

# Christianity and society: answering our culture's tough questions about the Christian faith

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Preacher: Brian Douglas

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, could I welcome you all this evening to this Be Thinking Talk as part of our events week here at Calvary Church. So I welcome you all this evening. Just on the administrative side, fire exit. If you want to get out of the building quickly, that's the door which takes you straight out on Divide Up Road.

And a toilet is just through that green door there. Important things for us to know. The Be Thinking Talks are named after the website. There's a [www.bethinking.org](http://www.bethinking.org) website which contains some very fine material defending the Christian faith and talking about the Christian faith.

And we ask permission to use that name for these talks. This is one of a series of talks answering questions and addressing issues that would be raised in a student city like ours.

The format of the evening is that we're going to have a talk and then there will be a question time to follow. We won't actually answer all the questions this evening, surprisingly.

But we have another opportunity if you are up for it tomorrow evening, 6.30 onwards. We're going to have a little panel up here to answer questions from the floor.

[ 1 : 25 ] So you're very welcome to come to that. Our normal church meeting tomorrow is also looking at a particular question, the question of suffering. And I dare say most of you have one of these, but this has got the details of our various church meetings.

And you're very welcome to come to them. Well, I think that's all the introduction I need to give, apart from to welcome our speaker, who's here, Brian Douglas.

He's a DPhil candidate at the University of Sussex. His study is something to do with history, something to do with theology, something to do with something that I can't read in about the 1700s. Is that right? 1700s? Yeah. OK. So as to history, he's going to be very contemporary. As to the 1700s, he's going to be right up to date.

And oh, yeah, it was Scottish. That's the word I've written down. He's not in Scotland. He's here. So can we give him a little welcome and a hand over to Brian? Well, thanks, Phil, and thanks to Calvary for hosting these and for opening their doors to us and giving us snacks and goodies to eat.

[ 2 : 43 ] And thanks to you all for coming. I'm American, obviously. I'm from Miami, the Miami area originally. And I really like Brighton. We've only lived in Brighton just under a year.

But I really like Brighton. I tell people that if there's a city in the UK that's like where I'm from, it must be Brighton. Because it's right there on the seaside. It's all the way to the south. And it's very cosmopolitan, which I really like, too.

And that's why I'm really happy to see people from all different countries here tonight. That's something I like the most about Brighton. Our talk tonight is called Christianity in Society.

Answering our culture's tough questions about the Christian faith. It's kind of a general title. But I wanted something that would fit with the theme of the week. Which, as Phil said, we're having an outreach week, a special events week here at the church.

And the theme of the week is big questions and big answers. And the reason that that thing was chosen is because Christianity has come under attack a lot.

[ 3 : 49 ] Not just recently. We could say it's come under attack recently. Do you know what? It's always been under attack. And one of the things people have always said for centuries and centuries is that the Christian faith is unreasonable.

That there are questions that the Christian faith can't answer. That this reason and that reason, for all these reasons, we don't need to believe that it's not worth it.

But the theme of big questions and big answers was chosen because Christianity can answer the questions that are asked of it. As a matter of fact, it answers the questions of life.

That's the common questions that people have asked for centuries. Better, I think, than anything else. It answers the questions. And we can't answer all the questions tonight.

I'm not going to pretend to try to do that. Even the things we talk about tonight, we'll talk about, you know, we'll only be able to spend a few minutes on each thing. And then afterward, we'll have an opportunity for questions.

[ 4 : 49 ] If you have more questions, or if you think of a different question between now and then, as Phil said, tomorrow evening, 6.30, here in the same place, we'll have a time for questions and answers.

But I hope that tonight you get a glimpse, just a sample of the truth that Christianity can answer the questions, even some of the difficult ones that are presented to it in our day and age.

So tonight we're going to look at four questions. Four different misconceptions, if I can use that term, about Christianity. The first one, misconception number one, is faith versus reason.

In our society, in certain books that are published lately, again, this is not a new question, but in our society, it's often supposed that to believe something by faith is to go against reason.

This is a common definition of faith. Faith is believing something without evidence. So you have absolutely no evidence to believe what you believe, but you believe it anyway.

[ 6 : 05 ] That's faith. Or even, you believe something despite evidence to the contrary. So there's all the evidence that says that this is true, this is true, but you believe the opposite, against the evidence.

And that is faith. I'm not going to pick on any one particular thing here. This is a question that's asked in a lot of ways, phrased differently, but I'll just point out that Richard Dawkins, in his book, *The God Delusion*, defines faith this way.

He says, to believe in God, he says faith in God, any kind of faith in God is believing something without evidence. This definition is often used to pit science against faith, to put them in opposition to each other, to set it up so that science teaches us fact, and faith, religion, Christianity teaches us myth.

It teaches us things that we know aren't true, but we believe them anyway. Things that we have absolutely no evidence for, and yet we believe them anyway, despite the fact that science or reason leads us in another direction.

The biggest problem with a definition like this, that it is believing something without evidence, is that it's what's called, oftentimes, in sort of reasoning circles, you'd say this is stacking the deck.

[ 7 : 30 ] And that means that I'm setting up a definition that's very easy to attack. You see, what this definition says is, faith is believing something without evidence. Do you have faith, Christian person?

Do you have faith in God? Yes. Well, see, if you agree to that definition, then you set it up equal, you don't have any evidence for it then. If faith is believing something without evidence, and you have faith, then you must be believing something without evidence.

And it's sort of used to stack the deck, and sort of angle the discussion before it ever begins, in such a way that anyone who believes in anything, really, who has faith, is sort of automatically bound to lose in an argument, frankly.

Sometimes it's done unintentionally. I think sometimes it's done intentionally. I think sometimes people know that they're stacking the deck in an argument. What does Christianity have to say about this?

Faith versus reason. Is it true that we believe things for which we have absolutely no evidence? The Christian answer is this.

[ 8 : 44 ] Not all faith is blind faith. Not all faith is blind faith. Some faith is blind faith. There are people out there who believe things that they don't understand, or that they shouldn't believe, or that there's no evidence for.

I mean, we can all think of examples of that. I'm not going to point out any one particular thing. But I mean, we've all known people who they tell you what they really honestly think about something, and you're really taken aback by it.

Even for just a moment, you have absolutely no idea what to say in response to them. You think, are you joking? I mean, you're looking for that little hint of a smile to creep across their face, and

then there's no smile.

And you realize that they're really telling you what they believe. And you think, my goodness, that's really odd. But the Christian answer is that not all faith is blind faith.

A better definition of faith. This is not the only definition. This is maybe not even, we could decide amongst ourselves what is the best definition. But this is a better definition of faith.

[ 9 : 54 ] Faith is voluntary assent to an understood proposition. That is, it's voluntary, first of all.

That is, it's not like I say I believe something because someone puts a gun to my head and says, now say it.

And then I say it. If I say it under that circumstance, I really don't have faith in that. I have faith in the fact that if I don't, he's going to shoot me. That's what I have faith in at the moment. But it's voluntary, but it's also understood.

