Fixing the Trouble with Evangelicalism

Part 2 of 2: Re-Imaging Evangelicalism in a Changing World
with Darrell Bock, John S. Dickerson
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So I wanna come back to this hated one, because of course we had you in to do a conference for us yesterday and in the midst of doing that, you mentioned the way in which the culture is turning more hostile. And you pointed out – I thought it was one of the most fascinating parts of what you did yesterday. You pointed out the kinds of laws that are being considered and passed today, which kind of is a snapshot of kind of where we are, what we're dealing with. Can you share some of those? I mean it ran from things as mundane as, I will say, bathrooms, flowers, and cake.

Yeah.

Okay. So what do bathrooms, flowers, and cake have to do with where we are culturally?

Well, there's been a trend just in this last year of folks from the LGBT movement, if you wanna call it that, going to Christian vendors in various states from the wedding industry, Christian bakers, Christian florists, Christian photographers, and saying, "Hey, will you photograph our same-sex wedding? Will you make a cake for our same-sex wedding?" And there are three cases right now, one in Colorado, one in Oregon, and one in New Mexico. In each of these cases, because of laws that the state had passed that are anti-discrimination, these Christians are on trial for holding to their religious convictions.

So in Colorado this baker – I believe his name's Richard Phillips. He actually is standing before the Colorado Human Rights Commission and could face up to 12 months in jail because he refused to bake a cake for a same-sex couple. That sounds really radical, but it's actually happening. I'm not trying to be dramatic. And in Oregon it's the Bureau of Labor. The baker up there, she faces a $50,000 fine for each homosexual person she wouldn't bake a cake for.

Even though those people could go somewhere else and find a cake to be baked or get flowers? So you're saying they're being targeted?

That seems to be the trend. There's actually other – in the Midwest and in the Northeast, there are event planning companies, wedding locations, other bakers, a t-shirt company, all owned by Christians where it doesn't seem to be an accident that folks are coming in and saying, "Hey, can we do this? No? Okay, then we're gonna call the authorities."
So in New Mexico, the New Mexico State Supreme Court already ruled. And in their ruling, which you can look up the exact wording online, but they ruled against the Christian photographers because of the way this statute was written in New Mexico. And one of the judges in the ruling actually wrote that these folks are “compelled by law to violate their religious beliefs.” The law demands it. And obviously we live in a state and a country where every state's laws are developing and getting tested in courts.

But there is a trend that is going this way and we see a lot of these laws mostly in California. California about a year ago signed into law a bill called “reparative therapy” for young people who are having homosexual impulses or feelings. The law makes it illegal for a counselor or therapist in California to counsel a minor away from homosexuality. And I covered a lot of legislation when I was a reporter and interviewed a lot of legislators, and they're pretty bright people. And a lot of them, it's just been the norm for more than 200 years in the United States.

When there's a law like that, they used to be aware that most Americans are religious and they would put in religious exemption clauses. Well, this reparative therapy bill that was signed into law a year ago specifically did not have an exemption clause. And if you look back at the committee meetings and the development of the bill, the reason was because they were targeting Christian counselors and Christian families. They're targeting a family that might have a 16-year-old son who's a Christian family. They wanna go to a Christian counselor because he's having same sex attractions.

This law was written so that it is now illegal for that counselor to counsel the 16-year-old away from those. There is no religious exemption. There's no exemption for any kind of beliefs and of course it was challenged by some Christian groups, and it was upheld by the courts in California. So it is now the law of the land in California.

**Darrell Bock**

By upheld, do you mean the discriminatory part of it was upheld?
Yeah, the entire thing. It was challenged and so it was kind of put on pause and then the whole thing was upheld. It's now enacted. Just within the last couple of weeks in California, one bill was passed, signed into law. We'll probably go through that same little process of being challenged, likely upheld, and another one was drafted. I'll tell you about the one that was passed is called the bathroom bill.

Yeah, that's right. We covered flowers and we covered cake, but we still haven't gotten to the bathroom yet.

Yeah, that's right. So the bathroom bill is for transgendered young people in the state of California and it states that if a boy who's 13, no matter what his biology is, no matter how he was born physically, if he identifies as a girl, then in the state of California, that school, or college, or university must let him use the girl's bathroom, the girls' locker room, the girls' showers, and play on a girls' sports team. So this is an LGBT movement law, and from their world view, from the way they see things, this is just justice for this person who was born into the wrong body.

