

Kevin DeYoung: Defending Christian Faith as Important as Preaching It

A respected Christian author and pastor says believers “need a theology of defending themselves in the courts,” pointing to the example of the Apostle Paul in the Bible.

Kevin DeYoung made the comments on The Gospel Coalition website, showing that Paul believed that preaching the gospel and defending it from attack are equally important.

DeYoung said, “we must not assume that defending ourselves—strenuously and sometimes even defiantly—before the governing authorities is inconsistent with being a follower of Jesus” or goes against spreading the gospel.

Gospel cause

Considering passages in Acts where Paul defends the gospel and his ministry, DeYoung said the Apostle was a “cultural apologist” as well as a missionary and pastor.

“In these chapters we repeatedly find the word (or some variation of the word) apologia as Paul makes his apology or defense,” DeYoung commented.

He added that while Paul “understood that to quietly accept injustice could have been simpler and perhaps even personally satisfying”, in his case, and in cases today, “an unwillingness to defend himself would not have served the cause of the gospel.”

Hope not hate

DeYoung, pastor of a church in Michigan and popular Christian author, commented that Paul used his defence as an opportunity to preach about Jesus Christ.

“Time after time, when put on trial, Paul found a way to talk about the resurrection of Christ, about faith and repentance, and about the Messianic identity of Jesus.

“We can be quick to say ‘Let’s stop all this fighting, all this controversy, all this culture war stuff, and get on with the work of evangelism’ as if Paul’s defense was not also evangelism!

“More than ever, we must be ready for someone to ask us a reason for the hope that we have – even if they mistakenly believe our hope to be hate.”

Important

DeYoung concluded: “For Paul, defending the faith was just as important as preaching the faith because he did not see the two as different tasks.”

“Paul was willing for his life to be cut short if the work of the gospel could go on.

“But so long as the gospel itself was maligned, misrepresented, and unfairly marginalized, he wasn’t about to submit himself to slander or surrender a single civic right,” he said.

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