Do you see that? So I'm assenting to something. A proposition meaning a statement of fact is all that means. I'm assenting to a proposition, but I'm doing it voluntarily and I'm doing it with understanding.

I'm doing it in such a way that does not just disengage my mind, but rather I say I'm thinking through it, I'm reasoning through it, and what do the facts say? What is a reasonable conclusion?

Christians would say, no, I am not believing something for which I have no evidence. I'm not believing something for which even, I'm believing something contra the evidence.

[ 10 : 59 ] Rather instead, I would say I'm believing something that I understand. Something that I have thought about. It's not a disengaged action. It's something that uses the mind.

There are big things and there are little things that we have faith about, aren't there? This definition of faith is very, very broad. Maybe that's one of its weaknesses. I could say, I have a proposition, that plaque is hanging on the wall there.

And I can believe that, I can voluntarily assent to that in an understanding way, but that's a little thing in the sense that it doesn't really affect my life all that much.

The fact that I acknowledge that, that I affirm that, that I have faith in that, that I believe in that plaque hanging on the wall. I believe it exists. I believe it says the things it says.

I don't believe it's the hallucination. But that's a little thing. It doesn't really affect my life. But there are certain propositions. There are certain statements of fact that if you assent to them, they must change your life.

[ 12 : 08 ] And one of them is the idea that there is a God. If you believe, thinking through it, again, not detached because you're told to, because you're forced to, but engaging with the mind, looking at the evidence, and saying, I believe that there is a God.

And not even that's enough, is it? Just to say, there is a God. But that there's a God who pays attention to this world. There's a God who cares about what I do.

Be it good or bad or right or wrong, the things that I do. That there's a God who's not just there, but He's paying attention. There's a God who is powerful. There's a God who wants me to do what is right.

These kinds of things, if we begin to think through these things and we begin to understand them, those kind of things cannot help but change the way you live. So there are little things like this or like that or anything, any little thing that just comes and goes in your mind that you believe, that you assent to.

You say, yes, it's true. Yes, it's true. Yes, it's true that this computer is hooked up to that projector because I'm seeing the same thing on both screens. But that doesn't change a lot.

[ 13 : 27 ] But there are certain things that do change a lot. Further, let's take it a step further. No one can escape this accusation about believing certain things that they have seen or haven't seen or have evidence for or don't have evidence for.

I don't know why this is so often aimed at Christians. We've sort of done the one side now. We've said, no, Christians aren't just believing things that they have no evidence for. But the same is true in reverse and anyone else too.

All of us believe things that we don't have hard fact data evidence for sitting in my hand. I've got the numbers. I look at the chart. Well, there's no arguing with that.

Okay, it's true that that fact is because I've got the hard data right there. The thinkers, you know, sometimes you think they're kind of out of their mind or something. They've debated this for centuries sometimes.

People say, you know, are the things that we see really there? I mean, are other people really? I mean, what if it's all just a hallucination? What if I think I'm standing up here talking to a room full of people but they're really just empty chairs?

[14:42] I mean, it sounds absurd and there's a sense in which it really is absurd because, you know, I won't get into this history of philosophy stuff now but there's a sense in which it is absurd.

But if you really think about it, how do you know? Everything that you think you know. You find that some of the links in our sort of mental chain sometimes are an awful lot weaker than we think they are.

So, in that sense, there's not really anything out of the ordinary about Christianity. No, it does not disengage the mind. It uses the mind. And then it's kind of funny that accusations are coming from a certain quarter where the same kind of thing is going on.

Again, back to the discussion of Christianity versus science. Science uses assumptions. Every single scientific experiment always assumes certain things.

When people come back to you with scientific data, they're assuming certain things. Let me use one example. Some of you might remember or have heard about the population disaster that was about to happen in the 1970s.

[15:58] Remember that? Where it was supposed to be that because the population of the world was growing and there's only so much food to go around, they're going to have impending starvation over huge sections of the world and within 20 years.

That was what was said by scientists in the 1970s. That's really interesting because it didn't happen. That's what's the most interesting thing about it. It didn't happen. Why didn't it happen? Because some of their assumptions were untrue. They assumed, first of all, that population was going to grow at a steady rate.

That it was going to grow at the same speed. If this is the gap between food supply and population and if the population grows at a steady rate, this is how many years we're going to have before food was runs out.

And that's the first assumption. Now, population in fact, did grow at something close to what the predicted rates were. It might have even actually been a little bit faster.

[17:01] The population might have even grown a little bit more between 1970 and 2000 than people anticipated. But the assumption that they got wrong was they assumed a fixed, a constant food supply.

supply. And the reality is as technology develops, as ability to destroy, you know, as ability to protect against things that destroy crops like insects and things like that, as those things improve, food supply increases.

So as a matter of fact, we have more of a food surplus now than we did in 1970, 1970, despite the fact that the world population has increased astronomically.

You see that especially in countries like China and India. Standard of living in China and India, if population growth acceleration was going to be such a problem, China and India would be where you'd see it the most because those countries have just ballooned in the last 20 to 50 years.

Just absolutely skyrocketing. But standard of living in both of those countries has shot up from what it was in 1950 or 1970. And so you see certain assumptions don't come true and the thing comes to pieces.

[18:18] But that's just to show you that science uses assumptions. We have somebody here I was talking to beforehand who is studying architecture. Maria is there studying architecture. And to construct a building requires assumptions.

You're assuming, for example, that your surveyors got it right and that the land pitch, for example, is what it's supposed to be. You can design a building and if it's off too much, the building will be unstable.

Ask the people in Pisa about that. There's some assumptions that were made in the building of a certain tower that maybe the assumptions were false.

So anyway, science and every other discipline in the whole world, I mean really, this is absolutely true, uses assumptions. assumptions. And so assuming something and reasoning from it is not necessarily, it's not intrinsically bad.

That's the way human beings think. We can't all know everything about everything firsthand. I mean certain things it's not even possible to. Who was the most famous, who's the most powerful resident

of Brighton ever?

[ 19 : 33 ] in his history? Who do you think? The Prince region? I mean that would be, at least that's a good guess. I mean you know maybe it's, maybe it's Lawrence Olivia, I don't know.

But, you know, he's so wealthy, I don't know what. The Prince region, I mean you know, he talks, a kingdom moves, right? And he lives here in Brighton. Where did he?

How do you know? Were you there? You didn't see it firsthand, did you? You're getting that from something else. So you're assuming that the facts of the case, as they've been told to you, are real, that they're true.

So everything uses assumptions. We always use assumptions. The question is, which assumptions do you use? That's what's more important than saying faith versus reason.

You see, reason builds on this great solid foundation over here. It doesn't assume anything. And green of faith builds on this horribly weak foundation over here that assumes everything.

[ 20 : 37 ] And there's such a drastic difference between the two. But there's not really that much of a difference between them. The question is, which assumptions do you use? Everyone believes things that are both seen and unseen.

And the question is, which assumptions do you use? I'm going to leave that one there. And if you want to bring back up during our question and answer session, that's under the heading of faith versus reason, misconception number one.

