

WORLDVIEW

Session Four

Family of Christ Lutheran Worldview Study

THEME

Science is a gift from God for investigating His creation, but it is not the ultimate authority for all truth. Christians receive scientific inquiry with gratitude while recognizing that God's Word alone reveals the Gospel: Christ has come to save sinners and give eternal life.

Key Verse

- John 3:1–17

Supporting Verses

- Genesis 1:1
- Psalm 19:1–4
- John 1:1–3
- John 17:17
- Colossians 1:16
- 1 Corinthians 2:12–14

Science, Faith, and the Limits of What We Can See

Creation, Knowledge & Truth

1. Begin With the Text, John 3:1–17

Nicodemus was educated, religious, and accustomed to asking important questions. Yet Jesus showed him that there was a reality he could not discover merely through human knowledge:

“Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3

Discuss:

1. What does Nicodemus know about Jesus when he comes to Him?
2. What does Nicodemus not understand?
3. What does Jesus teach us about the limits of human knowledge?
4. Why is being intellectually informed different from having faith?
5. Where do we tend to assume that what we can observe or measure is all that is real?

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2. Science Is a Gift From the Creator

Christian confession: God created the heavens and the earth. Creation is real, ordered, and worthy of investigation. Scientific study can help us understand how God's creation works.

Human beings are capable of genuine knowledge, but we are also finite and sinful.

Key distinction:

Science: A method for investigating the physical creation through observation, experimentation, and evidence.

Scientism: The philosophical claim that only what can be demonstrated through natural science is real or knowable.

Discuss:

1. Why is it important for Christians to distinguish science from scientism?
2. What are examples of questions science can answer well?
3. What are questions science cannot answer by its methods alone?
4. Can science tell us what is morally right? Why or why not?
5. Can science tell us whether human life has ultimate meaning? Why?

3. Two Sources of Knowledge and One Ultimate Authority

God reveals Himself through creation, which displays His power and wisdom. God reveals Himself through His Word, which tells us what creation cannot tell us on its own, especially the truth about sin, salvation, Christ, and eternal life.

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“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” John 17:17

Science can investigate God's creation. It cannot replace God's revelation in Scripture.

Discuss:

1. What happens when we expect science to answer theological or moral questions?
2. What happens when Christians refuse to listen to legitimate scientific evidence because they fear it?
3. How can we avoid both fear of science and worship of science?

4. When Science and Scripture Appear to Conflict

Before declaring a contradiction, ask:

- What does Scripture actually say?
- What kind of biblical literature are we reading?
- What does the scientific evidence actually establish?
- Are we confusing evidence with a philosophical interpretation of the evidence?
- Could our interpretation of either Scripture or creation be mistaken?

Key principle:

Truth cannot ultimately contradict truth because God is the Author of both creation and Scripture.

Discuss:

1. Why should Christians approach these questions with humility?
2. How can a Christian disagree with a scientific conclusion without being anti-science?

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3. How can Christians disagree with another Christian about scientific questions without treating the disagreement as a test of salvation?
4. What questions about science have you found difficult or unsettling?

5. The Law: Our Knowledge Cannot Save Us

Science can tell us extraordinary things about the physical world.

It cannot: forgive sin; reconcile us to God; create faith; defeat death; give eternal life.

Human reason itself is also affected by sin. We can use our intellect to discover wonderful things while still attempting to make ourselves the ultimate authority. The deeper problem is not simply ignorance. It is sin. We want to know, control, and define reality on our own terms.

Discuss:

1. How can scientific achievement become a source of pride?
2. How can Christians turn either science or theology into an identity marker?
3. Where do you personally see the temptation to trust human knowledge more than God's promises?
4. Why is "I don't know" sometimes an important Christian answer?

6. The Gospel: The Creator Came to Save His Creatures

Discuss:

1. Why is the resurrection fundamentally a Gospel claim rather than a scientific experiment?

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2. What difference does it make that the Creator Himself entered His creation?
3. How does Christ change the way we think about both our knowledge and our limitations?
4. Why is eternal life more important than our ability to explain the physical universe?

7. The Means of Grace: How Does God Give Us Faith?

We should not leave the discussion with the impression that faith is simply our decision to believe something science cannot prove.

God creates and sustains faith through His Means of Grace:

Holy Baptism — God joins us to Christ and gives His promises.

Holy Absolution — Christ speaks forgiveness to sinners through His Word.

Holy Scripture — God's Spirit works through His Word to create and sustain faith.

Holy Communion — Christ gives His true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:6

Discuss:

1. Why is it important that Christianity is not merely an intellectual worldview?
2. How does the Holy Spirit create faith?

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3. How does Baptism remind us that our salvation depends upon God's action rather than our intellectual ability?
4. How does receiving Christ's forgiveness in Word and Sacrament give us confidence when we don't have all the answers?

8. Living Faithfully in a Scientific World

Christian posture:

Study creation. God has given us minds capable of investigation.

Ask questions. Faith does not require intellectual dishonesty.

Follow evidence. Christians need not fear honest inquiry.

Recognize limits. Science is not equipped to answer every question.

Submit to Scripture. God's Word—not human opinion—is our ultimate authority.

Confess Christ. The most important truth is not merely how the universe works, but who created it and who has redeemed us.

Serve your neighbor. Scientific knowledge can become a vocation through medicine, engineering, research, education, technology, and countless other forms of service.

Discussion: Bringing It Home

1. Where do you see science functioning as a genuine blessing in your vocation or daily life?
2. Where do you see scientism functioning as a competing worldview?
3. How should Christians respond when scientific questions remain unresolved?
4. How can parents help children appreciate science without treating science as the final authority?

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5. How can our congregation encourage honest questions without compromising Scripture?
6. What would it look like to have a church culture where someone can say, "I don't understand this," without being ashamed?

Closing Reflection

What can science do? It can help us understand God's creation.

What can't science do? It cannot make us right with God.

What does the Law reveal? Our knowledge, reason, and accomplishments cannot overcome sin or death.

What does the Gospel proclaim? The Creator became man in Jesus Christ, died for sinners, rose again, and gives eternal life.

Where does God give that life? Through His Word and Sacraments, by the working of the Holy Spirit.

Am I trusting my ability to understand everything—or am I trusting the God who understands everything and has promised to save me in Christ?