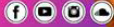




Sunday 23 April
8:15AM & 10AM



WHEN
CHRISTIANS
GET IT WRONG
 RIGHT

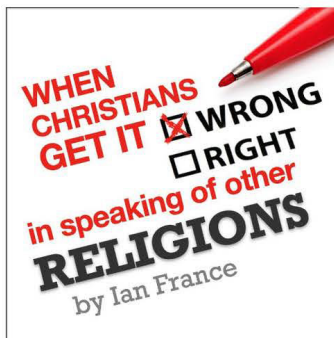
in speaking of other
RELIGIONS
by Ian France

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When Christians get it Wrong ... in speaking of other religions – Ian France - 23.4.2023



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When Christians get it Wrong ... in speaking of other religions -
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▶ 2

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-9;15

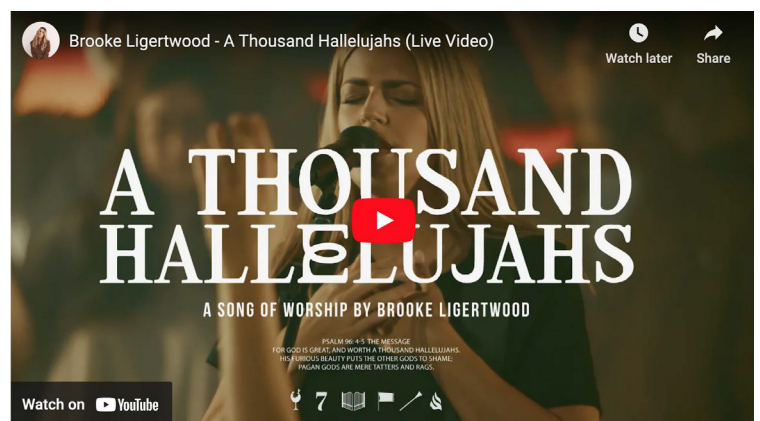
Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

1 Peter 1:1-2 background to the letter:

As the leader of the group who had been so close to Jesus, any letter from Peter would have been received as an important document. More is known about the relationship between Peter and Jesus than that of any other disciple. He was never one to hang back but always spoke out – occasionally without perhaps considering what he was saying. In this letter, Peter did not need to establish his authority – his position in the Church was well known. Peter wrote to all Christians who had been scattered and were spread around the known world. The places mentioned in his introduction were probably those which the courier would visit en route as he took the letter to the



A Thousand Hallelujahs: Brooke Ligertwood

various churches. Peter described his intended readers as the elect – those chosen by God. In using such a word, they would have been strengthened and encouraged in hard times. He greets them by offering them grace and peace.

3:8-9

Peter has been talking to husbands and wives. Now he broadens his discussion. He encourages his readers to be of one mind – the mind of Christ which is revealed in the Word of God. The people of God are to live in unity, even whilst each one is different. He describes the warm love that should exist amongst us: compassion, brotherly love, kindness and respect. Jesus said His followers should be recognizable by the love they had for one another (John 13:35). Such warm love should be extended to others. Any arguments or disagreements should be dealt with promptly and not allowed to fester or grow out of hand. In this way enmity can be defused and not become an issue in our lives or in the community. It is only Jesus' love that can break the natural cycle of retaliation for wrongs done against us. When we can bless those who wrong us rather than retaliate we inherit a blessing ourselves.

3:15

Christ needs to have centre stage in our hearts. No other lords will do. Our knowledge of the Word of God will help us to witness our faith to others. But we can only do this when we know that God is the Lord of our life.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever had a discussion with people about other faiths – their own or faiths in general? What was the outcome? How do you feel, looking back, about the way you listened, agreed or disagreed, treated the others in the conversation? What would you change now, if anything? If you have not had such a conversation, why do you think such an opportunity has never arisen?

Application

- Many national and international events are described today as 'inter-faith'. What do such words mean to you? How do you respond to them? Are you encouraged to attend them, or do they put you off? Why? How would you respond to a friend who invited you to attend such an event?
- When a major disaster occurs, often some of the first responders are Gift of the Givers. How does their rapid response differ from that of the Church? Is the media instrumental in pushing their response forward to gain our attention? How does the Church respond? What does this say about people's compassion for one another?
- Consider your reactions to the previous two questions. How do you respond to the statement 'We are blinded to the good in other religions'? Do Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40 influence or even change your reactions? Why/why not?
- People are aware of the many times the Church has got it wrong. How do you respond to someone who accuses the Church of such times? Would you be pre-

pared to apologise on behalf of the Church to those who have been wronged? Why/why not? What difference would such an apology make?

- Why are you a Christian? Briefly share your response with one another. Are you willing – and able – to stand up for your faith? Why/why not?
- If we are respectful, humble, and accepting of others from different faiths, why is it important for us to maintain a purity of faith for ourselves? How does 1 Peter 2:9 help you to answer this question? How can you use it to defend your own faith?
- How can you witness your faith in Jesus in simple ways to those who attack what they perceive to be the dogmatic, arrogant stand of Christians? Where do you need to do this in your day to day life at this time?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

Whether there may be issues of faith or other matters which lead to disagreement in your relationships this coming week, look for ways you can love those who come against you through simple acts of kindness. Make a note of their response and be ready to report back next week how things went.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-1/>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-3/>