If you want to talk about the foundations, the assumptions, which ones are solid, which ones are not, I'll do my best to answer. But for now, we'll move on to misconception number two.

And that is that Christianity leads to division, intolerance, and violence. What about the Crusades, slavery, wars, injustice, etc.?

All done in the name of Christianity. Over the years, so much stuff has been done. Now, sometimes people use this accusation to blame all religions.

[ 21 : 45 ] They say, look at Islam, or look at Christianity, or look at anything. And you look at religion, and religion just seems to, every time you have religious people, you have division, you have intolerance, you have violence, you have wars, you have slavery, you have injustice.

So, religion must breed all those things. It's just a shame that people fall for that stuff, really. Because if they would open their eyes, they would see these things just lead to intolerance and all kinds of horrible things.

So, it's leveled against all religions, really, from time to time. But we'll look just specifically at Christianity and answer the questions related to that. What about the Crusades going through and on holy wars and slaughtering people?

Is that the Christian way? It's not a real good track record, is it? What's the Christian response to this? Christian response is that those things are always wrong and it cannot be justified.

Injustice has no place in Christianity. slavery, violence, division, all these horrible things that are done, these things that are, if you look at the, you know, those things are just as much against the law of God as they are against anything else.

[ 23 : 07 ] And here's the truth. This is not just a problem with Christianity. It's not just a problem with religion. It's a universal problem. all ideas can be and are frequently misused for evil.

It's a problem that is not intrinsic to religion generally or Christianity specifically. It's a problem that is intrinsic to humanity because all people everywhere tend toward these kinds of things.

Example number one, the 20th century's leading killer, which, you know, you're talking about Christianity as sort of a cultural ideology. Which cultural ideology in the 20th century was the leading killer?

Does anyone know? No? Even more than Hitler? Well, I mean, just ideology, speaking ideologically. Marxism, or some would say atheism, because Marxism is explicitly atheist, very radically so.

Atheism, you know, if, you know, again, not to knock on one particular nail too hard, but Dawkins accuses Christianity of this. He says that religions tend to violence and all kinds of horrible things.

[ 24 : 27 ] He says atheism is the road. That's the way. We avoid all this stuff if we just follow the road of atheism. But then you look at 20th century, and you look at atheism's track record, and you see that that doesn't escape either.

It doesn't escape the accusation. The problem remains. You take away Christianity. You take away religion in general. You take away everything. And the problem remains.

Marxism is supposed to empower the common man, protect his life more than anyone else's, spread that to all common people.

Don't come down with this aristocracy stuff. This wealthy 1% is the phrase that's used in America all the time. The wealthy 1% own 80% of the industries in America or something like that.

And if that's true, that's not very good. But down with this 1% and up with the rest of us is the idea. But then you look at the track record of Marxist leaders in the 20th century.

[ 25 : 31 ] And Stalin was mentioned, Lenin, so many, so, so many. Caused. The extermination of so many of the people that they were supposedly helping by these revolutions and things like that.

So, not to take any particular side on that issue except to say anything can be warped and twisted and turned around and used to justify slavery, violence, intolerance, injustice, and all these things. things. Example number two. And that is our society's chief virtue. It's not my terminology.

Others have said there's only one virtue left in Western society. Heroism and altruism and all these things that were historic virtues in Western society.

Some people say those things are dead. I mean, whether you agree with that or not, it's all right, but they say there's only one thing, one virtue that really defines Western culture right now.

[ 26 : 45 ] Do you know what it is? It's tolerance, isn't it? The only thing that we're not tolerant of is intolerance. And that's the funny thing about it.

If you do anything that can get you construed as intolerant, whether you're being intolerant or not, if someone even perceives you as being intolerant, all the tolerant people will suddenly stand up in opposition and condemn you.

They will. I mean, it happens. I mean, it's really, I don't need to, I can't at the moment off the top of my head cite any particular examples of this, but just watch the news. And you'll see the most angry people on the news, that person thinks so highly of himself and his opinion, and I can't believe that he would get up and try to share that opinion with the world, they say on the national news broadcast beamed into thousands of homes.

Right? Here they are sharing their opinion, telling people everything that they believe, trying to convince others that this person is wrong. And it's the funny thing.

Tolerance, is it a good thing? Tolerance, is tolerance a good thing? Is it good to tolerate people? You have the right to believe what you believe.

[ 28 : 09 ] I'm right or wrong. I'm not going to force you, I'm not going to shoot you if you don't believe what I believe. Is that a good thing? I think it's important.

I don't think you can exist as a society without some level of tolerance. Without being able to say, we would need to define tolerance. He's head shaking. That's fine.

We can talk about that more later. To exist as a society, if you have 100% intolerance, you have nothing but strife. You have nothing but feuding. So there needs to be some measure of it at least. We have to talk about how we define all that. But you can take it to an extreme, can't you? That measure of tolerance that is necessary for a calm, orderly, civil, protected society.

You can take that to an extreme. So here's something that in our society universally accepts as good, this idea of tolerance. And then what do we have? We see tolerance turn to intolerance on a daily basis by the people who think of themselves as the protectors of tolerance.

[ 29 : 19 ] It's really kind of a funny thing going on. Those are just two examples. Christianity is not the only ism, ideology, way of thinking, set of beliefs that struggles with this.

Most importantly of all, is that only Christianity can explain this universal problem. Here, I'm going to say something that you might find as bold.

Only Christianity can explain the fact that this problem, the problem of division, intolerance, violence, injustice, is a universal problem amongst human beings regardless of their set of beliefs, ideology, cultural background, whatever you want to chalk it up to.

Only Christianity can explain that because only Christianity says that all men everywhere are sinners.

All people, not just sinners, they're fallen, they're corrupted, that by choosing to follow their own way, by choosing to rebel against the law of God, what they have done is they have become corrupted.

[ 30 : 44 ] And that corruption manifests itself at the personal level. And so the conflicts that we have, any of us have observed, maybe some of us have really intensely perceived in ourselves, the conflicts we have are not just with others.

Sometimes the conflict is within ourselves. And we know what we're supposed to do, or what we want to do, or what we think is best, and yet we find ourselves doing something else.

That happens sometimes. Or sometimes we're of a completely divided mind. We say, that's a really good idea, and that's a really good idea, and I can't do both.

And those are the easy choices, because that one only has two options. Sometimes we're faced with situations in life in which we have not just two, but a multiplicity of things before us.

We cannot possibly do all of them, but we have to choose between them. And sometimes we can do that sort of flippantly. We just sort of flip the coin, we roll the dice, we choose to throw a dart and hit the one, well, that's the one I'm going to do.

[ 31 : 54 ] And we say, okay, certain decisions you can do that with. Because certain things, I don't have to tell you, certain things, really weigh heavy on the human heart.

Certain things are very, very difficult and cause much pain. And those are just the conflicts within ourselves. And then I also don't have to tell you about the conflicts between people.

I don't have to tell you. I'm the one studying history, but you all know enough to know what it's like when human beings fight, when human beings have conflict.

one of the things that disturbs me most that's going on in the world right now. I've been reading an awful lot about the conflict in the Gaza Strip between Hamas and Fatah.

