

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. I want to preach today about an unashamed spirit — a confident spirit — an unashamed authority that God wants on His people: the settled certainty that everything He has promised in His Word is true.
- B. I began reading C.S. Lewis as a young Christian, and the way he thought and wrote connected with me. Lewis was a professor at Oxford University. Before he became a Christian, he was a lifelong atheist, until the influence of his friend JRR Tolkien. From that time, Lewis applied his brilliant mind to the defense of the Christian worldview.
- C. He didn't treat Christianity like a fragile heirloom hidden from the modern world. He handled faith like it was demonstrably true — able to stand on its own two feet in the classroom, the hospital room, or at a graveside, without collapsing.
- D. My talk today is my attempt to preach like C.S. Lewis might if he were here.
- E. Our course is called **What's the Difference?**
- F. And our topic today is **Secularism and Atheism** viewed from the Christian worldview perspective.

II. THE QUESTION

- A. The question today is simple:
 - 1. Does holding the secular (worldly) or atheist worldview, in which there is no God, help a person make more sense of their world?
- B. If you're trying to build a life that is intellectually rational, emotionally healthy, and deeply meaningful... does it help or does it hurt to keep God in the picture?
- C. St. Paul, had a clear answer to that question:
 - 1. *"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes..."* (Romans 1:16)
- D. I don't need to whisper this, apologize for it, hide it, edit it, or be embarrassed to speak of it. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ — that constellation of salvation truths revolving around the Cross of Christ, the love of God, and the eternal salvation inviting whosoever wills to come.
 - 1. I am not ashamed. That is the spirit God wants on His people.
- E. Here's my main argument:
 - 1. **No worldview in human history honors reason, morality, logic, suffering, beauty, human dignity, justice, historical validity, forgiveness, and hope like biblical Christianity. It's time for God's people to say so.**
 - a) Christian... say so.
 - b) Say it with your life.
 - c) Say it with your love.
 - d) Say it with your attitude: I've got a secret strength and his name is Jesus.
- F. If you want logic, you can't beat Christianity. If you want beauty and human flourishing, you can't beat Christianity.
- G. And I want to take on the hardest questions to make that case.

III. 1. Christianity Explains Why Evil Is Actually Evil

- A. The first reason we do not need to be ashamed of the Gospel is this: Christianity explains why evil is actually evil.
- B. The modern secular person often says, "I do not need God in order to be moral." It's true. Many atheists are kind, thoughtful, and generous. So the question is not: can an atheist behave morally? Of course they can.
- C. The deeper question is: in a universe without God, what makes morality morally binding?
- D. If the secular atheist is right, then the universe is only matter in motion.
- E. Nothing beyond matter, energy, chemical reactions, instincts, and evolutionary struggle.
 - 1. In a world like that, why should I love my neighbor? Why protect the weak? Why should genocide be wrong, even if an entire nation votes for it? Why be moral?
 - 2. Why love at all?
 - 3. Without God, you can still have laws, customs, public opinion, and consequences. But you simply cannot make a compelling case for a moral law that stands above every culture, government, dictator, and human opinion.
- F. Even so, every normal person lives as if that moral law exists.
 - 1. We know slavery is evil even when courts protect it.
 - 2. We know abuse is evil even when the abuser justifies it.
 - 3. We know hypocrisy is evil even when it wears religious clothing.
- G. That matters, because some here have been wounded by people wearing religious labels. You saw people talk about grace but weaponize shame, preach love but practice control. And something inside you said, "That is wrong."
 - 1. And you are right.
 - 2. But WHY are you right?
- H. Where did you get the moral code that says abusers, hypocrites, and genocidal maniacs are wrong? Your system has to answer: why is evil evil?
- I. Christianity does not ask you to silence that protest. It explains why the protest is there. Your outrage against hypocrisy is not meaningless noise.
 - 1. Your grief over injustice is not a chemical accident.
 - 2. Your instinct that people should not be crushed is not evolutionary wiring.
 - a) It is the echo of the Maker — proof you were made in the image of a moral God.
 - 3. *"Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness..."* (Romans 2:15)
- J. C.S. Lewis said it perfectly: a man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.
- K. You cannot say, "That *should not* have happened to me," unless you believe there is a standard of what *should* happen — which is exactly what atheism erases!

