz talked about how evangelicalism shares close ties with modernity
- Things like the scientific method, empirical approach to reality, and commonsense realism.
- But...
 - Shift in thinking, what was once believed to be true has been thrown out the window.
 - There is a blatant rejection of the immediate past.

STANDING OUR GROUND: REJECTING THE REJECTION OF THE METANARRATIVE

- Postmodernism has tossed aside objective truth, at least as it has classically been understood
- This rejection of the correspondence theory not only leads to a skepticism that undercuts the concept of objective truth in general; it also undermines Christian claims that our doctrinal formulations state objective truth.
 - Postmodern skepticism, therefore, leaves us in a world characterized by a never-ending struggle among competing interpretations.



SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?



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- In contrast to postmodern thought, we believe that there is a unifying center to reality. More specifically, we acknowledge that this center has appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, who is the eternal Word present among us.
 - We firmly believe that the local narratives of the many human communities do fit together into a single grand narrative, the story of humankind. *There is a single metanarrative encompassing all peoples and all times.*

What is that metanarrative? Jesus Christ ☺

“We believe not only that the biblical narrative makes sense for us but is also good news for all. It provides the fulfillment of the longings and aspirations of all peoples. It embodies the truth—the truth of and for all humankind.”

COMMON GROUND: THE REJECTION OF THE ENLIGHTENED EPISTEMOLOGY

There are some valid critiques that the postmodern thinker has to modernity; we can't reject this.

- Modernity is built on the assumption that knowledge is certain, objective, and good. Postmodernism rejects this belief. Let's take a look at these.

KNOWLEDGE IS CERTAIN

- As Christians, we believe that the rational, scientific method is not the only form objective truth.
- Intellect can sometimes lead us away from truth.

As Blaise Pascal put it, “The heart has its reasons which reason cannot know.”

KNOWLEDGE IS OBJECTIVE

- Grenz says
- *“But in contrast to the modern ideal of the dispassionate observer, we affirm the postmodern discovery that no observer can stand outside the historical process. Nor can we gain universal, culturally neutral knowledge as unconditioned specialists. On the contrary, we are participants in our historical and cultural context, and all our intellectual endeavors are unavoidably conditioned by that participation.”*

KNOWLEDGE IS GOOD

- Well...this one is hard to refute at first, but you only need to think about the harm that technological advancements have done. What about the splitting of the atom? Ever heard of unit 731.
- Grenz talks about “We can only wonder what dire results may flow from investigations into the human genetic structure.”

CONTOURS OF A POSTMODERN GOSPEL

- Our job as the church of God is to be able to articulate the gospel in this postmodern generation just like with every generation that has come before and for those that will come after.
- I think of great men and women who have come and gone, those who are getting up in age and will soon be absent from the body and present with the Lord; it's our job to pick up the torch and follow the same commission.

POST-INDIVIDUALISTIC GOSPEL

- *“Members of the next generation are often unimpressed by our verbal presentations of the gospel. What they want to see is a people who live out the gospel in wholesome, authentic, and healing relationships”*

POST-RATIONALISTIC GOSPEL

- *“A postmodern articulation of the gospel is post-rationalistic. It no longer focuses on propositions as the central content of Christian faith. Instead, it takes seriously a dynamic understanding of the role of the intellectual dimension of human experience and our attempts to make sense of life.”*

POST-DUALISTIC GOSPEL

- *“Our anthropology must take seriously the biblical truth that our identity includes being in relationship to nature, being in relationship with others, being in relationship with God, and, as a consequence, being in true relationship with ourselves. All these emphases are evident in the ministry of our Lord, who spoke about and ministered to people as whole persons and as persons-in-relationship.”*

POST-NOETICENTRIC GOSPEL

- *“That is to say, our gospel must affirm that the goal of our existence encompasses more than just the accumulation of knowledge. We must declare that the purpose of correct doctrine is to serve the attainment of wisdom.” Is knowledge good?*
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- *“We must engage postmodernism in order to discern how best to articulate the Christian faith to the next generation. The gospel of Jesus Christ has gone forth in every era with power to convert human hearts. Today that gospel is the answer to the longings of the postmodern generation. Our task as Christ’s disciples is to embody and articulate the never-changing good news of available salvation in a manner that the emerging generation can understand. Only then can we become the vehicles of the Holy Spirit in bringing them to experience the same life-changing encounter with the triune God from whom our entire lives derive their meaning.”*



THANK YOU, QUESTIONS?