Because the issue here, and we actually are planning to do a future podcast on this issue, because I think most Christians don't appreciate it at all, and that is in the culture, the issue of sexual identity has become a discussion of choice as opposed to being focused on an action. And so that becomes a big difference.

Oh, and that's such a huge part when we get into the solutions of thriving for Christ in our culture is understanding that we're often speaking a different language. The word, homosexual, to us, might overlap a little bit with what some of these unbelievers are thinking of when they hear the word, but they're thinking of a person's identity. It's not a choice that they're born with. We're often thinking of a physical act. And so if we wanna dialogue with the culture, if we wanna reach them for Christ, obviously we don't compromise our beliefs, but we do need to take the time to listen and understand what they're saying, what they mean.
And so man, issues like this are so heated because for a lot of well-intentioned unbelievers, this is an issue of this person's human rights. And as someone who's from the media – I mean I was the liberal media, you know? I didn't never really write for Christian publications. I was in the mainstream and probably kind of the left mainstream as far as the publications I was writing for, not my own beliefs, but that's where God had called me. And even as someone from those circles, as I've seen the stories come out about this bathroom bill, the vast majority of them say the state of California passed landmark legislation to enshrine the rights of transgendered young people in California. Well, just the way that's written, if you disagree with it, you're a bigot. You're prejudiced.

Darrell Bock Right. Right.

John S. Dickerson And these are a lot of my former colleagues, people I respect. They're writing from their worldview.

Darrell Bock Right.

John S. Dickerson And this is the world that we live in and that we do need to understand now. And so there's the bathroom bill in California, signed into law a couple of weeks ago. The newest one is just in committee right now. It's in process of becoming a bill. It passed its first committee and it's called in slang, the anti-Boy Scouts bill.

And what it is, is if you remember when the Boy Scouts earlier this year were trying to decide can homosexual boys be Boy Scouts, and it was a big decision for them and a lot of controversy. Well, legislators in the state of California, many who are LGBT themselves, told the Boy Scouts we're gonna write a law that if you don't let young people be homosexual, we're gonna write a law that you lose your nonprofit status. Well, regardless of what the Boy Scouts chose, they've pursued this law. It's now being drafted.

It passed its first committee and this is a law that targets youth groups. That's how it's worded. It targets youth groups and in their terminology, if you discriminate for gender identity or homosexuality, you will lose your nonprofit status. Again, there is no exception for being a Christian youth group.
Right. You know what seems odd about this to me is that the very restriction of rights that the group putting forward these laws was complaining against their being the victims of in the past, they've now reversed the tables. It's like nothing's been learned from the process about – when I think about what a democracy is about and what our culture is about, what people fight for, if you wanna think about it even that way, it is the right to have an open public square of ideas in which people have convictions, and they're allowed to live them out. And the idea that because I think something and then act out of that is somehow restricted, to me, it's putting us in an odd place when we tout ourselves as a defender of democracy.

It is, and I think a lot of us who have studied it and others a lot smarter and more studied than I am see the backlash against Christians. It's a pendulum swing. There are groups that are minority groups that I think this ties back in with inflated. Here's the evangelicals. They're these big, broad shouldered, rich, closed minded bigots who have been oppressing these groups for years. Well, now the tables have turned and now we have power, so we're gonna get them back.

We're gonna show them. Yeah.

And if they're not gonna toe our line, we'll take away their nonprofit status.

Yeah.

And obviously that's not everyone's motive.

Right.

But that seems to be a spirit of the age, not just with obvious groups like the LGBT group, but actually with – I would say many Americans in my generation who are just nonbelieving, they're not necessarily the LGBT group. They're just post-Christian and they kinda wanna see justice against the powerful Christian majority.
**Darrell Bock** Yeah, and it hides behind a claim that the law is neutral or secularized or doesn't see religious differences, that kind of thing, but it also seems to negate the impact of freedom of religion. So I think it's an interesting area. It actually is a topic. It's another one of these topics we'd like to come back to in the podcast, because I think it's a topic all onto itself in terms of a sign of where the culture's going. And in saying this, I'm gonna be clear. In saying this, it's not a complaint as much as it's an observation.

