Last week I preached on the topic of Religious Pluralism... which is basically, the belief or religious perspective that All Roads lead to the same God.

It is the belief that..... while the various religions of the world may have different things to say about who God is... and how to reach God....

That all of them are simultaneously true... they all lead to the same God. (SLIDE)

We looked at attractiveness of the “All Roads ” point of view....

And the attractiveness of it comes from the fact that on the surface, it seems a more enlightened, and humble and tolerant to hold this point of view... AND ultimately, many people who adopt this view seem to find it the most “comfortable” position to hold... primarily because it avoids the potential disunity and disharmony that can come from people having different beliefs than other people about God. They want to find a way to live at peace with people of differing faiths.

But while as Christians, we are called to live at peace with all people....

***Romans 12:18***

***If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.***

... and this includes people of other faiths...

The way in which we live in peace with others isn’t simply by ignoring or compromising the uniqueness and differences between our beliefs and those of others.

Christianity doesn’t allow for compromising of the unique claims of our faith... because as we read in scripture...

Jesus... the founder of our Christian faith, makes some very exclusive truth claims... one very important claim being...

***John 14:6***
***“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”***

And what we find here is that Jesus does not teach an “All Roads” way to God, but a “One Road” way to God. He clearly says...

“No one comes to the Father except through me”.

another example of this Christian claim comes from Peter in Acts when he declares...

***Acts 4:12***

***Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”***

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In our world today, where religious pluralism and relativism have become more popular... As a Christian, it has become more uncomfortable to embrace and profess belief in the exclusive truth claims of Jesus..

I think that one of the reasons being that... people assume is that... if they believe in the exclusive claim that Jesus is the only way to God... then they might end up being obliged to be like those jerky Chrsitians that they’ve seen on the news or on the internet.

The ones who have superiority complexes... and who are rude toward people who don’t believe in Jesus or the teachings of the bible. The ones you see on the streets with bullhorns and signs passing judgment on everyone.

And people think... if believing that “Jesus is the only way” means becoming like that... count me out!

Now, while we as Christians are believe the bible and Jesus to hold the true and authoritative revelation of God and his truth...

I don’t find any place in the New Testament where Jesus teaches Christians to have a jerky attitude of superiority, disrespect, unwelcome toward those who simply do not share our beliefs in Christ.

In fact... what I find is that the bible gives us instruction and a basis for behaving quite the opposite.

Now... if your like me... you might feel like I did for many years. And you might be thinking...

How I can embrace my belief that Jesus is the only way to the father... in a way that ensures I don’t end up developing a Jerky attitude toward people who don’t believe what I do?

Christians can avoid developing a jerky attitude toward people who don’t believe what we believe by remembering the three “rules” that go along with our belief that “Jesus is the only way”.

1. Belief that Jesus is the only way isn’t license to have a Superior Attitude toward others.

2. Belief that Jesus is the only way isn’t a license to disrespect people of others beliefs.

3. Belief that Jesus is the only way isn’t a license for rejecting people of other beliefs.

1. Belief that Jesus is the only way isn’t license to have a Superior Attitude toward others.

While Christianity does claim to have truth about God that is superior to other religions ....... having superior truth doesn’t give Christians license to have a Superior attitude.

Think about this...

How did any of us come to know or discover these superior truth claims that we hold?

In the Christian faith, we believe that God, by his grace, has revealed these truths to us.... and has birthed in us... our faith in him.

The truths of our faith are not truths that we have come up with....

Nor were these truths revealed to us because of how....

Righteous we are, or how good we are, or how smart we are, or how good looking we are, or how much money we have, or how talented we are.

Think about it... why were you’re eyes open to faith in Jesus, and not someone else.

For some reason... you and I responded to the message of Jesus Christ with faith... and we can’t totally explain why.

How is it that I can grow up in a the same home as my parents and 2 brothers... and yet only 3 of the five of us claim some level faith in Jesus.

How is it that I can go to the same youth group that many of my friends went to in highschool... and yet somehow I was among the small percentage of us had a light go on for us at that Christian camp... and we chose to be lifelong followers of Christ?

Many people heard the same messages I heard... why were my eyes opened and others weren’t? The faith I have was revealed to me by God... and I did nothing to deserve it.

And now I get to inherit all of the blessings and freedom and restoration in my life that Jesus offers. Why me?

***Psalm 8:3-4***

***“When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him?”***

God has opened my eyes to faith in Jesus... and

Because of this... I am humbled.

Who am I God, that you would take notice of me?
Who am I God, that you would open my eyes?

