

Week 11: The Only Way and Our Calling to Witness

Objective: Conclude the apologetics series by affirming the exclusive claims of Christ and commissioning believers to be faithful, reasonable, and gracious witnesses in the world.

A. Introduction – 5 minutes

- Briefly recap the course: defending truth, examining evidence, answering objections.
- Ask: If Christianity is true, what difference should it make in how we live?
- Illustration: Imagine a building on fire. There is only one staircase that leads out safely.
 - Is it arrogant to say, “This is the only way out”?
 - Or is it loving?
 - Exclusivity is not cruelty.
 - It’s compassion when lives are at stake.
 - If Jesus is the only way, telling people is mercy.
- Emphasize: If Jesus is truly the only way, then being His witness is not optional – it is essential.

Transition: So the real question is this: Is Jesus actually the only way – or is that something Christians invented?

B. The Exclusive Claims of Christ – 15 minutes

Claims:

- **John 14:6** Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
 - **John 10:9** I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.
 - **Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.
 - **John 3:18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.
 - **1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,
 - Jesus did not claim to be *a* way, but *the* way.
 - Christianity is exclusive in truth, but inclusive in invitation.
 - Jesus alone
 - Lived a sinless life (**Hebrews 4:15**)
 - Died for our sins (**1 Peter 2:24**)
 - Rose again (**Romans 1:4**)
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- **Philippians 2:9-11** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 - Jesus’ uniqueness isn’t just functional (He saves)
 - It’s ontological (He is Lord)
 - The exclusivity of Christ Is rooted in the exclusivity of God.
 - **Isaiah 45:5** I am the LORD, and there is no other.
 - **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - There is:
 - One Creator
 - One moral lawgiver
 - One judge
 - Therefore, one Savior
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Briefly address objections:

- Objection: “All religions lead to God.”
 - Response: Religions contradict each other – they can’t all be true.
 - Christianity: Salvation by grace.
 - Islam: Salvation by submission and works. (Islam is the Arabic word for submission)
 - Hinduism: Escape through karma/reincarnation.
 - Buddhism: No personal God to reconcile with.

| Question | Christianity | Islam | Hinduism | Buddhism |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Who is God? | Personal, triune | Personal, one | Often impersonal | No creator God |
| What’s the problem? | Sin | Disobedience | Ignorance / Karma | Desire / Suffering |
| How are we saved? | Grace through faith | Submission + Deeds | Liberation from rebirth | Eightfold Path |
| Final Goal | Eternal life with God | Paradise | Moksha | Nirvana |

- These are not different roads up the same mountain – they are different mountains entirely.
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- Objection: “That’s narrow-minded.”
 - **Matthew 7:13-14** Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
 - Response: Truth by nature is exclusive (e.g., 2+2=4 excludes other answers)

- Objection: “What about people who’ve never heard?”
 - This is where we must move from speculation to Scripture.
 - **Romans 2:6-16** God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God judges people’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

 - Response: God is just and merciful, but that doesn’t change Jesus’ role as the only Savior
 - Scripture never presents ignorance as a path to salvation – it presents Christ as the Savior of all who call upon Him (**Romans 10:9-13**).

C.S. Lewis – The Trilemma

- Jesus claimed things no mere moral teacher would claim. He is either:
 - Liar
 - Lunatic
 - Or Lord
- Tie this to exclusivity:
 - If He is Lord, neutrality isn’t an option.
 - Exclusivity does not equal arrogance.
- The real reason people resist exclusivity is not logic – it’s autonomy.
 - People don’t want:
 - One truth
 - One authority
 - One Savior
 - “But what about my kind, moral, non-Christian friend?”
 - The hardest part of exclusivity isn’t philosophical. It’s personal.
 - Remember,
 - God is perfectly just.
 - God is perfectly merciful.

- We trust His character where we lack answers.

Transition: If Jesus truly is Lord – not a teacher among many, but the Lord – then that truth demands something from us. Truth always carries responsibility.