**John S. Dickerson** That's exactly right.

**Darrell Bock** Yeah.

**John S. Dickerson** And I need to be really careful about that.

**Darrell Bock** Yeah.

**John S. Dickerson** The book points out, and we need to remind ourselves repeatedly of the Scripture that we wrestle not against flesh and blood. We're not at war with any group of people and it's easy to fall into that. In fact, I think right now that's the narrative of our culture, is the conservative Christians and the LGBT movement are enemies. And it's so important that we remind ourselves these folks, even if they oppress us, even if some group in the culture persecutes us, they're not our enemy. Our enemy is unseen.

It's supernatural and it's an unseen force and everyone who doesn't yet know Christ is a slave of his. And he'll use unbelievers against God's people, but ultimately those unbelievers are never our enemy. They're the hostages. We've been sent here to love them and to rescue them. And so we've gotta be careful that as we observe these realities, we don't fall into a narrative that these people are our enemies. These are people who we love and who Christ loves desperately and gave his life for. We wanna reach them with the gospel.

**Darrell Bock** And so the way I like to say this, because I think it's an important point is the gospel is ultimately about an invitation. It’s a good news that offers an invitation, 2 Corinthians says – Paul says, "Our message to the world is we beg you be reconciled to God." And so we're looking at an invitation and extending a hand.
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Now, that doesn't mean that extended hand doesn't have to deal with reality and have some challenges wrapped up in it. It does. But in the end, your goal is not to win a war. Your goal is to win a person.

John S. Dickerson  That's right.

Darrell Bock  And so to do that, it's very, very important how we put this all together. We spent a lot of time talking about where the culture is and probably some people are pretty depressed. But let's take a look at the flipside now. How do you encourage the church to engage in light of these realities? What are some of the high points that we could focus on in terms of what the response should be?

We've already talked a little bit about one, and that is avoiding getting trapped into the pursuit of a war in such a way that the very people you're trying to reach are viewed as the enemy and you almost put them at arm's length. How do you help people do that well? I know you talked a little bit yesterday about how we view sin and being careful to be sure that we communicate how we all fall short and all have a need as opposed to there being special categories. Why don't you talk about that a little bit?

John S. Dickerson  Yeah, so it's because of this kind of warring narrative that's going on in our society, it's very natural in our human nature and in some of the circles that some of us are raised in to view some groups of sinners as a worst class of sinners. And Romans 1, which does talk about the consequences of our sin and what happens in a society when it continually turns its back on God. I think sometimes it's misunderstood or misinterpreted to mean that well, this class of sin is worse. And I don't think many of us would say that, but we often act like it, and we need to examine really that theology. Did Jesus ever say that one kind of sin was worse than other kinds of sins?


John S. Dickerson  That's right.
Darrell Bock

And in Luke 13, he makes the point, unless you repent, you likewise will perish, so the issue is not determining which sin is worse, but to understand that we're all accountable to God. We're all equally accountable to God. We're equally accountable to God even though the way in which we fall short may differ in different areas. And we tend to spot those areas where we behave, but we also tend to have blind spots in those areas where we don’t.

John S. Dickerson

That's right, and that's exactly what the Pharisees did. You can find almost lists in the Bible of which sins are worse, but they come from the Pharisees. For the Pharisees, it was the sins they didn't struggle with conveniently were the worst ones, to be a tax collector or a prostitute. So when Jesus started hanging out with those people and eating with them, it just blew the Pharisees' minds. But Jesus, we know, didn't talk in this kind of grading on a curve of sin lens.

He talked about two categories. You're either a child of God or a child of Satan. You're either in the light or you're in the dark. You're either on the narrow road or you're on the wide road. You're either a sheep or a goat, a wheat or a tare.

This is how Jesus thinks. This is spiritual reality and this is Romans 6. Well, first of all Romans 3, that we're all separated from God by our sin. We've all fallen short and then Romans 6, that none of us – we're all slaves to sin apart from God. What the book does, The Great Evangelical Recession, we make these observations, but then we try to press into Scripture, knowing that in Christ we have everything necessary for life and godliness.

His word is gonna give us all the wisdom we need to thrive in this culture. And it helps, I think, for the first half of the book, to see where we are. Then you see the New Testament in some new light and that's one of them, is Romans 6. Lord, forgive us if we ever think that because you saved us by grace, we're somehow better than someone else. We've gotten a long way from Paul who said, "I'm the chief of sinners."

