

Chapter 13. Loving Your Neighbor and Apologetics

A life based on cost-benefit analysis "... believes in nothing, cares for nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing and only remains alive because there is nothing for which to die." Dorothy Sayers

Session overview

- Understand the link between loving your neighbor and Christian apologetics
- Consider hospitality as the key to honing your worldview
- Explore the link between the Christian worldview and leadership as well as finance
- Review two poems and selected quotes summarizing this material

Love as the compelling argument

- With any philosophical worldview, we need to understand its entailments
- Important to think through the logical coherence and empirical correspondence of a worldview
- The final piece is the implied lifestyle that results
- Is life really "red in tooth and claw" and merely meaningless "survival of the fittest" or is life deeply meaningful, full of hope, and worthy of expending unconditional love?
- Jesus addresses this issue clearly:

Matthew 22:35-40

³⁵And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

- A right relationship with God results in a loving relationship with other people
- Jesus gives a new commandment to his disciples:

John 13:34-35

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

- Followers of Jesus Christ are to be marked with a genuine love for each other
- Key hallmark of true followers of Jesus Christ is the love they have for each other as well as a passion to make disciples

I Corinthians 13 (Keystone of Christian Worldview)

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we

prophesy in part,¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- Agape, the word for love used in this passage is rather unique to Christianity
- “Agape has been expounded on by many Christian writers in a specifically Christian context. C. S. Lewis uses agape in *The Four Loves* to describe what he believes is the highest level of love known to humanity: a selfless love that is passionately committed to the well-being of others.”¹
- Contrast followers of Jesus Christ who are committed to loving God and loving others with the reality on the ground in this modern era
 - Paul Vallely writes in 2014, “The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in the United States estimates that 100,000 Christians now die every year, targeted because of their faith – that is 11 every hour
 - The Pew Research Center says that hostility to religion reached a new high in 2012, when Christians faced some form of discrimination in 139 countries, almost three-quarters of the world's nations
 - All this seems counter-intuitive here in the West where the history of Christianity has been one of cultural dominance and control ever since the Emperor Constantine converted and made the Roman Empire Christian in the 4th century AD
 - Yet the plain fact is that Christians are languishing in jail for blasphemy in Pakistan, and churches are burned and worshippers regularly slaughtered in Nigeria and Egypt, which has recently seen its worst anti-Christian violence in seven centuries.”²
 - The primary response for Christians is not retaliation, though often justice is sought
 - The mandated response is to love our enemy—an admittedly impossible task outside of a life transformed by redemption found in Jesus Christ

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Hospitality as the gateway to the world³

- Hospitality is the opposite of avoidance or at the extreme—cruelty
- Opening your home and sharing a meal with your neighbor is the essence of serving and loving them
- Your neighbor can be across the street or from across the globe
- Listening is a fine art: As our house guests have many questions and our home is a safe place to ask these questions, it is crucial to listen.

¹Wikipedia.

²See <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/christians-the-worlds-most-persecuted-people-9630774.html>.

³For an insightful book that addresses this topic, see Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*, 2018.

- Behind every question is the questioner and behind every questioner is not only a worldview but experiences that include pain and suffering
- Some of our guests have personally observed the very present evil of oppression and injustice common in their countries
- Where do sojourners turn for justice? How do they restore life's meaning and hope?

Luke 10:29-37

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” ³⁷He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

- It is indisputable that the teaching of Jesus Christ has transformed life on this earth and it is His teaching that urges us towards hospitality
- Jürgen Habermas notes that western culture has never been the same. He states:
“Universalistic egalitarianism, from which sprang the ideals of freedom and a collective life in solidarity, the autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of continual critical appropriation and reinterpretation. To this day, there is no alternative to it. And in light of the current challenges of a postnational constellation, we continue to draw on the substance of this heritage. Everything else is just idle postmodern talk.”⁴

The servant leader⁵

- “Business and beliefs. Jesus and your job. Personal and professional. Servant and leader. Even seeing those words paired together makes many people uneasy. Our sophisticated culture encourages us to draw lines and keep our spiritual lives separate from our secular lives. Faith is for Sundays or family gatherings only. Right?” (p. 8)
- Blanchard’s views on leadership changed after his eyes were opened “... to the power of the Word ... ” referencing the Bible. He concludes, “I realized that Christians have more in *Jesus* than just a great spiritual leader; we have a *practical and effective leadership model* for all organizations, for all people, for all situations.” (italics in original, p. 9)
- Blanchard has identified Jesus as a practical and effective leader
- How can a simple carpenter from Nazareth have the key insights to so many different fields of study? Any conclusion other than Jesus is God’s son, that He rose bodily from the grave, and

⁴Jürgen Habermas, *Time of Transitions*, Polity Press, 2006, pp. 150-151, a translation of an interview from 1999. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy website, Jürgen Habermas currently ranks as one of the most influential philosophers in the world. See <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/>. It is important to note that Habermas is not a Christian.

⁵See Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *The Servant Leader Transforming Your Heart, Head, Hands & Habits*, 2003.

the Bible contains his authentic teachings is logically difficult given the depths of biblical insights. Leadership and finance are just two of many.