And they just sheer disregard for any kind of order or human life. It's one of these moments in history. Even the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan and things, when that has deteriorated to a very bad point, but even that seems orderly to me compared to what's gone on in the Gaza Strip this week.

[ 33 : 09 ] It has just been utter random chaos. That bothers me to no end. What bothers me the most is I'm thinking about people having to live life in that.

Just think about it for just a minute. They've got nowhere else to go. You're a shopkeeper in Gaza. And you don't want anything to do with it. You don't want to be there.

And you've got kids. And there was a hospital. I was reading about a hospital that had all kinds of sick and injured and elderly people. And bullets were flying through the windows.

They were shooting at each other. They would see each other through one window and into another on the other side. And they would shoot at each other through the hospital. And to think about living in that and having nowhere else to go.

Nobody else wants you. Somebody who's really involved in this kind of thing was telling me about refugees of the Balkans wars in Serbia.

[ 34 : 16 ] And they're in Serbia, but they're not Serbs. And the problem is that one of them is! a Serb and the husband is a Serb and the wife is a Croat.

Or one's a Bosnian and the other one's a Serb. Or any multiple combination of Balkans ethnicities mixed together in marriage or one person maybe is the son of a mixed and he's sort of half and half. And nobody wants them. So they're not welcome in Croatia or wherever. They're not welcome in Serbia. Nobody wants them. refugee cities.

there's not at the moment really a whole lot of hope for them to go elsewhere. There's not anywhere else for them to go. They've got no home. And to think about being in that situation I think to myself how do you live?

How do you go through your daily life? When you think to yourself I'm going to be here tomorrow the odds are I'm going to be sitting behind the barbed wire in this camp.

[ 35 : 29 ] I'm just going to be here. This one doesn't want me. That one doesn't want me. I can't go to any other countries. They don't want me either. Here I am. That's all there is. It's amazing to me.

These are the products not of Christianity per se. Sometimes these things are done in the name of Christianity. Sometimes they're done in the name of other things.

These are the products not of religion as opposed to non-religion whatever that may be. These are the products of human beings being sinful and corrupted.

This is fallenness in action. This is humanity not being what God created it to be. That's what the Bible says all this is.

And only Christianity can explain that. Everything else sees human beings as either utterly wonderful like they solve all their own problems if they only apply themselves good enough to it.

[ 36 : 38 ] Or they see human beings as just utterly lost and there's no combination. Christianity says both are true. God made man in his own image. He gave him a mind.

He gave him the ability to reason. He gave him this sense of moral goodness. He gave him God likeness. But then there's this fallenness that comes into play as well.

So how can men be capable of doing such wonderful things and yet doing such horrible things? Only Christianity can explain that really. We can chat more about that at the end if you have any questions or tomorrow.

But we move on. Misconception number three. Christianity is nothing more than a moral system. That is, it's a list of rules. Do this, don't do that. Do this, don't do that. Why would I choose to restrict my life by submitting myself to some set of religious rules?

[ 37 : 42 ] That's the question, isn't it? I mean, people say, you know, you hear this all the time, people say, you know, I kind of like the things I do. I mean, you know, Christians don't go to pubs and they don't drink.

That's kind of a misconception, I think. They can do if such things are done right. But this is what settled. Christians don't do this and they don't do that and you're not allowed to do this and they make you do this.

Why would I sign up for that? Why would I choose that? That's silly. You know, I want to live my life. I like to decide things for myself.

Why would I choose to sign up for that? The Christian answer is that Christianity is not a moral system. It has morality to it.

But that morality is not an end to itself. The difference between moralism, which we'll just call it a broad term that means that any set of any real belief system that is defined by do and don't and try and do and do better and work harder and all those things we would call that moralism.

[ 39 : 09 ] Any kind of belief set like that. The difference between moralism and Christianity is this. Do versus done. You see, moralism says do.

Do, do, do, do, do, do, do, do, and then do more, and then do more. It's try, try, try, try, try harder. harder. It's if God is going to be happy with you, it must be because of what I do to make him happy with me.

That's moralism. If I'm going to be successful in life, there's the list of things. If the things that I'm going to do are going to be blessed or if I'm going to be happy or whatever these sort of cosmic questions are, the answer to them is do more and try harder.

That's moralism. The difference between moralism and Christianity is do versus done. You see, Christianity says you cannot do enough.

You cannot just simply try harder and do but you know, I know I messed up yesterday but if I just do good, if I just kind of toe the line for the rest of my life, God will look at it and say you know what, more good than bad, welcome to heaven, you've got box seats, enjoy the view.

[ 40 : 33 ] It's not like that. Christianity says that all it takes is one time, one time to trip and fall, one time to trip and fall and God is not happy with that.

That's as difficult as this is. One time tripping and falling is an infinite offense to him. being an infinite God, that is a huge thing, even one time.

So the problem is what must I do? If God says, there's nothing I can do that's going to make, I mean, if I've already tripped and fallen, I'm kind of without hope, aren't I?

It's not going to go real well. When he and I meet face to face, he's going to say, sorry. you can do good enough. That's not going to work for me. The different Christianity says it's not about what you do.

It's about what Christ has done. The Christianity finger is always pointed to Christ, away from myself, always to Christ. Because here is what Christianity says.

[ 41 : 44 ] This is the simplest way, I know, to explain the Christian faith. This is the bare bones. This is the bottom line. It's the fact that although here's me, and the sin is just here. I mean, everything I've done that displeases God is here.

Here's Jesus. And he has done everything perfectly. The Bible teaches he lived a perfect life. He did everything right. So he's the one who deserves to have God look at him and say, well done. Well done. You have done perfectly. I'm happy with you. And we deserve God to say, no, I'm not going to, I don't accept you.

You're not worthy. And that's what we deserve and that's what Jesus deserves. But miracle of miracles, absolutely something inexplicable happens.

That on the cross when Jesus dies, he pays penalty for sins he didn't commit. He takes our sins upon himself. And he takes the penalty, the punishment that we deserve, that rejection from God that we have earned, he takes on himself.

[ 42 : 52 ] He bears it. And not only that, he took the penalty on himself. His perfection, his goodness, he gives to us. It's a trade.

It's like a giant X. That which we should have goes to him. That which he should have goes to us. And the best way I know to explain it is to say this, so that when God looks at you, if you are in Christ, if you put your faith in Christ alone for your salvation, when God looks at you, do you know what he does?

He smiles. He smiles. Not because of you, and not because of anything you have done, but because of what Christ did.

So when he looks at you, he sees Jesus. And he says, that is my son, that is the one on whom I am well pleased. Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Is it because I am so good and faithful? No. It is because Christ was good and he was faithful. And because he has given to me what he has deserved and taken upon himself what I deserve, when God looks at me, he smiles.

[ 44 : 02 ] That is the difference between Christianity and moralism. If there is one thing I can't stand, it is moralism. somebody coming and telling you to solve all your problems by trying harder.

Do you know what? If you only did better, if you only worked harder, if you only just did X, Y, and Z, that would solve it.

