

Why Apologetic Preaching?

How does incorporating apologetics into our sermons work itself out practically? Quite often, apologetics should be included out of necessity.

Beyond the sermons preached by the first Christians, much of the text of Scripture itself is written as an apologetic.

- The first chapters of Genesis are both a Scriptural account of creation and an apologetic against Ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies.
- Even many of the miracles recorded in Scripture are meant to serve apologetic purposes. These miracles range from the plagues in Egypt demonstrating the futility of Egyptian gods to the healing miracles performed by Jesus, revealing that He is the Messiah.

The text of Scripture is so littered with apologetic elements, I would argue that it is difficult to preach the whole counsel of God without incorporating apologetic elements into one's sermons.

For example, in an age of increasing skepticism; we need to provide basic arguments at the onset for every new book series. When introducing a sermon series on II Timothy, it would be beneficial to briefly mention some of the evidence that leads us to believe this letter was written by Paul. Why? Because many in our audience are being influenced to believe that we have no idea who wrote the books of the Bible. Are there some texts for which authorship is difficult to concretely ascertain? Absolutely! Nonetheless, the Scriptures are hardly anonymous in authorship.

Some texts of Scripture easily lend themselves to apologetic application (such as [I Cor. 15](#)), while others are more difficult (i.e. Song of Songs). Yet, in today's culture even the most innocuous of passages requires an apologetic.

For instance, when speaking of the gospel picture housed in the relationship between a husband and his wife, we must preach (even briefly) an apologetic for God's definition of marriage. The marriage covenant is one of the clearest pictures of the gospel and it has practical applications for Christian living. However, it is under assault. So, when preaching on marriage or the picture of the gospel it provides, we must include apologetic elements.

It may seem that what I am proposing actually falls outside the context of corporate worship and should instead be considered as part of personal evangelism.

The reality is that when the church gathers to worship through Word and song, that time is specifically for the instruction and edification of the saints.

However, we can never assume that every self-professed believer is actually a believer. Further, we cannot live under the assumption that the person in the pew is free from the influence of our culture and battles with doubt. Moreover, whether recognized or not, most Christians adopt as their own the interpretation and application of Scripture that which is taught by their pastor.

Therefore, if we model an apologetic-free approach to the biblical text, that is what our people will practice. Thus, in an effort to edify and build up the body of Christ, we must “Contend earnestly for the faith...” ([Jude 3](#)) from the pulpit so that the pew will be a place of confidence and a place of preparation for cultural engagement.

Recovering Apostolic Apologetics

The first sermons of the apostles do two things: (1) make much of Jesus and His gospel and (2) defend the truths contained in the gospel.

- In Acts 2, Peter preaches the gospel message, explains the Scriptures, and defends the claims contained therein by referencing the miracles of Jesus.
- In Acts 17, Paul reasons with the men of Athens through preaching the resurrection of Jesus and utilizing philosophical language that his listeners understand.
- In the very next chapter ([Acts 18:24-28](#)), Apollos preaches about the ministry of Jesus and refutes those who would deny that Jesus is the Messiah.

The Gospel Coalition.