

OpenTheo

An Open Statement of the Truth

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

We must never use apologetics—or for that matter, contextualization—as a way to make hard truths less noticeable or the offense of the gospel more palatable.

In this article from WORLD Opinions, Kevin encourages Christians to be bold and courageous in the face of cultural accusations.

Transcript

[Music] Greetings and salutations. Welcome to Life in Books and Everything. This is Kevin Deong.

Today I'm reading my latest piece in world opinions entitled "An Open Statement of the Truth. Three Places To Start Living Not by Lies." You may have wondered in recent days, "When did I become a bigot?" Not that you are likely a bigot, but that the world now considers you one. The leaves that used to be obvious to Christians and to almost everyone else have now been called hate speech, while practices and spectacles that wouldn't have been whispered and private have become public celebrations.

Recently I traveled across the country to preach at another church. On one of my flights I overheard the male flight attendant talk loudly and boisterously about "his husband." During my trip I went into a local bookstore and the two women next to me talked at length about lesbian volumes on the shelf and their own experiences with lesbianism. While walking through the downtown of that same city, a city with reputation for being conservative and Christian, I noticed that most of the restaurants and shops were flying rainbow flags.

It couldn't help but feel that my beliefs and not just my beliefs but the truth of God's Word were now the very beliefs that should only be spoken about behind closed doors. The world wants to press us into its mold and that mold is getting very tight very quickly. You don't have to go looking for the sexual revolution, it will find you.

What then is an Orthodox biblical Christian to do? Lots of things we can pray and plan,

we can invest in our church and our communities and in our families, we can be involved in politics, media, education, entertainment or law, we can be good neighbors, we can love, we can worship. There are as many things to do to "live not by lies" as there are ways to be salt and light in the world. But if you need a place to start, try these three things.

Be cheerful, be clear, and be confident. Be cheerful. Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose hearts.

2 Corinthians 4-1. This text is especially for pastors but surely the spirit of the passages for everyone in the church. Are Christians ever justified in being angry? Yes, Ephesians 4-26.

Is it ever appropriate for Christians to be afraid? Yes, Matthew 10-28. Is there ever a place to hate what God hates or even in a manner of speaking to hate those whom God hates? Yes, Psalm 139-21. The Christian life allows for many and complex emotions but here's what the Bible does not allow.

The Christian must not lose heart. That's what I mean by cheerful, not absent-minded or oblivious but joyful, happy, hopeful. We must never revile when reviled nor is there ever a time to return unrelenting cynicism for cynicism.

After all, people are supposed to ask for the hope that is in us, 1 Peter 3-15, not ask about our abject sense of utter despair. 2nd, be clear. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 4-2. This verse is at the heart of everything I believe about pastoral ministry. People need to hear the truth and they need to hear it from us open and unashamed.

Just because shouting would be rude doesn't mean you have to whisper. Tell people what is. When asked and in the right setting tell them what you think, the only sure way to keep biblical faith hidden is if we agree to hide it.

When I was preaching through Acts several years ago I encountered the apostles' bravery and many passages and I repeatedly told my congregation that boldness was not the same as bravado and that it was not a personality type for the loud and outgoing. Boldness, I said, is being clear in the face of fear. To be sure, I believe in the good use of apologetics, to strengthen the faith of believers and to show unbelievers the incoherence of unbelief.

But we must never use apologetics or contextualization as a way to make hard truths less noticeable or the offense of the gospel more palatable. Be cheerful, be clear, finally be confident. For God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to

give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 4, 6. I find in too many Christians today and I can find the sentiment creeping into my own heart a lack of trust in the Word of God.

Look, the gospel is going to be veiled to those who are perishing 2 Corinthians 4, 3. We shouldn't be happy about that but neither should we be surprised. The God of this world, the God of this age, has blinded the minds of unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 4, 4. That's true.

But it's also true that the ruler of this world has already been judged. So Jesus said, John 16:11, let's be less anxious and less apoplectic. God still saves.

God still changes hearts. God still speaks light into existence where all seems dark. To riff on the old gospel maxim, the world is much more sinful than we imagine, but God is bigger and better than we dare to believe.

(dramatic music)