

Giving Hope to Ferris Bueller

I really like the 80's movie *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. It reminds me of me when I was a kid. I hated school and tried to find any reason not to go. Like Ferris, I even came up with reasons to stay home that technically weren't true. (Something that cost me later in life.)

There's a scene in the movie where he's getting ready for his day off. It's the kind of story where he often looks at the camera, as in conversation with the viewer, and share's his thoughts. At one point he says this:

"Not that I condone fascism, or any -ism for that matter. -Isms in my opinion are not good. A person should not believe in an -ism, he should believe in himself. I quote John Lennon, 'I don't believe in Beatles, I just believe in me.' Good point there. After all, he was the walrus. I could be the walrus. I'd still have to bum rides off people."

"-Isms in my opinion are not good". Let's think about this.

Do any of the following statements sound familiar?

- "All religions are one path to God." (This is called Plural-ism)
- "All religions are true and valid for those involved in them." (This is called Relativ-ism)
- "All religions exist to serve the needs of human-kind." (This is called Human-ism)

Teachers and preachers in Churches have been called out repeatedly for their adherence to any of these three philosophies. Christians agree with Ferris; these -isms aren't good.

Each "-ism" presents a problem. If all religions are one path to God, then we can't say Jesus is the only way. If all religions are valid, then none of them are truly valid. If all religions exist to serve people, then it's based on what we want, not on what we need or what's right.

The thinking Christian community have accurately responded by stating, "Jesus Christ is **the** way to God, whether we believe in Him or not, and it is way more about Jesus than it is about us." This statement is true. This statement is Biblical.

However, we sometimes fail to recognize how the "-isms" aren't just abstract things floating around in the air. They are real thoughts, from real people who have real feelings attached to them.

The folks at www.rzim.org say that people ask four main questions in their lives: Origin (Where do I come from?), Meaning (What is the point of all this?), Morality (What is right and wrong?) and Destiny (Where will I go when I die?)

Let's not forget how Ferris finishes his thought in the quote above, "A person should not believe in an -ism, he should believe in himself. I quote John Lennon, 'I don't believe in Beatles, I just believe in me.'"

Ferris' answer to life's questions, "*Believe in yourself*".

Let's walk through what Ferris might be thinking. To him, allowing others to believe in themselves means it's disingenuous, disrespectful and disheartening when we don't pay close attention to the journey and experiences of others. If we believe in ourselves, then everything and everyone is valid.

Ferris, and others like him, arrive at pluralism because if everyone were pursuing their own answer, every answer would have to be correct, right? He arrives at relativism because if someone finds their answer, it's respectful to them to allow them their viewpoint. He arrives at humanism because if religious people do nothing while millions die needlessly, then religion is useless.

We must understand that beliefs outside of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (no matter how misleading or untrue) are human attempts at making sense of the world. In the Bible, wise Christians have thought to introduce Christ to people in ways they would most understand.

- **Acts 17:22** (Paul preaching to the Athenians) "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious." (Pluralism)
- **1 Corinthians 9:22** (Paul teaching the Corinthians) "I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some." (Relativism)
- **James 1:27** (James to the Jewish Brothers)"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." (Humanism)

So how would I communicate hope in Christ to Ferris Bueller? I would tell him that I have the same questions about life that he does. I would tell him that I respect the journey he's taken to answer them.

Then I would tell him, "I'm a Christian and I don't believe in -isms either, I believe in Jesus."

Then I'd see where it goes from there.