- L. The secular worldview wants the fruit of Christian morality, but it has severed the root. It wants human dignity, but cannot explain why an accidental collection of atoms deserves that dignity.
 - 1. It is borrowing moral capital from a God it has denied.
- M. And here is where the logic of the Gospel becomes emotionally beautiful.
 - 1. If there is no God, the wrongs done to you in secret will never be answered.
 - 2. The abuse no one saw, the betrayal no one believed, the injustice buried under money or religious reputation — all of it vanishes into the dust. The universe will not care.
- N. But if the Moral Law is real, then the Lawgiver sees. Nothing is buried forever. No tear is wasted. The things that were done to you matter, because you matter to Him.
- O. Yet, if we are honest, this idea of a moral law creates a disturbing problem.
 - 1. The same Moral Law that says what was done *to* you matters, also says what's been done *by* you matters too. We have all broken God's laws and instinctively know it.
- P. So picture God's moral law as a mountain — the towering standard of perfection standing over every one of us.
- Q. And this is where Christianity breaks away from every other system on earth.
 - 1. Religious systems say: you have to pay for your moral failures by climbing that mountain of good works and rituals.
 - 2. A secular system says: what mountain are you talking about? What moral requirements are you talking about?
- R. But a world with no mountain is a world with no moral code. And a world with no moral code is a world with no human dignity.
 - 1. Under a secular system, what are you? You are a collection of molecules powered by energy.
 - 2. What is your baby? A collection of molecules powered by energy.
 - a) Isn't that exactly what you can say about a fish or a worm or a light bulb?
 - 3. The secular viewpoint is the death of human dignity because it erases the sacredness of human life... and by doing so, obliterates both the need for and the logic of any compelling moral code.
- S. But the Gospel says something entirely different. The mountain is real, the moral code is real, the justice of heaven is real — and human life is so precious to God that the Maker of the mountain came down.
 - 1. God became human without ceasing to be God.
 - 2. At the cross, He did not ignore the evil of the world; He absorbed it. He satisfied absolute justice while throwing the doors of mercy wide open, because that is the extent of His love.
- T. So, Christian, do not be ashamed of the Gospel. When you call evil "evil," you are not taking your stand on a cultural mood swing.
 - 1. **You are standing on a logic and beauty nothing else comes close to — on the foundation of a God whose moral code is the infinite love eternally flowing from His heart.**
 - a) Standing on that truth is standing with unashamed authority.
 - b) Evil is evil because humans are precious to God.

IV. 2. Christianity Gives Suffering an Enemy and a Redeemer

- A. "If God is real, why is there so much suffering?"
- B. Suffering is not a *philosophical* puzzle. It has a face. It has a name. It is a diagnosis, a divorce, a funeral, a betrayal.
- C. No argument has turned away more people than the problem of pain. We must not answer it lightly.
- D. But consider what happens if we remove God from the equation.
 - 1. **If no God exists, suffering, though agonizing, is not actually a violation of anything.**
 - a) A cancer cell is not "immoral"; it's just biology. A tsunami is not "wicked"; it is just physics. A predator exploiting the weak is not "unjust; it is just nature running its course.
 - b) In a purely material universe, these things simply are. Nobody has a rational right to object.
- E. Yet our hearts refuse to accept this.
 - 1. When a child is abused, we do not say, "How biologically unfortunate." We cry, "Evil!"
 - 2. When death rips away someone you love, you do not say, "That's just nature." You say, "This is wrong."
- F. This protest in the human heart is not a weakness. It is a witness — the soul remembering we were made for a world without graves.
 - 1. **You cannot call the world "broken" unless you have some deep, inherent sense of what "whole" looks like.**
- G. That is the Christian's position. Sin fractured our relationship with God, with each other, and with creation.
 - 1. *"For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."* (Romans 8:22)
- H. Creation groans. The world is beautiful, but it is bleeding. And Christianity is strong enough to speak truth about both.
- I. It does not tell the grieving to "just stay positive" or call death natural. The Bible calls death an enemy. Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb because death is an intruder in His Father's world.
 - 1. **The Gospel explains suffering as the gnarly outgrowth of the Fall — suffering was ushered in, not by the will of God, but by the rebellious choice of the human heart.**
- J. But the Gospel does not merely explain suffering. It gives us a God who enters it. At the center of our faith is not a distant deity watching from a safe balcony. It is the Son of God with nails in His hands.
 - 1. **Whatever else we say about the problem of pain, we can never say God stayed away.**
 - a) *"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows..."* (Isaiah 53:4)
- K. He bore them. He carried them. The Christian answer to suffering is not an argument; it is a Person. A crucified Savior. A Redeemer with scars.
- L. So when someone asks, "How can you believe in God when the world is this broken?" a confident spirit does not panic.
 - 1. You can say, "I believe because the cross shows God has not abandoned this broken world, and the resurrection proves brokenness will not have the final word."

- M. So I want you, Christian, to live with an unashamed spirit. To live with a confident spirit. I want you to stand and say with boldness, I am a Christian. Jesus is true. God is real. The Bible is trustworthy. And the answers you've been given stand head and shoulders above any other answers ever offered in this world of humankind.

V. **3. Christianity Explains the Human Longing for More**

- A. If I am merely matter, why do I possess consciousness and longing? Why does it feel like something to be me?
- B. Neuroscience can map brain activity — neurons firing, chemicals moving, electrical signals. This is real science, not to be dismissed.
- C. But description is not the same as explanation. Science describes the chemistry of what happens when you love, or hear music, or watch a sunset.
- D. It cannot explain why you are experiencing it. Why is there an inner life?
1. **Science has never been able to define "consciousness."**
 2. "There are two other words I do not understand — awareness and intelligence. Why am I talking about things when I do not know what they really mean?" (Roger Penrose, Oxford mathematical physicist)
- E. Under the secular worldview, your thoughts are nothing more than chemical reactions produced by blind physical causes.
- F. But if that's true, why should we trust your thoughts to be true?
- G. Especially, why should we trust your thoughts about your thoughts to be true?
- H. If the human mind evolved for survival, then the thought "God does not exist" might just be a useful survival mechanism — but that same mind cannot claim it has stated an objective truth.
- I. If human reason is merely an evolutionary trick, its arguments against God are just more trickery.
- J. But Christianity offers a deeper account.
- K. **In the Christian worldview, the mind is not an evolutionary accident; it is a relational bridge.**
1. Humans possess consciousness specifically so they can enter into a relationship with a loving God.
 - L. A rock cannot experience grace. A biological machine cannot commune with its Maker.
 - M. Consciousness is no longer a mystery — it is the very space God designed so He could meet with the human soul.
 - N. Consciousness is not our only pointer. Human longing also points to something.
 1. You hear a certain piece of music, or look up at the stars, or hold a baby's hand, and something inside of you aches. It is not just happiness; it's homesickness. C.S. Lewis called this "Joy" — a longing for something this world awakens but cannot finally satisfy.
 2. You get the job, you buy the house, you build the family, you take the trip — and yet even these wonderful things cannot carry the weight of your soul's expectation. That doesn't mean they're bad. It means they are not God.
 - a) *"God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts..."* (Ecclesiastes 3:11) - O. That is the Christian explanation. Your desires are not a biological anomaly. They are God having implanted eternity in your heart — your soul remembering it was made for more than earth.
 1. He wants you to dream.
 2. He wants you to aspire.
 3. He wants you to press on.
 4. He wants you to have great expectations and to pray great prayers because you have a great God.
 - P. The secular worldview looks at your deepest hopes and says, "You are temporary matter. Enjoy what you can before the lights go out."
 - Q. But the Gospel says something infinitely more beautiful. Your hunger for transcendence is not foolish. Your ache for beauty is not childish. Your desire to make a difference is not an illusion. It is an invitation.
 - R. You are not an accident. You are not a machine. You are not a soul-sized appetite wandering in a universe with no food.
 1. **You were made by God. You were made for God. And your heart is restless until you not only rest in Him, but achieve the high calling and the glorious dominion for which you were designed.**
 - S. So, Christian, do not be ashamed. Your faith is not fragile. And here is the confident spirit: the God who put eternity in your heart is the God who keeps His promises. Your longing itself is proof that everything He has promised in His Word is true.