C. From Belief to Responsibility – 10 minutes

- Witnesses
 - **Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my *witnesses* in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
 - What does it mean to be a witness?
 - Tells what they have seen, heard, and experienced.
 - **Matthew 5:14–16** You are the light of the world.
 - Why? (v.16) “that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”
 - **Romans 10:14** How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?
 - **2 Timothy 4:2** Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season.
 - Key idea is testimony
 - Focus: Personal story + truth about Jesus.
- Ambassadors
 - **2 Corinthians 5:20** We are therefore Christ’s *ambassadors*, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.
 - What is an ambassador?
 - Represents the authority and interests of another.
 - Key idea is representation
 - Focus: Authority + representation + mission.
- A few more points:
 - Every Christian is called to these roles.
 - How does an ambassador differ from a witness?
 - A witness tells what they know.
 - An ambassador represents who they serve.
 - The “Courtroom” Clarification
 - A witness:
 - Doesn’t create truth.
 - Doesn’t defend their own opinions.
 - Simply testifies to what they know.
 - This relieves pressure for us:
 - We aren’t required to “win.”

- We are called to be faithful.
- As witnesses, we testify to what Christ has done.
- As ambassadors, we represent Christ's kingdom in character, conduct, and message.
- We are not defense attorneys for God. He does not need protecting.
- We are messengers of reconciliation.
- You are a witness because you know Christ. Witnessing flows from relationship.
- You are an ambassador because you belong to Christ. Ambassadorship flows from citizenship and commission.

Transition: So this isn't just about what we say, it's about who we represent. So what kind of people should messengers of Christ be?

D. Marks of a Faithful Witness – 10 minutes

1. Conviction – Rooted in Scripture and truth
 - a. **2 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
2. Clarity – Able to explain faith reasonably
 - a. **1 Peter 3:15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.
3. Character – A consistent and credible life
 - a. **Philippians 2:14-15** Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky.
4. Compassion – Gentle and respectful speech
 - a. **Colossians 4:6** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.
5. Courage – Prayerful boldness that depends on God
 - a. **Ephesians 6:19** Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,

And courage matters because not everyone will receive this message.

- You will be rejected!
 - **John 15:18-20** “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.”

- Being rejected does not mean you failed.
- It may mean you were faithful.

Transition: So how do we actually do this? What does faithful witness look like in real life conversations?

E. Sharing the Gospel Simply – 10 minutes

- Being ready when the door opens
 - Elevator pitch (your story in 30 seconds)
 - A simple Gospel outline:
 - The Problem – Sin separates us from God.
 - The Solution – Jesus alone saves through His death and resurrection.
 - The Response – Repent, believe, and obey
 - Encourage a 3-part testimony (before, how, now):
 - My life before Christ
 - How I came to faith
 - What Christ means to me now
 - Keep it simple, clear, and Christ-centered.
 - Speak the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:15**)
 - Avoid arrogance
 - Are we saved by superiority? No!
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - Be confident in Christ and humble in approach
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- The Candle Illustration
 - If this room were completely dark, and I lit one candle...
 - Darkness doesn't overpower light.
 - Light pushes back darkness.
 - You don't have to defeat the darkness.
 - Just shine faithfully.

And that is exactly how the gospel has always spread.

- Two thousand years ago, eleven ordinary men left an upper room convinced Jesus was Lord. They had no political power, no armies, no wealth. But they had conviction. And the world has never been the same.
- You stand in that same line.

F. Final Charge and Encouragement – 5 minutes

- This class is not the end – it is a launching point.
- You are equipped to defend the faith and represent Christ well.
- God uses faithful and *available* people – not perfect ones.

G. Class Discussion (If Time Permits)

1. How has your confidence in Christ grown through this series?
2. Who is someone you can begin praying for and engaging with intentionally?
3. How does believing Jesus is the only way shape how we live and speak?