It would be over. Problem solved. No. That will never solve your problems. You know why?

Because you trying harder is a failed exercise.

Because I know you're like me. I mess up. I trip and fall. And if I trip and fall today, what makes me think I'm not going to do it tomorrow?

What makes me think I'm not going to do it again the day after that, and the day after that, and the day after that? You know the funny thing? We all think we're so good sometimes. We all think we're doing so well. But the funny thing is, we can't even live up to our own standards.

[ 45 : 06 ] Our own ideals. We always think, well, you know, that's what I really want to be. And you look at what you are and what you really want to be. And we can't even measure up for ourselves.

And then we think that God is just going to say, well, that's alright. That's alright. No difference. The truth is, we don't have to worry about it.

I don't need to lie awake at night, wondering if I've done enough. And if I died tonight, would everything be okay? I can know that it's done.

It's done. Done is past tense. It is finished. That's what Jesus said on the cross. It is finished. I can rest assured that my salvation, that my standing with God, that my success in that long-term eternal sense doesn't matter, doesn't rest upon what I am and what I've done.

It rests upon who he is and what he's done. That's the difference between Christianity and moralism. According to moralism, there is no one who is good enough.

[ 46 : 16 ] No one. If you want to ask me about that afterward, if you want to say, well, I think I'm good enough, you don't have to put it that way. If you want to ask me how I know no one is good enough, I can show you.

Moralism completely misses the point. The point is Jesus. The point is Jesus. If your eyes are on anything else, it's just moralism. Misconception number four.

Last one we're going to look at tonight. A few minutes, and then be glad to try to answer any questions you might have. Misconception number four is that in the final analysis, all religions are really just about the same.

Aren't they? Again, I'm really not trying to hammer on one particular person here, but Dawkins accuses people of faith of being this way as well.

He lumps them all together, and he says, you have religions. Religions are like this, and religions are like that. They're really all the same in the final analysis. So you're a Christian, she's a Muslim, he's a Jew, it doesn't really matter in the end.

[ 47 : 28 ] This way of thinking can be both positive and negative. So it can be very wide, and what I mean by positive is saying, you know, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, fill in the blank, anything, put the list together that you want.

It's alright, they're all okay. But really the most important thing is that you believe stuff. Believe something, follow it with all your heart, and you'll be fine.

That's really what's most, human beings just need religion, don't they? And this is something that really kind of makes you feel better. And that's really what it's all about, making you feel better, so you can go out and face the next day, and so beliefs is what's most important.

And that's sort of the positive spin on that. Go ahead, be anything you want, it's okay, because in the end it really works out about the same, really. It can also be negative, it's not just positive, it can be negative, you can say, well, religions, I mean, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, I mean, anything, I mean, they're all just rubbish, aren't they?

I mean, talk about a bunch of deluded people believing just anything that people tell them, I mean, it's really, I mean, all of it's really kind of rubbish, isn't it? I mean, they're all the same, really, aren't they?

[ 48 : 45 ] I mean, religiousness, well, who would want that? So there's the positive and there's the negative. Christian response is quite to the contrary.

Christianity is utterly unique. There is no other religion like Christianity. There is nothing else like it. Why is that? Because every other religion in the world, I mean, quiz me on this one, every other religion in the world, ultimately, at its root of roots, is moralism.

it's you do better, you try harder. That's the end of the day. How you do, how you're standing in the end, depends on your production, your productivity, your success, your accomplishment.

Everything else ends up there. Only Christianity says, no, it's not about you. It's never, ever, ever about you. You only look at yourself long enough to realize that you need to look elsewhere.

[ 49 : 55 ] That's what Christianity says. Only Christianity has Jesus. Only Christianity has anything even remotely close to Jesus.

There's do versus done. There's the self versus Jesus. Relying on me versus relying on him.

There's the idea of substitution.

As opposed to moralism. Jesus substituting himself for me. There is nothing like substitution. I assure you, quiz me, if you think you found something, ask me about it.

There is nothing like substitution in any other religion in the world. It's only found here. truth. This truth is the fact upon which the Christian faith is based.

I'm just going to read you one thing that Jesus says about himself. This is Jesus' own words as recorded by the Bible. This is just a simple little story.

[ 51 : 00 ] It's so simple it doesn't have names. It doesn't have much of a plot. It's just real brief. I mean, it's just right there. It's like a snapshot almost. He says, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

See, that's the difference between Christianity and everything else. Every other religion in the world is the religion of the hired hand, be it one hired hand or another. At the end of the day, they'll tell you the wolves are coming.

They'll say, okay, I'm going to brief you on a wolf strategy. The wolves like to circle first, and they usually come from right over there because that's the darkest spot. And they like to come up from over there.

[ 52 : 11 ] And so if you keep watching that way, you'll see the wolves when they come. And that's really important. Step number one is recognizing the wolves. Okay? And then step number two, I'm going to teach you some wolf fighting techniques.

Here's how you resist wolves. Okay? Don't let the wolves eat you. There's the wolf fighting sheep, lambs. We're going to learn the wolf fighting techniques. And then when the wolf comes out of the woods, they say, okay, guys, do well.

I'll be over there. Do well. I hope everything I thought you really works out in the end. Because it's up to you. But there's a good shepherd. There's only one.

He says, I'm the good shepherd. The good shepherd goes and he puts himself between the wolves and the sheep. And he fights for the sheep. It doesn't let the sheep fight for themselves.

He fights on their behalf. And at the end of the day, it costs the good shepherd his life. The good shepherd dies. Do you know what the good part of the story is?

[ 53 : 08 ] The good shepherd dies, but the sheep live. He's the only one. He's the only good shepherd. And Christianity is the only thing that has anything remotely close to this.

So we've looked at four misconceptions. Christianity is unreasonable. Why would you believe that? To believe, to have faith, means that you turn off your brain. You put all the evidence aside, and you just believe it.

The second thing, the second thing is that Christianity leads to problems. There's all kinds of horrible things that happen. All kinds of awful things that happen.

If you sign up for Christianity, it's like signing up for genocide. I mean, it's horrible. We learned that that's not just a problem within Christianity, that there are people who have taken something and misused it, have abused it, and have corrupted it.

There's a problem with anything. There's more problem with humanity than it is really any one particular set of beliefs, especially, I would say, Christianity. Third thing is that Christianity is moralism.

[ 54 : 19 ] It's just a list of rules. Why in the world would I sacrifice my independence for a list of rules? We learned that Christianity, although, yeah, there are things that Christianity says do and don't do.

Yeah, this is the way God wants us to live, the way he doesn't want us to live, but it's not about that nearly as much as it is about Jesus substituting himself for us.

It's not about us doing good or trying harder. It's about Jesus as our substitute. It's do versus done.

The last thing we looked at was that all religions are the same, and I assure you that they're not.

This is very unique what I'm talking about when it comes to the good shepherd. So, four misconceptions and that's all for me tonight in terms of a talk.

What I'd like to do now is do my best with any questions you might have. So, please, feel free.