VI. **4. Christianity Alone Has an Answer for Death**

- A. Every worldview must explain death. Philosophies are not tested only in the classroom or the concert hall. They are tested at the cemetery.
- B. What does death mean in a world without God?
1. If secularism is right, death is the absolute end.
 2. Atoms disperse.
 3. Consciousness vanishes.
 4. The love a person felt reduces to a temporary chemical arrangement permanently undone.
- C. The secularist offers comfort by saying, we will hold you in our thoughts. But if thoughts are just chemical reactions, isn't that the same as saying we'll run a couple of experiments in your memory with our chemistry set?
1. In the end, both the person who perished and their memory are swallowed by the same void.
- D. Yet if human beings are purely biological machines, why does death feel so profoundly unnatural? People do not weep for dead batteries. Nobody holds a funeral for a broken computer.
- E. But when you lose someone you love, your heart despairs. You grieve. Death feels like an enemy. Why? Because your soul knows humans were not made for the grave.
- F. That's why the Bible calls death an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26).

- G. Here is where Christianity diverges. It does not just offer an idea about death; it offers a Savior who experienced it. On that old rugged cross, Jesus was betrayed, mocked, beaten, crucified, and buried. He went all the way down into the darkest depths of human mortality. And then, on the third day, He exploded out of the tomb.
- H. This is not a metaphor. It is not a myth. The resurrection of Christ is a claim about history. Christianity does not say, "Believe this because it makes you feel better." It actually says, "If this didn't happen, walk away. But if it did, everything changes."
 - 1. If Christ is risen, then death is not ultimate.
 - 2. Evil has an expiration date.
 - 3. Suffering does not get the final word.
 - 4. Hope makes sense.
 - 5. A reunion day is coming.
 - 6. Because for the believer in Jesus, death is just another word for transportation.
 - a) *"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)
- I. Christian hope is not built on blind optimism. It is built on an empty tomb — and an empty tomb is where unashamed authority comes from.

VII. Conclusion

- A. Christian, do not be ashamed.
- B. No worldview in human history holds together reason, morality, suffering, beauty, human dignity, justice, forgiveness, and resurrection hope like biblical Christianity.
- C. Stop whispering.
 - 1. The Gospel is not fragile.
 - 2. No need for arrogance.
 - 3. No room for mumbling.
 - 4. Do not apologize.
 - 5. Evil is real. Grace is stronger than shame. Death is defeated. Jesus is Lord.
- D. When the atheist claims this faith is outdated:
 - 1. Remember — the Gospel outlived every empire that tried to bury it.
 - 2. When the secular professor says Christianity is intellectually weak: Remember — it explains the moral, rational, beautiful, broken, longing human experience with immeasurably more logic and beauty than any other system.
 - 3. When the world says death wins: Remember — an empty tomb outside Jerusalem declares, "Oh, I beg to differ."
- E. You stand unashamed.
 - 1. Not because you have every answer.
 - 2. Not because you are smarter.
 - 3. Certainly not because following Jesus makes life easy.
 - 4. You stand unashamed because Christ is risen.
 - 5. The Gospel is true.
 - 6. And everyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame.
- F. This is who you are.
 - 1. An unashamed spirit — that has stopped tiptoeing around the gospel.
 - 2. A confident spirit — that has stopped questioning God's reality in your life.
 - 3. An unashamed authority — that stands on the empty tomb and declares: everything God has said in His Word is such a true truth that it makes every human a liar.
- G. You speak with courage.
 - 1. You live with grace.
 - 2. You answer with gentleness.
 - 3. You serve with conviction.
- H. Biblical Christianity is not barely surviving the modern world. It is the world's only hope. Always has been and always will be.
 - 1. It is not fragile. It is not small.
 - 2. *"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes..."* (Romans 1:16)
- I. So to the atheist here today, and to the secular intellectual here today, I say to you that you might have all the wisdom and all the right ideas and all the intelligence and all the money in the world. But if you want the power of God in your relationships, your marriage, your parenting, your emotions, and your eternity, then today's the day for you to come to Jesus.