And none of us has the power to resist sin, apart from the gospel. And it's actually an affront to the cross, you know? It's an affront to the gospel and to the blood of Jesus and the cross for us to tell people, "Hey, act better. Be better. Be more righteous in your own strength."
That just doesn't line up with the gospel. The gospel message is repent and come to Christ. He'll set you free. After that, your life changes. But when we just tell people, "Change your life whether or not you believe in Christ," what we're saying doesn't really line up with the book of Romans, for sure.

**Darrell Bock**

Now, well, another topic that came up was the whole issue of cultural mandate, that people – that the Christians have this mandate to change the culture. And we've actually done several podcasts that deal with this in one way or another. We had Andy Crouch come in, who said, "Thinking about culture making and what that means, we tend to think globally, but really, there's a local dimension to culture making and the way we impact life and impact human flourishing that also impacts and changes culture. And Christians don't think enough about that."

Now, that's one dimension of the conversation. But in the discussion of your book, this topic came up about well, there's a cultural mandate, so how do you engage a culture that's hostile to you on the one hand and at the same time, stand up for your convictions? Isn't that gonna be inherently confronting? And so isn't there a sense in which there's no choice or is there another way?

**John S. Dickerson**

Well, it's true that the gospel's a stumbling block. There is gonna be a point of conflict inevitably. I think our problem, if you could call it that, is we tend to lead with that. And we know better when we go into foreign cultures, foreign tribes in Africa or Papua New Guinea. When we send missionaries into those very foreign tribes, we know better than to just show up and say, "Hey, your polygamy's wrong. Your cannibalism's wrong. Here's the Ten Commandments. Repent and be saved."

We know better than to just show up and do that. We know the great missionaries that we have around the world right now. They go in, they demonstrate an unconditional love through actions. They'll dig a well or they'll build a clinic. This is what 1 Peter 2 says when it says, "Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds, and glorify your father in heaven."
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That same word, good, is used in Matthew 5 when Jesus says, "Let your light so shine." If you can shine in the darkness, that men will see your good deeds and glorify the Father. So we know this when we go into what is visually an obviously foreign culture. We know you start with good deeds. You take the time to learn the language. You build a relationship and then on that foundation you present the gospel. And those who accept the gospel, you disciple, and their lifestyles are gonna change rapidly because now they're free from sin.

Darrell Bock

So part of the assumption that you're working with here is that you're sufficiently engaged with those who may need to be challenged that you've established a level of trust for that engagement as opposed to just kind of coming in as an outsider and shaking your finger with no connections tied to the person. Fair analogy?

John S. Dickerson

That's right, and I think we'd all agree that nine times out of ten or more that's gonna fail in a foreign tribe in Africa or New Guinea. What we have failed to recognize is that as culture has rapidly changed in the last 20 years, a lot of our neighbors in America who speak English are from radically foreign tribes. And we need to do the same thing really that Jesus did. He didn't love us from a distance. 1 John 4, we love him because he first loved us. Philippians 2, he humbled himself.

He came down into our darkness. He took the time to become one of us and without compromising his righteousness. And so if we're gonna follow Christ to foreign tribes, we get that overseas and I'm essentially calling us for a paradigm shift that we recognize. A lot of our neighbors in our workplaces, in our family reunions, living on the same street. They are now from foreign tribes, and if we just show up and just wag our finger in their face and say, "Repent," it's not gonna be any more effective here than it would be in Africa.

But if we follow Christ's example, and I'm not saying do this because it works or do this because we're smart, I'm saying this is what Jesus did. He humbled himself, became one of us, spent 30 years with us walking on this Earth. And so in the same way, follow that example. Apply 1 Peter 2. Live such good lives among the pagans that they'll see your good deeds.
Darrell Bock  

Yeah. I think this is one of the places where we really have messed up on the cultural mandate. We've seen the cultural mandate as we've gotta change the people on the outside, and we just go and confront them, when in fact one of the ways that I think you challenged the culture is by becoming your own well-functioning community yourself actually modeling what it is that you're talking about so you can say to someone, "You can see what this looks like. Come and see what our communities are like," that kind of thing.

And then raise the question, isn't this a better way to live? Isn't this a better way to conduct your lives? That kind of thing. And I think when we miss that, we risk not having an example behind what we're doing. I often like to tell students that if you watch the gospels, you'll see Jesus preach a message like he preaches the message in the synagogue in Nazareth and he says, "I've come to preach to the poor and to heal the sick," and that kind of thing to preach the good news of the day of the Lord, of the day of Jubilee.