Brian, after your first explanation of the first misconception what would you give as your definition of faith?

[ 55 : 35 ] Faith isn't something that is a sort of internal response to something. My definition of faith is the one that I gave.

I think it's the best one. We could discuss it if someone disagrees with me. It's not the most clear-cut one per se, but it's voluntary assent to an understood proposition.

Again, a proposition being a statement of fact. This is true or that is true. And then believing that statement voluntarily, reasoning through it, to me, that's faith.

I say, I'm looking at the field of possible statements, all the different truth claims in the world. Here they all are laid out before me. There's all the options. I reason through them and I say, I believe that one.

And it happens again, like I said, on very small-scale things. I believe this is the best toothpaste.

That's not exactly life-changing. There are things that we have to decide between fact statements about that matter very, very much, that have huge-scale effects on our lives.

[ 56 : 50 ] That's my definition of faith. And if anybody else has one, you can follow up with that. How would you say that to a very, very uneducated person?

Voluntary ascent to the person. That's not layman's land of the city. No. That's not an epidemic. It's fun. If you're in London road, what would you say to somebody other than that?

Let's just say it's, you know, it's reasoning and choosing, it's thinking about and choosing a fact claim. We're talking specifically about fact claims.

You know, you know, a lot of the things that are said in the world are not necessarily fact claims.

They're just things that are said. But when truth is claimed, we either accept it or we don't.

And to accept something as true, to accept a claim of truth, I think that's an act of faith. I'm defining it in such a way that it involves the mind.

[ 57 : 59 ] It's not this random leap of faith, stepping off into nowhere, hoping, I really think that when I do this, it's going to hold me up. I'm doing it with my mind as much as I am with anything else.

Any other questions? Sir? If Christianity is comprehensive enough to be able to make sense of all the reality, which I believe it is, and it seems that the church has been privatised, it's just like your private faith, it's irrelevant, it's not allowing a public voice as to people.

How do you then think that in a multicultural pluralistic culture, of all the isms out there, how does the church communicate an exclusive view of truth that is able to explain the whole reality to the Western culture?

How does it impact the Western culture, education, health, sport, all of life? Yeah. without speaking religious judgment and subculture language, it actually impacts the public's view.

I think that's a great question. The answer to that, I think, is that too often people who come to church, Christians, people call Christians, they come to church, they treat matters of faith as if they're the property of or the business of the pastor.

[ 59 : 43 ] The guy up there, he's sitting there, he's reading out of the Bible, he's preaching a sermon, that's the guy who's really living the Christian life. And he's the one that we look to for the model of that.

That's why I don't like it necessarily, I know what people mean, it's alright, but I don't necessarily like it when people say, he's going into full time Christian work or something like that. It seems to me like that's kind of silly.

All of life. Let me just set the record straight on this for anybody here who might think, well, Christianity, are you trying to overstep your bounds by saying it affects all of life?

Every ideology that ever walks the face of the earth claims things that have an influence on, an effect on, all the different spheres of life. So to believe something, some major ideology, will have an impact on how you live in the home, it will have an impact on what you do at work, the way you do your work, it will have an impact on what you do for recreation, for play, it will have an impact on, I mean, you know, some people say, you know, if we believe these things, how can, you know, how can we not use mass transit, and, you know, if we believe these things, how can we not privatize or not privatize these industries?

These ideologies have effect that encompasses everything. I agree with you that Christianity does exactly that, along with everything else. I think it's really got to be the people, the Christians, learning about the principles that are true from God's word, learning, maybe it takes the church teaching them, or maybe they, you know, I don't know what it takes, they need to learn how God's word, the truths of Christianity, apply to their lives as a father, as a husband, as a worker, as a student, as a person giving up here a talk, as a citizen.

[ 61 : 43 ] I have all kinds of obligations on my life, and I need to learn how to apply my faith to all those things. So I think it has to be done in the church, people need to learn, but they need to take it out of the church.

You talk about sport, for example. How many Christians play sport? How many people will play a football game on Thursday night, or, you know, spend Saturday, that's what they do on their off days.

They go and they'll play a match of this and that, or that's what they do with their friends, that's their get-together thing, you know? We go and we have a good time, and then we hang out together afterward.

That's part of life for a lot of people, isn't it? But imagine if we began to do those things in a way that was sort of distinctively Christian. That's when you're starting to apply these sort of abstract things into daily life.

I think the churches are now become secularized because it kind of retreated, with the onslaught of modernism and post-modernism and humanism, these isables.

[ 62 : 53 ] The church didn't feel like equipped to build it, and it kind of retreated into a ghetto. And it's been there for so long, and it's been kind of stuck there.

And there's no doctrine of creation, there's no theology of work. You know, the church is big to the church, and that's it.

Yeah, yeah, I think it's a big issue, and I think what happens is, in a culture of toleration, a culture of lots of voices, it's easy for any of us to sort of be intimidated by all the voices, and say, how am I going to be heard?

And so it's easy just not to speak. But the answer is, I mean, in a culture where everybody gets to speak, that's where we should proclaim the gospel loudest, isn't it?

We should see that not as something scary, but as an opportunity. If we're going to be given a voice, we need to take it. And that's one of the problems, is that a lot of times the church, people attempt to silence the church by legislation or things like that.

[ 64 : 12 ] people, you know. But I think we have to say, no, if this is a culture that values free speech or however it's phrased, here's what I say.

Take it or leave it. Weigh the evidence, my friend. I'm going to put it before you. Here's what I believe is true. Weigh it and say, you know, yes or no. That's what all any of us can read. Did you have something to follow up on that? Yes, Brian, I think those are really good questions that Guy asked as well. I think what you're talking about is actually a big concern that I have about Christianity.

We're all Christians. We're not perfect. We could be doing more. We might offer a suggestion to this, along the lines of what Brian said. You asked how can this be done?

How can Christianity and this message be brought into the mainstream education and things like that. Brian mentioned sports. That's one thing.

[ 65 : 12 ] I would define how it can be done by thinking of shared borders. If you can imagine you've got two sides in the middle of a border that's shared by both sides of people.

One side is Christian and the other is non-Christian. They meet together in the shared border of all sports for instance, but not only in sport but through music. But not only through music but other things and there's quite a big list of shared borders.

You sit down and think about it. I have been working on something at the moment that is putting us into practice which is why I feel strongly about mentioning it. And what I have decided to do is to try and have a place where people will be able to, it's web-based, where people will be able to come because they're maybe interested getting some free things for their computer to make the computer look better, to make them use their computer easier.

And they search for free things or whatever and they find a web page. And on the web page, I consider that a shared border. I consider that a place for not necessarily Christian people but anybody who come looking for something.

and when they're there and the gospel is presented to them. Yeah, I mean, individuals are, can I respond? Yeah, yeah, please, yeah, absolutely.

[ 66 : 42 ] Yeah, I agree with you. Individuals are obviously responsible to be stewards, to use their gifts, you know, in creation. We're faithful stewards, you know, as we go into creation, our workplace work.

But I think that there is a sacred, secular divide. We don't want to get too technical or whatever. And I think that mentality has got to be addressed. I think the root problem is theological because people live out what they believe.

