

Article 3 Man

Pastor Jared Osselaer | Lead Pastor, Story City Church

How do you not love a man who, in speaking of the Trinity, references Shilin and Spud Webb?

If the question is of the relevance of Article 3, man—then the answer, dear friends, expresses itself most urgently in our missiology.

Our Baptist faith and message underscores this by affirming that all humans are made in the image of God and, therefore, every person, regardless of their standing, possesses inherent dignity and worth.

Family, this statement is not a theological assertion. It is a call to action.

Secular Western culture and those who apprenticed Jesus share the concept that humans have inherent value, worth, purpose, and identity.

What those concepts mean, where they come from, and their implications constitute both a great divide and a great opportunity to demonstrate the relevance and impact of the gospel in our world.

But how? How do we bridge this divide in this day and age and in this state that I dearly love?

This is most relevant.

In **Romans chapter 1**, Paul gives us a litany of sins that Christians have long held dear as markers of separation between the faithful and the not yet redeemed.

It's become a tool for creating an us versus them, where, like the Pharisee, we can beat our chest and say, "at least I'm not like him over there."

But Paul so importantly continues in **chapter 2** with a strong warning, "but for the grace of God, there go I."

Paul clearly reminds us that none of us have an innate desire or will to do good, to love God and people, to be faithful ambassadors, to practice holiness, or to understand who He is, what he's done, who that makes us,

And then what we are supposed to do in light of it?

He places that ability and desire in us.

I posit that in the name of righteousness, we often forget that it's the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience that are intended to lead us to repentance.

If God's missiology with us is the modeling of and offering up of kindness, restraint, patience, grace, longsuffering, and sacrifice, how much more should that be our missiology to our fellow men?

Finally, family, there is no greater time for us to recognize the importance of God's mission and our role in it. But it must not come at the expense of losing effectiveness of our ambassadorship in its application.

We cannot be silent about injustice or ignore the pain of our neighbors and believe that they will still suppose our words are backed by love and truth.

The more we know Jesus, the more our hearts should break for those that do not know Him. The more we know Jesus, the more we love Jesus, the more we're moved towards the broken, the marginalized, the widow, the foster care and adoption system, the poor, the resident alien, all who remain under the very watchful eye of our gracious Savior.

We live out this missiology not by watering down the gospel.

As an aside from the Spirit of God Himself, there is no greater tool available to us than the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

No, we do this as Paul does, *by becoming all things to all men.*

Paul becomes the lead missionary of the church to the Gentiles without abandoning truth.

What Paul abandoned, family, hear me, what Paul abandoned was not scripture, but cultural preferences. Long held, dear.

My brothers and sisters, we know the result of Paul's actions, both the resistance and the suffering, but also the establishment of God's kingdom in the midst of darkness.

We're reminded of our need for redemption through Christ alone, reinforcing that we must answer the difficult questions of our culture with scripture and scripture alone.

However, our application in both word and deed must be modeled with the kindness, restraint, patience, grace, long-suffering, and sacrifice that God shows us.

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

While the burden on us is not to be successful but obedient, we must carry it with the same grace extended to us.

So let us hold fast and let us not lose sight as we seek to faithfully represent Christ in a world that sees the value, worth, and purpose of man so differently than we do.