

WK 3: EVANGELISM  
ACE HOUR

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Tolerance & Fluency

# WHERE WE ARE

- Week 1: Setting the stage/ Evangelism Defeaters
  - Week 2: Re-Evangelization (Getting our own theology right)
  - **Week 3: Interacting with Culture/ Tolerance**
  - Week 4: Putting it into Practice/ Breaking through the casual
  - Week 5: Evangelism in different contexts/ Q&A
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# RECAP

- Week 1: Setting the stage/ Evangelism Defeaters
  - Why we evangelize
  - What stops us from evangelizing (Defeaters)
- Week 2: Re-Evangelization (Getting our own theology right)
  - Confronting our Fear of man with a better understanding of the Gospel of Adoption
  - Multiple dimensions of the Gospel:
    - Historical
    - Personal
    - Cosmic

# TOLERANCE

- What is Tolerance?
- **Classical** Tolerance
  - Other opinions have the right to exist
- **New** Tolerance
  - All opinions are equally valid or true

# CLASSICAL TOLERANCE

- Other opinions have the right to exist
  - Foundation of American culture
  - Historically existed in many civilizations
  - Christianity is inherently tolerant in this way
    - God has shown tolerance to other beliefs, religions
    - Jesus demonstrated tolerance (Caesar/God)
    - Cross exemplifies tolerance

***“I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it” -  
Voltaire***

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# CLASSICAL TOLERANCE

*How can we show this kind of tolerance to others with differing beliefs?*

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# CLASSICAL TOLERANCE

- Listen/ ask questions why they believe what they believe
    - Gain understanding/ insight into their point of view
    - Look for contrast/ similarity with our own beliefs
    - Dispel myths/ stereotypes of Christianity
  - Learn patience
  - Develop sympathy
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# NEW TOLERANCE

- The belief that **all opinions are equally true and valid**
- Logically flawed; may lead to contradictions
  - “We should grant others the dignity to believe what they want”
  - “We should force others to believe what we believe to be true”
- Self-contradictory: the belief that all opinions are equally true supercedes other beliefs that do not agree (ironically, it is **intolerant**)

## NEW TOLERANCE

*How should Christians respond to the claims of religious pluralism?*

# OUR RESPONSE: PERSUASIVE TOLERANCE

- Enter dialogue with sincere desire to learn other's beliefs and willing to share what we believe
- Check motives: are we manipulating others to agree with us?
- Allow the Holy Spirit to work through the discourse freeing yourself from responsibility to "convert"

*"We should be eager to learn from others, not fearful or condemning of them. Meaningful conversation is in short supply, and of all people, Christians should be having meaningful conversations about these matters with others. After all, Jesus claimed that he alone had the answers to the deepest questions of life. If we believe his teachings are true, we have every reason to talk deeply with others about the life, message, and teaching of Jesus." (Unbelievable Gospel, p.83)*

# OUR RESPONSE: DISTINCTIVES ABOUT THE GOSPEL

- ***What are Christianity's distinctive claims compared to other worldly religions?***
  - Christianity: God came down to us to save us (gift of grace)
  - Other religions: Man works his way up to God (earning wages)

# FLUENCY: SPEAKING GOSPEL IN CULTURE

- We are stuck in **Christian Ghettos**
  - Need to transpose the **cultural “key”** in different contexts
    - Prison story
  - Historically, USA was considered a Christian nation
  - Modern times: Christian words are not universally understood
    - Christ = teacher, mythological character, spiritual guru
    - Sin = bad deeds
    - Faith = wishful thinking
    - God = moldable deity
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# FLUENCY: PAUL'S MODEL

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## Acts 22 (Speaking to Jews)

- Credentials
- Shares stories/ testimony
- Engages with Jewish theology

## Acts 17:22-31 (Speaking to Greeks)

- Engages with Greek philosophy/ poetry
- Found 'touch points' with Greek culture (eg. "unknown god")

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that **you may know how to answer everyone.**” – Colossians 4:5-6

# FLUENCY: JESUS' MODEL

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- **Agricultural imagery with villagers (Luke 13)**
- **Legal imagery with lawyers (Luke 11:37-54)**
- **Spiritual birth with law-keeping Pharisees (John 3:1-8)**
- **Water imagery with those who are thirsty (John 4:1-34)**

“When we fail to address the reasons people have for not believing the gospel, we share an unbelievable gospel.” (*Unbelievable Gospel*, p.127)

# FLUENCY: SPEAKING GOSPEL IN CULTURE

- Do not assume others understand key gospel words/ language
  - Consider shifting Christian-exclusive activities with non-exclusive activities
    - Balance need for fellowship/spiritual growth vs. cosmic/ Kingdom-living
  - More than intellectual sophistication, this requires **love**:
    - Sacrifice of time/ tweaking crammed schedules
    - Putting away canned responses
    - Conversing with people
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# FIVE GOSPEL METAPHORS

- **Justification** (Legal metaphor): A righteous God relates to unrighteous people- by making us righteous
- **Redemption** (Slavery/ sacrifice): In Jesus, our incurable sinful status is uniquely cured- he absorbs our sin and dies our death
- **Adoption** (Family metaphor): In Jesus, we are adopted out of the satanic family and placed into God's family
- **New Creation** (life/death metaphor): In Jesus, the old life is exiled and a new life introduced- through His resurrection life
- **Union with Christ** (body-marriage metaphor): In Jesus, a life divided from God is united with Him to enjoy all his graces