That's right. What you believe, then you apply, you live it out. So I think the root problem is theological because of that sacred, secular divide. And that we've, you know, we've had this belief that spirituality is only for church.

It's a private thing. It's just for Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. And that divides between what is perceived as sacred and what is perceived as secular is so deeply ingrained because of bad theology ultimately and that the Christian life, it's like, you know, people's work.

where Christians spend most of their time is in the workplace. That's right. They're not equipped to actually be salt and light where they spend most of their time. And so people, you know, a message of life today is so dominated by work because I think that we've brought into, as a society and the church, we've brought into, I don't want to go to rest too much, the American Dream a little bit too much.

[ 68 : 18 ] And people come to church on Wednesday and they're just stressed out and they're just totally whacked out. And it's as if we are serving the God of Mammon during the week and you know, on Sunday we can make the God the scourge because we're not, you know, consciously serving the God of Mammon during the week but as a society we've brought into this kind of play now, play later and people are so dominated by work that they've got no time to actually build human relationships which is the essence of life.

And we've just come up the weekend everybody's wiped out and we've kind of just got no time to build relationships plus the theology I think is the blue problem.

Sorry? It's interesting what you guys have said because you know, the solution maybe to the problem is okay, good theology is the root.

But you know, in terms of practically how are we going to convince people in the pew, people in the church to say, well, it's not just the domain of the pastor. He's not the professional theologian.

It's about people living Christianly. You know, you're talking about shared borders. I think that people just need to be conscious. They need to be made conscious of where are my shared borders?

[ 69 : 51 ] It's interesting that you mentioned work because work was the first one that came to my mind. Where's the place you're most likely to meet somebody who's not a Christian? Where's the context in which you're most likely outside of your family, where's the context in which you're most likely to get to know someone?

really, really well. Why? Because you simply spend day after day working alongside them. You get to know them. You may not like them. You may not.

You may really. I mean, work friendships oftentimes turn into lifelong friendships. And there's a reason for that. But yeah, I think that really the church just doesn't think about a lot of these things and they need to.

And I think that that's sort of the essence of the problem. People are not sitting there saying I need to take what I'm hearing and it needs to change my life. It needs to change the way I do everything. We'll move on from that. We can talk about that afterward but I just want to make sure that everyone gets a chance to ask any questions that I have. Yes, sir?

[ 71 : 01 ] I think that Christianity is the only belief system that can answer the problem of why the world is so messed up.

If men are so capable of good, look at the things that men have achieved, amazing things, beautiful things, artwork and climbing on climbable mountains and flying through the air in inventions that are coming, I don't know, I could go on and on about that.

You think about that and then you think about all the horrible things that human beings are capable of doing. How are the two reconcilable? I think that Christianity is the only thing that can reconcile those two things.

Did you want to ask any further questions about that? Would you like to ask anything specific or offer a comment? What I mean by Christianity's answer to that, and let me just, maybe this will start answering your question perhaps.

Only Christianity says, man is created glorious. Man is very, very special amongst creation.

[ 72 : 31 ] All the things that exist in the universe, there is only one man. I say mankind, is what I mean. Humanity. Humanity is in a sense very of the earth.

It's very temporal. He's very, earthly in the sense that, you know, from dust to dust, and the things he can, he has to feed his body by regularly consuming physical things.

He needs rest, which is a display of weakness. You go too long without rest, and suddenly all things begin to not work out so well. I can testify to that.

But then there's this other side to man that nothing else has. He's not just physical, he's spiritual. No other being reasons. No other being, you know, they say that dogs have emotions, and that dolphins can reason, and things like that, and those things are true.

I think that those things are just pale reflections of what man can do. There's nothing like man in the way that he thinks, in the way that he feels, in the way that he doesn't just need physical food, he needs spiritual food as well.

[ 74 : 02 ] He has this craving for that, this desire for it. It's a funny thing because atheism, for example, tends to be, it pretends like it's the non-religion. Well, see, I'm an atheist, I just sort of wash my hands of all that religious stuff.

You guys can feed your souls, but you know, I don't have a soul, so I don't need to feed it. But then, if you watch atheists, they're really, they preach, they evangelize, they hold fast to their beliefs, they weigh everything they hear in light of what they believe.

It's an awful lot like a religion, sort of the non-religion. They try to sell it that way, but it's really a religion. I don't think that human beings can escape having that spiritual side to them.

So, only Christianity understands man as being really, really glorious, sort of this hybrid between something that is earthly and something that is heavenly, in a sense.

But there's not just this gloriousness of man, only Christianity says man is utterly fallen. And this fallenness of man affects all of his life. It affects the way he thinks, it affects the way he feels.

[ 75 : 19 ] Which of us in this room has ever thought something, we're really sure about it? I want to see your hands, okay? Be honest. Which of us has really, really been sure about something, only to find out that it was not true?

My hand goes up. Every one of us. I mean, we've all thought about something, really sure about it, and then we found out it wasn't true. Our reasoning is faulty. Which of us really, really, really, at some point in our lives, utterly convinced that we were in absolute love with somebody.

And in a fairly short time, in the grand scheme of life, we were kind of over that. Has that ever happened to anybody? Our emotions are flawed. No, don't be honest.

Come on. See, our minds are flawed, our emotions are flawed, we think things, we're mistaken about things. Which of us has ever thought we heard something, or thought somebody said something to us, or thought we saw something, only to have it not really have happened?

Didn't you just say, da-da-da? No, I didn't say anything at all. I mean, that's happened to all of us, hasn't it? We've heard things, we've seen things. You see, we're flawed creatures. I've just talked about our mind, I've just talked about our emotions, and I've just talked about our physical bodies, our physical ability to perceive.

[ 76 : 52 ] We're flawed. And that flawedness doesn't just stop with those things. We are spiritually flawed as well. We are attracted to things that are wrong.

We know, before we ever get into it, we know that it's not going to end well. we know, we know, I should not want to do that.

But I do. And I don't just want to do it, but I do it. And this compounds on itself. We are very, I think perhaps, men are more spiritually flawed than they are even physically flawed.

It's because you look at history. History tells you this, men's physical abilities, though often flawed by horrible illness or mental illness or these kind of things affect us.

I think the spiritual illness is very, very bad. In that, you look at history and you see the things that men do to each other. And sometimes it's things that just blow your mind.

[ 78 : 03 ] You probably all heard about this. it was all over the news here about a month and a half ago. This girl in Kurdistan, age 17, was stoned to death by her own family.

She was from the Yazidi religion, and she fell in love with a guy who was a Sunni Muslim. And so they initiated an honor killing, though I'm not sure how much honor there is in it, by slaughtering her. You probably have all heard about this, because it was a very big deal at the time. I mean, that's her own family that participated in that. They went and hunted her down, because she was in hiding.

They went and found her. I have actually, myself, seen the video of this. Yes, there is a video that means that somebody was standing there watching a young girl being brutally killed by stones, and he was filming it.

