

Jacob Brink

First Year Seminar

UnLearn event assignment

Pick an UnLearn event to attend. Write a 1-1 ½ page (double spaced) reflection which explains what the event was about and your reaction to it (did it resonate with you? What was the fundamental issue the event tried to address? Do you see any connections to the content of the seminar here?)

The first Unlearn Chapel provides examples from the early church struggle with cultural differences to show the need to unlearn dishonesty, cultural idolatry, and justified love lessness. Like the new Christians in the first century, people today struggle with relating culture and the gospel. Instead of following the true gospel as described in the Bible, people often add additional requirements to salvation. Whether they add cultural practices, physical appearances, or cultural behaviors, the gospel they make is false and dishonest. Not only is culture often wrongly placed on the same field as the gospel, but it is also often placed above God in people's lives. The apostle Peter was guilty of disobeying God, so that he could continue to follow his religious traditions. Instead of eating the creatures offered to him by God that were declared clean, Peter boldly refused God several times, reasoning that his society knew better than God which animals were permissible to eat. He idolized his Jewish culture and traditions above the God who created those traditions and who had the right to alter them. Because of changing God's gospel and idolizing culture, people groups, institutions, and countries practice justified love lessness. Since they have disregarded Christ's message to spread the good news to all people and to treat Jew and Gentile as equals, they use their culture or social group thinking as the justification for excluding outsiders, or anyone who does not follow their way of thinking or does not meet their requirements. This issue isn't new, as the early church struggled to understand that God's grace and Holy Spirit was given to all those who professed Jesus as Lord. Many Jews believed that

circumcision and other Old Testament signs were necessary parts of salvation, forcing gentiles to adapt Jewish culture before joining the church. Due to peoples' tendency to elevate their own culture and their own ways of thinking above God's word, the early church, today's society, and all people throughout history struggled with false gospels, cultural idolatry, and justified exclusion.

Attending the Unlearn event encourages me to think through my core beliefs and biases with the Bible as my standard, instead of my feelings. I appreciate the way the speaker rationally explained how each bad habit of Christians to idolize culture today is the same sin the early church struggled with long ago. To understand that our sin is nothing new and that much of the New Testament writings were written to fight the lies, the idolatry, and the exclusion convicts me of our society falling for the same mistake repeatedly throughout history. It frustrates me to learn that we fail to learn from recorded past mistakes. If instead of surrounding ourselves with our worldly culture, we read and applied the teachings of the Bible, we would live with more unity, more diversity, and peace. Instead of excluding, we would include. Instead of forcing others to follow our culture, we would accept all cultures. Instead of ignoring the truth of the gospel, we would gladly preach the gospel to all peoples around the world. Personally, I am motivated to study the truth more, so that I can discern truth and so that I can help make the world more united in Christ.