Bible-based financial management⁶

- One of the interesting insights gained from an in-depth study of the Bible focusing on finance is the clear change of numeraire
- One interpretation is that there are at least two types of numeraires, currency (transitory) and metaphysical (enduring)
- We all know the transitory nature of money
- “Money talks! I heard it once. It said, ‘goodbye.’”
- “Do you know why they call it cold cash? Because you do not get to hold it long enough for it to get warm!”
- Enduring wealth is different as it never dissolves

Proverbs 15:16-17

¹⁶Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it. ¹⁷Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fatted ox and hatred with it.

Proverbs 8:10-11, 18

¹⁰Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, ¹¹for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. ... ¹⁸With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.

Proverbs 13:11

Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.

- Clearly, many of the challenges facing modern business practice and finance in particular would solve themselves if the primary motivation was love for others
- If we genuinely love our co-workers, bosses, suppliers, clients, and other stakeholders, then so many challenges would vanish
- The economic cost of monitoring is staggering
- Businesses that have sought to adopt various portions of the Christian worldview typically see the cost of monitoring decline
- If your staff seeks to honor God and love others, it fosters a much more enjoyable work environment and customers are attracted
- It is important to note that from a Christian worldview no one is perfect except Jesus Christ
- The simple act of sharing a meal together is loving your neighbor

Closing quotes

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?” Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956*

⁶For more insights on personal finance, see <http://www.robertebrooks.org/project/personal-finance/>.

“Christianity preaches the infinite worth of that which is seemingly worthless and the infinite worthlessness of that which is seemingly so valued.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, quoted in Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, p. 85.

“Men became scientific because they expected law in nature, and they expected law in nature because they believed in a lawgiver.” Alfred North Whitehead

“The battle for the mind cannot be waged by mobilizing in the streets or on Capitol Hill, nor by denouncing more furiously the secular humanists. If we are to help preserve even the possibility of Christian thinking for our children and grandchildren, we must begin to nurture first-order Christian scholarship.” Nathan Hatch

“Christian scholars view their work as larger than themselves, larger than itself. They look not only at what they’re studying but also along it, so as to see its Christ-centered implications. This tethering of the temporal to the eternal provides meaning and significance and beauty to what they do and generates the highest motivation for excellence. Their study becomes virtually an act of worship. They work not merely to understand the created order, as worthwhile as that goal is within itself; they also study the created order to deepen their understanding and appreciation of, and ultimately their relationship with, the One who fashioned it and who occupies its center, its Creative Orderer, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Duane Liftin

“The great delusion of modernity is that the laws of nature explain the universe for us. The laws of nature describe the universe, they describe the regularities. But they explain nothing.” Ludwig Wittgenstein

“I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it’s been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with incredible credulity that it has.” Malcolm Muggeridge, *The End of Christendom* quoted in William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design The Bridge Between Science and Theology*.

“Scholarship and science are not neutral, but are deeply involved in the struggle between Christian theism, perennial naturalism and creative anti-realism. And the unhappy fact is that at present (and in our part of the world) it is the latter two that are in the ascendancy. Christian theism has perhaps made some small steps back in recent years; but it is surely the minority opinion among our colleagues in Western universities.” Alvin Plantinga

Invictus (Latin: Unconquered)

William Ernest Henley, 1875

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.
 In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
 Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.
 Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the Horror of the shade,
 And yet the menace of the years
 Finds and shall find me unafraid.
 It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll,
 I am the master of my fate,
 I am the captain of my soul.

Conquered

Dorothy Day (1930s?)

Out of the light that dazzles me,
 Bright as the sun from pole to pole,
 I thank the God I know to be,
 For Christ – the Conqueror of my soul.
 Since His the sway of circumstance,
 I would not wince nor cry aloud.
 Under the rule which men call chance,
 My head, with joy, is humbly bowed.
 Beyond this place of sin and tears,
 That Life with Him and His the Aid,
 That, spite the menace of the years,
 Keeps, and will keep me unafraid.
 I have no fear though straight the gate:
 He cleared from punishment the scroll.
 Christ is the Master of my fate!
 Christ is the Captain of my soul.

Napoleon's question⁷

"When conversing, as was his habit, about the great men of the ancient world, and comparing himself to them, he turned, it is said, to Count Montholon with the enquiry, 'Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?' The question was declined, and Napoleon proceeded, Well then, I will tell you. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I myself have founded great empires; but upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions will die for Him. ... I think I understand something of human nature; and I tell you, all these were men, and I am a man: none else is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than a man. ... I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they have died for me, ... but to do this it was necessary that I should be visibly present with the electric influence of my looks, my words, my voice. When I saw men and spoke to them, I lighted up the flame of self devotion in their hearts. ... Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man to the unseen, that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years, Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy; he asks for that which a philosopher may often seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother. He asks for the human heart; he will have it entirely to himself. He demands it unconditionally, and furthermore his demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All who sincerely believe in him experience that remarkable supernatural love toward Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable; it is altogether beyond the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time can neither exhaust its strength nor put a limit to its range. This is it, which strikes me most; I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the divinity of Jesus Christ."

More Information: See <http://www.robertebrooks.org/project/christian-apologetics-and-finance/>.

⁷Henry Parry Liddon, Liddon's Bampton Lectures 1866 (London: Rivingtons, 1869).