He just filmed it. And for me to see it, do you know what he had to do? He had to post it on the internet. That's how all the news agencies found out about it.

[ 79 : 29 ] They found this film of a young girl being slaughtered by her own family. And I say that to think about what human beings are capable of. I have a son.

We just had today, this afternoon, his first birthday party. He is a little boy. And the things that I feel for my son, you know, people always tell you, you know, you feel all these strong things for your son.

I had no idea until you actually had one. And it's an absurd thing because when he was really, really little, I thought to myself, I don't really want him to change. Because I like him so much the way he is.

And the problem is, this is what I thought, and you're going to laugh at this, the problem is, I thought, you know, it all goes downhill from here. Because, you know, then he becomes two and everybody says the age of two is a terrible age. And then you get a little reprieve until they become teenagers.

And then when they're teenagers, you know, it's just torture from the morning to night. And, you know, I heard all this, but you know what funny thing about it? And I thought to myself all the time, every stage that he's been through, I thought, I don't want him to change.

[ 80 : 32 ] I want him to stay exactly like he is. He'll sit there. He just first started talking, he was saying, the only word he could say at the first was mama and papa. And I thought, well, I want him to say papa all the time, you know, for the rest of his life.

But you know what the funny thing is? Oh, and there was another thing, he started to crawl. And when they start to crawl, they get into everything and your life changes and you have to watch him all the time. And I thought, well, I kind of like the fact that he just sits in one place.

I can lay him down, I can read my book, and he sits there in coos and coos, and you know, you pick him up when you want him, and that kind of thing. I just, all the time I thought to myself, I want him to stay just like he is, because I love him so much just the way he is.

But then, it's not that long ago, it hit me. I love him more at every stage as he develops than I ever did before. I love him more right now than I did before he started crawling.

When he starts to walk, I love him even more. And I'll say, boy, I like him crawling. Once he starts walking, I never go back to crawling. They don't do that anymore. Once they start to walk, that's what they do, they walk.

[ 81 : 40 ] I like him when he's crawling. If he changes to quickly, he's never going to do this again. Then I realized, I love him even more. And to think about letting my son get to the age of 17, investing all that time and effort in raising him, loving him more and more as I go, and then slaughtering him, that's inconceivable to me.

And that's what human beings do. And that's what I meant by Christianity being the only thing that can explain that. They can explain the lofty highness of man, because man is made in God's image, has all these wonderful attributes.

They can also explain that horror, that absolute sheer terror, because man is so utterly fallen, and his spiritual self is probably more fallen than anything else. That's what I meant.

That's a very long answer, and I apologize for that. But do you have any questions beyond that? Are there any more questions?

We've got five more minutes or something, and then we'll... Steve. I thought actually your thing on toleration is interesting. I think you can argue, in fact, that just as Marxism, there's a sense of Christian heresy, the adoption of the Christian idea of theology of the future.

[ 83 : 03 ] So, I mean, it's only in the West that people talk about multiculturalism. You don't get people in India or whatever talking about multiculturalism. It's only in the West. It's a Christian heresy again.

And of course, the modern idea of toleration is actually invented by Christians, because it's implicit in Christianity. Because on the one hand, we accept that everybody is fallen, you can't change people from the outside.

There's not much point in just saying, do this, do that, because it doesn't actually change people.

And on the other hand, it says, treat people as you want them to treat yourselves. So if I were to go and wear socks or sandals, I can't really complain I can't understand why in the world you would.

So do a thing to their lips. I mean, I wouldn't think I do, but that's, you know. And in that sense, the original idea of toleration, it's probably largely a bit of a cron one actually, in the modern sense, but the idea that you will accept people, but it's different, because Christianity says you accept other people because Christianity is true.

And because that's true, we know certain things about other people, and therefore we'll accept them as people, because they're valuable as people. Whereas the modern view, as well, says that Christianity is, we will tolerate anything, but in the end, as you say, a mouse to say we tolerate nothing.

[ 84 : 30 ] I mean, another way of pointing out the time and end, the problem with everybody speaking is that therefore by definition nobody is listening. And that's exactly the sort of cultural situation we have now, where nobody listens, because there's no point in listening, because everybody has a right to speak, but it doesn't mean anything, so you won't listen.

And therefore, the, and I think actually, we can put forward a Christian view of tolerance, which is actually a workable one, whereas it's becoming, you know, it's becoming really obvious even to the world that the sort of political correctness idea of tolerance is essentially contradictory.

I mean, we even see it in the government, you know, are they interested in integration or multiculturalism? It's really, you know, the modern concept of tolerance is funny, because it's really not tolerance, it's just veiled oppression.

It's just, I mean, it's the same old thing. It's human history over again, because what it is, is saying, here's the list of things we allow, here's a list of things we don't. These people can say these things, these people can't say those things.

And that's what modern tolerance is. That is intolerance, so therefore it can't be allowed. And you really think about it, and it's not any different than just, you know, the oppressive regimes of the past in which one viewpoint is allowed and everybody else is persecuted.

[ 85 : 56 ] it's just the same old thing. It's just, you know, I think sometimes Christians are surprised by some of this stuff, and wow, my goodness, they won't let us talk, and what's this, and what's that?

There's nothing new under the sun. I mean, this stuff just, it's the same old stuff, and I think recognizing that helps a lot. You think to yourself, well, it's the same old battle, really. I mean, we're either allowed to speak or we're not, and if we're not, then when we speak, we should expect to be, you know, sort of, you know, it's a different way to say it than persecuted, but you know what I mean.

I think there is a difference in that we, in one sense, in that now, it's not that you're persecuted for what you say, it's just that people don't listen to what anybody is saying.

No, I think you can be attacked for what you say, too. There's a problem with nobody listening.

Yeah, I'm not denying the differences.

[ 87 : 00 ] It's just that I'm just saying, a lot of times, some of the differences, because of some of the differences, we don't notice the similarity. It's interesting.

It's an interesting time. It's an interesting time that we live in. We have fresh approaches, fresh problems, but in many ways, we need to look to the past, the wisdom in the past.

And that's a historian talking. If there's, yeah, I think we're kind of out of time for questions. Should you have any more? Should you say, oh, but my most important question was not answered?

Tomorrow night, 6.30, same time, same place, turn on the same channel, come back here again, and you won't have just me to answer your questions.

You will have a magisterial, omniscient, omnipowerful, panel of, these two in the front row are about to whack me here because they're on the panel of four amazing question answerers that you'll have to grill tomorrow night at the Grill a Christianity event.

[ 88 : 17 ] So, please come back tomorrow night if you have the opportunity. Tomorrow morning at 11. We will be talking about the one that I really wanted to talk about, but since Phil wasn't talking, he was talking about it tomorrow.

Tomorrow we'll talk about the problem of evil. It's a big, big problem, isn't it? If God is so, so, so wonderful, Mr. Christian, why doesn't he do something?

This world's falling apart. Where's God now? When tsunamis come, and hurricanes, that kind of thing. Problem of evil tomorrow at 10.30.

I'm sorry, the 11th question and answer tomorrow at 6.30. Thanks for coming. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.