

Session 5: Does it Work?

1. Bible Reflection

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 6:35

Reflect upon the following question:

In what ways does Jesus satisfy our thirst and hunger?

2. Session Outline Part 1

Our apologetics must go beyond merely helping people to see that Christianity is true, to helping them see that it is also relevant.

Alistair McGrath

Existential Apologetics

- Demonstrating that only in Jesus can our deepest existential longings as human beings truly be satisfied.

Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is".

Blaise Pascal

How do we demonstrate that Christianity is existentially satisfying?

- Show people that it tells a better story

I can only answer the question "What am I to do?" if I can answer the prior question of "What story or stories do I find myself a part?"

Alisdair MacIntyre

- Christianity has a deep narrative structure. It speaks of who we are and what life is all about not primarily in the form of a series of theological propositions, but in the form of a grand story – a grand story that connects God, Jesus Christ, human beings and the world around us.

3. Discussion Break

In what ways do you think Christianity offers the world a better story? What was it that most attracted you to Christian faith in the first place?

4. Session Outline Part 2

Telling a better story also challenges competing stories.

- In order to break a spell, you have to weave a better spell.

We are called to out-narrate the dominant stories that shape our culture, by exposing their weaknesses or showing how they are enfolded by our own or how they are eclipsed by a more luminous and compelling story.

Alistair McGrath

There are many stories shaping our culture today.

- The Christian story offers a fuller, richer account of reality.

John did not simply tell the pagan philosophers that they were completely wrong ... Rather, he showed them... that some of their intuitions about the universe ... were right.

Tim Keller

What are our existential longings?

- Identity – Who am I?
- Value – Do I matter?
- Agency – Can I make a difference?

The better story tells us that:

- Who am I? – It is not a case of who I am but *whose* I am.
- Do I matter? – We are not insignificant to our maker; we are infinitely valuable. We are all worth saving.
- Can I make a difference? – What we do in this life matters. Our words and actions echo not just in this life, but for all eternity.

The Gospel is the most powerful apologetic.

- Christ alone can answer our deepest longings and meet our deepest needs.
- When it comes to answering the question, 'Does Christianity work?' one of the most powerful things you can do is to tell your story.

5. Further Discussion

1. Can you think of instances where Jesus challenged the dominant cultural narratives of His time by telling the better story of God's Kingdom?
2. As you encounter people with little or no religious faith, what are some of the stories that you have noticed they are living their lives by, whether consciously or unconsciously?
3. Thinking about those stories, what could you both affirm and critique about them? How does Christianity tell a better story?

6. Take Time to Pray

Take a moment to pray with one another around some of the things you have shared today.

7. Where to From Here?

What is one thing you will take away from this session?

8. Notes