And in the very next passage, he's out ministering in a way that reinforces the message. So that if you say, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life," there actually is a way in which Jesus and his disciples minister to the community that said, "We really believe this, and you can see it in how we're interacting." And I think we've missed a little of that.

John S. Dickerson  

Oh, I think you're right on and not trying to be negative, not trying to be critical. I know we're all doing our best, but I agree. I think it's been a blind spot for many of us that we have thought that we can love from a distance. We've thought we can proclaim through a sign in our yard or whatever, here's my stance. It comes across to you like I completely oppose you, but I really love you.

And we're good to go. That's not what Jesus did. He didn't send down a message from heaven. "Hey, you're all sinners. I'm opposed to you, but I love you." He came down among us and showed that he loved us and then explained our sin and our need for repentance.

Darrell Bock  

So this discipleship that you're talking about that the church needs to develop, needs to also challenge people to be engaged in such a way that they're actually – if I can say it this way – in and among people, they're trying to reach, getting to know them, ministering to them, that kind of thing. Is that part of what you had in mind?
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John S. Dickerson  Absolutely, and I just have said it a few times, but I think that word in 1 Peter 2:12, live such good lives among the pagans, there's certain things from the New Testament paradigm where people are meeting at homes. They were a minority in the culture, whether they're in Ephesus or Galatia or Corinth, there are certain things that were givens that sometimes for us aren't givens. And we've gotta look into God's word and be real about where we are and say, "Okay, God really, it's a given that we're supposed to be among the pagans."

And I think for folks who are listening to the podcast, I've been a pastor for almost five years now, a senior pastor. It is a lot harder for me to live among the pagans than when I was working in a newsroom. And I think those of us who are leading ministries, this is an important thing for us, and it's an important thing for us to be encouraging our people, who, seven days a week – well, five to seven days a week, are working among the pagans. We can't reach them if we're not among them.

Darrell Bock  And even our language has to be careful here, because you've used a phrase a lot that actually I pause about, and that is when you're saying, "Living among the pagans," you're talking about living among the people who are unbelievers. You're talking about living among people who don't share our worldview. You're talking about living among people who share the culture, if I can say it that way, has shaped and formed in a certain way.

If they've never had exposure to the church, you wouldn't think they'd be impacted by the church. So how are they gonna get exposed to what the church represents? They can only get exposed to what the church represents by meeting people who can reflect that to them in one way or another.

John S. Dickerson  That is exactly right and for very many of them, their only exposure to the church is on the headlines, is on the news, is the lawn sign that says, "I'm against this or that." And so as a result, it furthers this kind of we're defined by what we're against, rather than what we're for, which is the good news and the great news of the gospel.

Darrell Bock  If we keep a distance, then the risk is that the stereotype gets affirmed because of that distance, in part.
John S. Dickerson: Yeah. I'd even go further to say when we keep a distance, it does solidify the stereotype. I saw this in one of the most secular newsrooms I worked in where no one else on a pretty big staff, no one else was a serious Christian, a lot of homosexual coworkers and a lot of just atheistic and agnostic secular coworkers. When I came in as an evangelical Christian, they thought of evangelical Christians in the same category as Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses. They thought of evangelicals as abortion clinic bombers.

I mean they thought I was gonna be this really radical – and I mean I am radical in my belief, but they thought I was gonna be this really offensive, jagged edged person. And those were really fun years. It was a privilege to get to work in that environment. And that's probably why I use the word pagan so much, is because they would all say, "Yeah, we're pagans." They knew they were pagans, and a lot of them knew the facts of the gospel, but they had never met an agent of the gospel who showed the grace, the love, the fruits of the spirit, the joy, the peace.

They want that peace. They want that joy. They want that contentment. And I think that's what we're called to do, whether that's at our family reunions, in our neighborhood, for so many of the people in the American church, in our workplaces.

Darrell Bock: Now, we're running short on time, so we need to kind of pull this together, but there is one more topic that I wanna have you address, and that's what does this actually look like? What are you challenging people to do, both pastors and people in the pews in terms of how can they, should they be different in engaging this culture? What are the types of things that you're saying to them?

John S. Dickerson: Well, there are a number and because of time, I'll say if you're able to get a copy of the book, The Great Evangelical Recession, I told all the pastors who were with us yesterday at the conference, there are six trends of decline there. There's six solutions. If you try to leave here and implement all six solutions, you're gonna be really overwhelmed, you know?

