

# Gospel-Shaped Communication

What does it mean to love God and to love people as we engage and work in an increasingly hostile world? We have to be sure about what we communicate (content) and also the manner in which we present truth. In our social media world, this last issue is an important one for all leaders. We want our communication to be truthful, clear, and gracious. How do we hold these apparently opposing tensions together?

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## I. UNDERSTANDING OUR TIME

- From Christendom to secularism – pluralism – individualism
- From questions about truth to questions about identity: who is good and who is evil?
- The result: culture wars, polarization, “hate”, cancel culture

## II. THREE VOICES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

### A. Apostle Peter, 1 Pet 3:8-17

- Attitude: “compassionate and humble”, “gentleness and respect”
- Argument: “Always be prepared to give an answer [apologia] to everyone who asks you to give the reason [logos] for the hope that you have”.
- NB: “the hope” in 3:15 relates to Christ’s resurrection (1:3) and to Christ’s return (1:13)

### B. Apostle Paul, Acts 17 (correct, connect, compare, challenge)

- The synagogue in Thessalonica
  - A shared worldview: The God of Israel, the Scriptures, promise about a Messiah
- Corrects misunderstandings and proclaims the gospel
  
- The Areopagus in Athens
  - No shared worldview: polytheist, epicurean and stoic philosophers
- Connects with the Gentiles
- Contrasts different world views
- Challenge them with the truth

Even if don’t share worldview we share life in the same world. The need to find the link between general revelation (reality) and special revelation (the Bible).

### C. Jesus Christ, Matt 12:22-28

- Dark accusation and a cool response from Jesus
- He deconstructs the objection
- He shows the consequence of their logic

- He uses a series of mind pictures
- He gives a strong challenge: “But if ... then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

### **III. OUR CALLING IN EUROPE 2023**

Never compromise the truth:

“For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.” 2 Cor 13:8

Always pray to God and relate to people and their issues:

“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Col 4:3–6