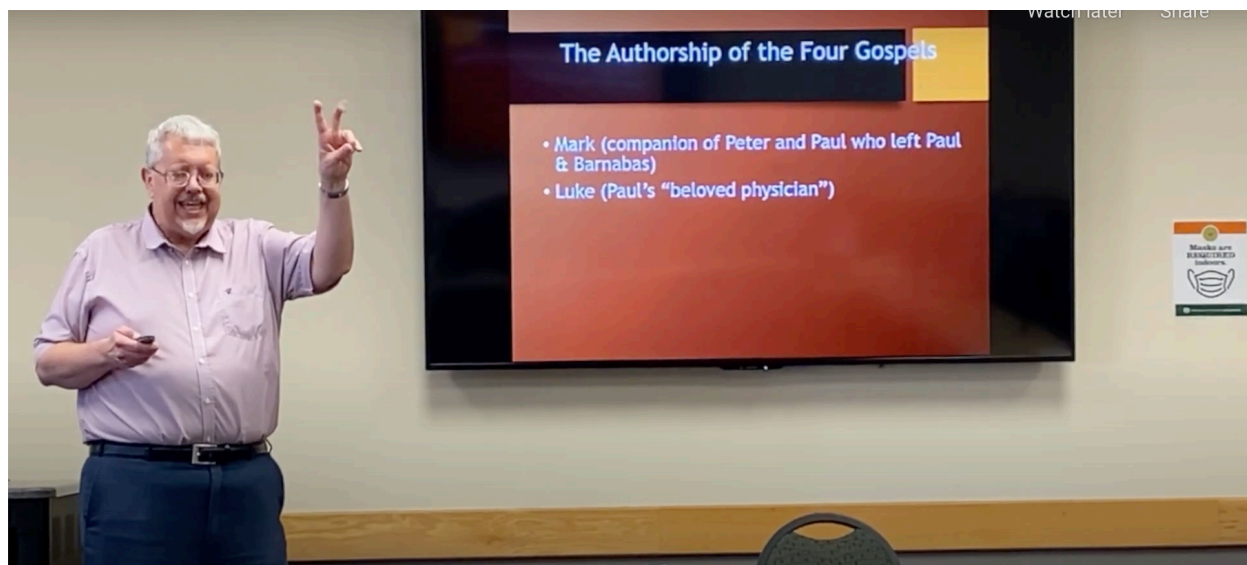


Every so often we **Take Stock...**

Following the fire in Louisville, things got back to the “new normal” pretty quickly. Not much time to reflect and process things because the new semester was upon us. It’s easy to think even now, almost two months later, that the fire never happened...until you have to drive by the part of our town that’s burned to the ground.



Dr. Craig Blomberg addresses Christian faculty at CSU last week on the topic, The Historical Reliability of the Gospels.

We’ll come back to that later, but let me catch up on a few things: we’ve already had some of our preliminary meetings on campuses this new semester. Speaking of that as I write today, we had a local pastor speak to our Christian faculty group at the Air Force Academy about fasting; last week before that we had Dr. Craig Blomberg (see photo above) speak to our faculty group on the

historical reliability of the Gospels at CSU. (Last fall I had him speak on the same thing at Air Force.) Here's an on-line link to that presentation:

<https://academicconnectionsgcm.org/video-2/dr-craig-blomberg---the.html>

Why the Historical Reliability of the Gospels?

I have mentioned there are challenges to working within the dominant secular academic culture. Its influence (some dramatic and some subtle) affects even the Christian faculty with whom I work. The university can still be justifiably called the place to go to lose your faith and each generation of our future leaders are still going there to prepare for their careers.

It's not that every professor is out to undermine Christian faith, but the spirit of the university with its focus on empirical things, its skepticism of the supernatural, and its shift away from seeking to find truth to seeking only "social justice" does send a message to each incoming and outgoing generation.

One cause of the environment being that way is a great sense of skepticism towards the reliability of the Bible. That is, it used to be years ago at the academy that there were lots of questions about its historical trustworthiness, just what its message(s) was, and can it be relevant to people in the 20th and 21st century?

What has happened in the cultural shift is that the narrative of what is trustworthy and relevant has to do with science and social change. People aren't asking the questions that many of us asked when we went to college. One of the things this shift has brought us to is thinking **that power is everything**. As a result our culture is divided, intolerant, and angry—what I like to call a generalized "fed up with the set up" feeling.

Still, human nature has not changed and the deepest of human and social needs have not either. That's probably our greatest opportunity for the gospel—our continuing need for personal redemption from our own selves and from our sin. It's a **real need** for us to understand, but not always a **felt need** all the time for our audience. Our job is to help our community, our nation and the world to see the importance of their real needs.

That's why I'm investing time and effort to produce resources to help our faculty understand the times and more importantly to understand the reliability

and authority of the Bible. Both are complicated issues to address to a sophisticated audience like university faculty, but both facets are real needs.

One of the ways we're addressing the authority of the Bible is by getting experts like Dr. Blomberg to speak to our groups. Of course, another proven way is just to get people into the Bible itself and let its authority speak to people.

However, to prepare 'thought' leadership we have to go in for a deep dive. It is necessary to understand how the Bible was put together—how the canon came to be—plus, who wrote it, when and where and under what circumstances. I have proposed to Dr. Blomberg putting together a series of presentations and interviews for Christian faculty and getting that on video tape for us. It's an expensive and time-consuming task, but Dr. Blomberg has agreed in principle to do this for us and we'll work on the details while he travels extensively overseas.

In the meantime, we have a number of other resources we can use to bridge the gap until that is finished. (Dr. Blomberg is on sabbatical in Europe until August of this year.) I'm preparing a list of things we could cover beyond the reliability of the gospels and it will include things like: the historical reliability of the (whole) New Testament, canonicity, the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament, what are the rules that apply to the interpretation of Scripture, what is the gospel, how does literary genre affect good interpretation, how to handle questions about the Bible to agnostic or atheist friends and more...

Here are some links you may wish to explore, remembering these resources were designed for Christian professors who teach and do research at the university:

1) Interim Resources on Biblical Reliability (for professors):

<https://academicconnectionsgcm.org/other-resources/apologetics/apologetics/section-1/theological-acuity/index.html>

2) Resources on the relationship of the authority of Christ and the authority of the culture in which we live (for professors):

<https://www.academicconnectionsgcm.org/other-resources/scholarship/christ-and-culture-resource/index.html>

Here are a few other items:

Please pray for Dr. Adam Pelsler, who teaches philosophy at the **Air Force Academy** and is a member of the fellowship there. He is speaking to the Christian faculty group **at CSU** on Thursday, March 10th on the topic: Faith and Virtue: Cultivating Christ's Love.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of our family and this ministry. Let's keep our focus on the progress of the gospel at the great universities of the world and see what He does.

Warmly in Christ,

Jim for Phyllis and Scott

Other Links:

Our ministry website: www.academicconnectionsgcm.org

Our Insider's links for Christian professors:

<https://www.academicconnectionsgcm.org/other-resources/insiders/index.html>