Surely there were others more worthy than me... to know your love, your grace, your blessings.

We ought to be humbled by the fact that, by his grace, we have come to a faith in him. We could have been left blind to him... but by his grace, we see his love, his righteousness, his justice, his forgiveness... and we have responded by putting our faith in him.

This reality ought to change our perspective toward those who do not know of the truth of God that has been revealed to us in Jesus.

There is no place for an attitude of superiority toward those who don’t believe what we believe... but rather... and attitude of humility.

**Having come to a knowledge and faith that Jesus is the only way ought to produce in us a humility not a sense of superiority.**

**2. Belief that Jesus is the only way to God is NOT a license to disrespect people of others beliefs.**

One of the ways that Christians disrespect people of other beliefs is that Christians often just write other religions off as having no truth or value in them.

But contrary to that attitude of disrespect, we can recognize that there are many truths and values that other religions of the world hold in common with Christianity.

And the presence of these truths and values in other religions points to our God.

1. Doctrine of Common Grace.... this is the belief that God, by his grace, has given certain abilities to humankind that are common to all.

a. Conscience- a sense of right and wrong

b. intelligence- to problem solve and to plan in advance and to invent.

 Intelligence to see and understand human behavior....

 And through this intelligence, humans can to develop wisdom about behavior, relationships, societies.

Much of this common grace... God’s gift of a conscience, gift of intelligence, and gift of understanding is found in much of the wisdom of other world religions.

THE GOLDEN RULE is found in most world religions...

 This is common wisdom... given by common grace.

“Don’t do to others what you would not want them to do to you.”

* Most all major world religions have a concept of supernatural God, gods.
* Most have a concept of an afterlife and judgment.
* Most have moralistic teachings of right and wrong, good and evil, just and unjust... by which people will be judged.
* And most teach charity toward the poor and those in need.

So Christianity shouldn’t be so arrogant to say that there is no truth in other religions. By God’s grace, he has revealed a recognition of right and wrong and a recognition of a higher power/powers that will judge human beings for how they have lived this life.

Praise God that he has revealed aspect of himself in these ways to all of humanity and most all human religions.

Can you imagine a world where this common grace was not revealed in the religions of most every culture....

Can you imagine the chaos and anarchy that would exist if people had no conscience or sense of accountability to God for our behavior in this live.

So, instead of having an attitude of disrespect toward other people’s religions, having an understanding of God’s Common grace can help us to appreciate Christian values found in other religions.

This doesn’t mean that all religions lead to the same God, but that we can find God’s truth, Christian truth... in other religions.

**THRID RULE...**

**3. Belief that Jesus is the only way isn’t a license for rejecting people of other beliefs.**

Yes... there will be many beliefs that others hold that are contrary to Christian teaching... and we may reject those beliefs...

But rejecting other people’s beliefs DOES NOT mean that we are to reject those people. I mean... unless they have ill motives toward you or mean you harm... or something... but otherwise... we ought to feel free to befriend and love people who don’t believe what we believe.

It is exactly those people whom Jesus had come to befriend and to reveal himself to.

***John 3:16***

***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.***

Jesus said,

***Matthew 28:19***

***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”.***

He came for the Chinese, the German, the Australians... just as much has he came for the people living in Jerusalem in Jesus day.

Not just the good people, the smart people, the influential... he came for all.

He came for the poor as much as he came for the rich.

He came for the peasant as much as he came for the kings.

He came for the prostitute as much as he came for the princesses.

He came for the morally bankrupt as much as he came for the morally upright.

He came for the children just as much as he came for adults.

He came for women and children just as much as he came for men.

He came to bring salvation to us all...

While Christianity may make exclusive claims, it is arguably the most inclusive faith on the planet.

God so loved THE WORLD... and he did not want any of us to parish in judgment for our sin, but to know his forgiveness... forgiveness that came through the death of his one and only Son Jesus.

God forgive us if we should have an attitude of unwelcome toward those who don’t believe what we believe... Those who do not believe in Jesus are the very people that Jesus came into this world to reach... and whom God has called us to reach out to and love in his name.

To reach people of all nations... all ethnicities... and all faiths... in his Name.

So... as we have see, our Christian faith gives us no license for an attitude of superiority, disrespect, or rejection of those who hold different beliefs in God than we do.

On the contrary, true Christian faith ought to produce an attitude of humility, respect and hospitality toward them.

May God give us the courage and freedom to fully embrace the “one way” belief in Jesus... and at the same time, demonstrate the humility, respect and hospitality to those who don’t believe... that God would be glorified in this...

And that we might see others come to experience....

PRAYER

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