CANCELLING CULTURE: ESTABLISHING BIBLICAL FILTERS FOR TODAY'S WORLD

Session 3- Media, Virtual Worlds, and the "Post-Truth" Condition

THE COST OF BEING "PECULIAR"

- "Peculiar"- A KJV word for "called out; chosen" (Deut. 14:2; 1 Pet. 2:9; Phil. 4:20; Gal. 4:22-26)
- Scripture is rooted in a history/mentality that is alien to our current climate
  - Ex 1: Scripture places a premium on food/drink when it comes to sacrifice because food was not abundant at that time. (Isa. 58; "to fast"= *tsum*= "to cover over the mouth")
  - Ex 2: Community first mindset above an individual first mindset. (Dan. 7; "...repented for my sin and the sin of my people...")
  - Ex. 3: Deep value for what happens between generations. (Matt. 1; who you are is as much about who you came from as what you did in your generation)
- **The cost of being a peculiar people is that we have to live like people out of time/place while inhabiting a particular time/place.**
- **General principle to guide us: interpret the unclear by the clear!**

THE ISSUE OF "REASONS"

- Epistemology is the study of belief formation ("How we know what we know.")
  - "*epistamai*"= "being acquainted with; knowing; to know about; understand; understanding; to put thought on a thing with one's mind"
  - Acts 19:15- when the demons says that it "knows" Paul, this is the word that is used
  - Acts 26:26- Paul is confident of Agrippa's knowledge concerning the matter of the resurrection; he has no questions about his "*epistamai*" on this matter.
- Rene Descartes (1596-1650) launches the modern world by formalizing his skeptical epistemic project to prove God exists with his *Meditations* (1641); his question: "What can we know for certain?"
- "Media"- comes from words meaning "in between" and "the vehicle to convey ideas through"; **thus, anything that channels data to you or divides you away from direct access to data is "media."**

THE ISSUE OF "REASONS"

- Virtual worlds- Becoming more populated for longer periods; can genuine harm/good be done in a space like this?

- **Widening accessibility/speed of information + the atomization of society through individualization/independence + the prevalence of "make-believe worlds" + the loss of cohering values/metanarratives= epistemic suspicion/bubbles and echo chambers. (basis of division today)**

THE ISSUE OF "REASONS"

- Some questions that reveal the depth of the "post-truth" condition:
- What is the value of an "expert opinion?"
- Does the platform matter more than what the expert is saying?
- Are we suspicious, in the very least, of our friends when they have differing perspectives on topics that we have deeply held perspectives on that are not necessarily biblical?

THE ISSUE OF "REASONS"

- "Post-truth" condition- postulates that absolute truth is not possible to perceive/apprehend by the masses but only what is useful for you based upon your own epistemic determinations (result of everything above). Might manifest:

- Postmodern/culturally relative- what is true is what the culture I am a part of decides is true/valuable

- Pragmatically transmodern- what is true is based upon what causes the least amount of problems for me from one moment to the next ("transactional truth")

A FEW KEYS TO NAVIGATING THESE DANGEROUS WATERS

1. Hold fast to your biblical worldview! (John 8:31-36; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13)
2. Walk as disciples with others of like-minded faith! (1 John 1:5-10)
3. Purpose to live Eph. 4:3! (Much more difficult than it seems)
4. Be open to/step outside your preferences; recognize your blind spots! (Acts 10; John 5:39-40)
5. Remember that it all counts...even virtual activity! (Rom. 2:6; 1 Cor. 3:10-18)
6. Consider the audience...and your actual power to affect them! (Matt. 7:6)
7. Be charitable and generous with people and their perspectives when it does not match yours! (1 Cor. 13; Prov. 11:25)
8. Work at changing your perspective from "individual first" to "community first!" (1 Cor. 8-10)

PRACTICING THE CRAFT

Considering the amount of time that we inhabit virtual spaces, it is important to know what is acceptable biblically in those spaces and what is not. Consider the *Eve Online* article that you read this week and ask/discuss this: is it possible that any "war crimes" (unethical actions that have genuine consequences) were committed during the 13-month virtual war that recently ended?