Darrell Bock: Yeah.
John S. Dickerson  
Really pray about which of these -one. And then I like to be really careful when implementing a solution. I think as Americans, we want here's the three step model. This works universally. It's monolithic. This works.

Darrell Bock  
And 14 months from now, this life will be completely different.

John S. Dickerson  
We want that and instead we see in the Holy Spirit, this dependence on the holy spirit, from Acts 1:8, to Acts 9:31, where it says, "The church was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit." He's the one who's gonna empower us to be Christ's representatives. The principles in the book I think are foundational because they're from God's word. They're not my ideas.

The way they're gonna flesh out is gonna look a little different in different contexts. But I think some of these paradigm shifts, one, that we're not the majority. And that brings a humility. And that brings a humility not only with our neighbors, but before God. That says, "Lord, our strength is not our bank account. Our strength is not our facilities. Our only strength is you."

And if we don't get to that place in our hearts, Scripture says God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore before the Lord that he will lift you up. If we don't start there with that paradigm shift of a desperate humility, God, unless you work, unless you show up, we're not gonna reach the lost. We're not gonna change the culture. We're not gonna strengthen and encourage your church. We can't do it without you."

That humility, these are really deep foundational paradigm shifts. Same thing with our unbelieving neighbors, whether they're LGBT, Muslim, or just agnostic, unbelieving, that we view them as people who God loves just as much as us and who are enslaved in sin because all have sinned. And that we really wanna look at the way Jesus ate with sinners. We really wanna live out 1 Peter 2.

I think if we really in our hearts before God say, "God, I wanna apply 1 Peter 2. I wanna live a good life among the pagans." If we do that with a humility and ask him to empower us the same way that he empowered the church in Acts, he will enable us to do that. And I wish it was do these three things, but I think that’s where it starts, is that humility before God and others.
Darrell Bock: And so this has the look, practically speaking, of actually making the effort to engage in ongoing relationships with people who at one level you might say, "Well, I don't have anything in common with them, so why should I do this?" And there was a lot of encouragement about the kinds of relationships that you have and the way you build them and who you spend time with, that kind of thing as a way of building the bridges to represent God well. Is that a part of the equation as well?

John S. Dickerson: Absolutely. I mean Jesus came from heaven to earth. The light came into the darkness, John 1, and if we're serious about following him, we're gonna go into the darkness as light. And I think especially for us in vocational ministry, we have to be intentional about that.

It's not gonna happen by accident. There's some unbelievers who stopped by and come to our ministries. But unless we get out there and really engage and I'd say surprise some of these groups that think that we should hate them, think we do hate them, let's go out without compromising the truth. Let's also be people like Jesus, who are full of grace, and demonstrate God's love with actions.

Darrell Bock: Now, you shared a little bit about, and this is probably the last thing we have time for. You shared a little bit about how you spend your own time to make this happen. Why don't you share a little bit about that? So how do you make this work?

John S. Dickerson: Yeah. One thing I've noticed now as a vocational minister, this is a lot harder. Jesus says, "Don't hide your light under a bushel." A lot of us work in a bushel, you know? We wake up in the morning, we drive to the bushel. It's a church building.

Darrell Bock: Right.

John S. Dickerson: And we work there. And so one of the very simple things I do is two days a week I work at a coffee shop and intentionally one where some pretty different tribes hang out. That's not an accident that that's where I go. And I go there very aware that if they find out that I'm a pastor, if they talk to someone else and say, "Oh, yeah. He's a pastor."
They're gonna have some prejudged stereotypes about me. My goal is not ultimately to get them to like me, but my goal is to show them Christ's love and grace in a way that sets them up to also show them God's truth. Romans 10, salvation only comes by hearing and these good deeds are only a foundation to ultimately explain the good news.

Darrell Bock

Well, this has been fascinating and time has flown by. And we've covered a lot. And I'm sure this is a topic that isn't going away. So I may hold out an invitation for you to come back and maybe, by Skype, follow up on some of this more down the road as we see how things progress. But I really appreciate, John, your willingness to come in and talk with us about this and to talk about kind of where we are and where we need to go and at such an individualized level.

This wasn't a scrape the Milky Way and look at how evangelicalism looks, what evangelical looks like from 55,000 feet. This is what it looks like when your boots are very much on the ground. And so thank you very much for coming in and talking with us. And we thank you for joining us at the table where we discuss issues of God and culture.