

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, October 7, 2018

**Pluralism: One Way or Many?
A Study of Acts 4:8-20**

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In addition to Christianity, what religions are practiced in Austin?

We've all seen cars with the "Coexist" bumper stickers. What is the message of that bumper sticker? What problem is the message trying to solve?

Read Acts 4:8-20.

Our key verses for discussion today are verses 12 and 20.

Salvation is Found in No One Else

Read Acts 4:12 again.

Simon Peter expressed an exclusive claim about Jesus. This is difficult to talk about in our city, where people tend to say, "There simply can't be only one way to know God." That view is known as ***pluralism***.

Pluralists say it's arrogant to say there's only one way to God. However, pluralists don't really escape the danger of arrogance and superiority, either. *Why is it so hard for anyone to see the danger of arrogance and superiority in their own convictions?*

So, the hope of pluralism is to build a world where no one feels superior to anyone else, and yet pluralism runs the same danger of making a person feel superior to those who don't hold to pluralism. We ***all*** need help with our tendency to feel arrogant and superior to others.

Christians actually have three resources that can make them agents of peace in our world: *common grace*, *saving grace*, and *the example of Jesus*.

First: Common Grace.

Read Romans 1:18-20 & 2:1-4.

These verses teach that even without the benefit of the Bible *some* truths can intuitively be known about God. So, it is no surprise we find elements of truth in every religion. This is especially true in ethics--what we "ought" to do.

- ❖ List beliefs Christians have in common with others, even if they practice a different religion.
- ❖ What are ways that Christians can work together with non-Christians to make our community and our world a better place?

Second: Saving Grace.

Read Romans 3:22-24.

The more we realize that we were saved by grace and not by personal worth or works, the more gracious we can be to others. Why is this true?

Third: The Example of Jesus.

Read Colossians 1:19-22.

Jesus died at the hands of opponents while asking God to forgive them because they didn't know what they were doing. How can this truth move us to be agents of peace in the world?

When someone wants to argue with us or they disagree with our convictions, how can we respond as agents of peace?

What We Can't Not Do!

The second key verse in Acts 4 is verse 20. Read that verse.

A literal reading of verse 20 has a double negative: "We cannot not speak!" What did they say they could not not speak about? (Hint: "...what we have s_____ and h_____.")

What is more effective in a pluralistic culture: Talking about what's *wrong* with another person's religion or talking about *your personal experience* with the benefits of knowing Jesus? Explain.

So...what is your personal experience with the benefits of knowing Jesus? Make a list of the benefits and why you personally value them.

CONCLUSION

In our diverse city, the most common question non-Christians will ask you is what Christians think of other religions.

- ❖ From what you've learned today, what will you tell them?
- ❖ How can you better prepare yourself to deal with this question?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests