

All Saints Day: Charlie Kirk

By
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“What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD Now in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints. O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds.”

-Psalm 116:12-16

This Sunday I thought it would be good to take a break from the book of Exodus to celebrate “All Saints Day”. Unfortunately, due to many various factors that I have spoken about before, this holiday has fallen out of fashion in our country. But historically, it served as the basis for what was once called “All Hallows Eve”, now known as “Halloween”. For centuries Christians would observe November 2nd in order to celebrate the saints who had come before us and had found their eternal reward in Heaven.

As you can see from the above passage, the word “saint” once held a much different meaning for the people of God than the one that we are familiar with today. In the modern world, the word “saint” tends to mean someone of unusual righteousness, and in fact in Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy there are full criteria for becoming a saint and individuals must be officially “canonized” as saints by the church. However, the original word, in the Greek and Hebrew, was related to the word “holy” which meant set apart.

“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours...”

-1 Corinthians 1:2

As you can see, it is Christ’s sanctifying work that calls us to be saints. This is not a title reserved for the phenomenally righteous, but for all those who have been “set apart” by the work of God, and called to be a part of His kingdom. I don’t necessarily think that it was a completely negative thing that the word became associated with particularly righteous people though. In much the same way that we can talk about particularly impressive individuals as being “true Americans” I think the same idea is at work here.

Being an American refers to everyone who is a citizen of this country. However when we think of a “true American” like George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, we are simply thinking of an ideal of what it means to be an American. A physical embodiment of our nation's highest ideals. In the same way, when we think of a “saint” as a particularly faithful Christian, it isn’t supposed to exclude all others from being called saints, but only an embodiment of the highest ideals of what it means to be called by God.

And so, this was a day where Christians had the opportunity to do this. To celebrate those in our past who truly answered the call of God and lived faithfully to Him. Doing this had two powerful effects. First, meditating on their example could bring boldness and encouragement towards our own relationship with God. The apostle Paul speaks about his own example to Timothy in this way:

“But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

-2 Timothy 3:10-12

Even though Paul was still alive when he wrote this, he is referencing a time when he was literally stoned, and presumed dead, by an unruly mob for preaching the gospel. At the time that Paul penned these words, the church was facing an unprecedented level of persecution, and Paul used his own example to encourage the faithfulness of Timothy. The same is true for us. By studying the example of those who were faithful to God, even unto death, this can have a powerful encouraging effect on our own faith.

Second, by honoring those who came before us, we can remember our history. That our faith is not a purely individual event, but that we are the recipients of an inheritance that spans all the way back to the very beginning of the human race. The writer of Hebrews devotes an entire chapter of his letter to focus on the faithfulness of previous saints, and he ends this chapter like this:

“Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the

earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”

-Hebrews 11:35-40

I want to call attention to this last line “...that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” The writer of Hebrews is reminding his audience of the history of their faith. That these men and women of faith, through their faithfulness, preserved the faith that we now partake of. This is something that our culture has widely ignored over the years. We see ourselves as radical individuals. We don’t really honor the past anymore or consider those who came before us with honor. As a result, many of us don’t even know the names, or the history, of our own family beyond who we have known in our own lives. This is equally true for our national history, or the history of our own faith. This is a massive mistake. This point is expressed throughout the Scriptures, but since we are in the book of Exodus, let’s quote from this book:

“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.”

-Exodus 13:19

The path to true liberty from Egypt begins by Moses *remembering* his ancestor Joseph. A profound lesson comes from this. Those who are moving towards liberty are those who honor the bones of their ancestors. Or to put it another way, those who preserve and venerate the faithfulness of those who came before us. Those who fail to do this are destined to lose their liberty. This might sound like a stretch, but this exact point is made more explicitly in the book of Genesis. Noah has a moral failing and ends up drunk and naked. His son Ham decides to mock the nakedness of his father, as a result his lineage is cursed to be slaves. His other two sons cover the nakedness of their father and have an honored lineage.

Right now our country is falling apart, for many reasons, but one reason is we have failed to honor our ancestors. We have failed to venerate them, to respect their legacy, and so we have lost their wisdom and are repeating the very mistakes that they fought to free us from. This is why this day is so important, it is a way for us to rectify this mistake.

Unfortunately, like all good things, this concept of honoring saints was corrupted. Over time the saints in heaven were venerated, prayed to, and even worshipped. What was once good and encouraging for the faith of the faithful, had become an occasion for

forms of idolatry. Worse, a strange belief in “purgatory” crept into this practice. I don’t have time to talk in length about purgatory; but a simple explanation is that purgatory was believed to be the place where Christians went if they had faith in God, but had too many sins to ascend directly to heaven. And so they went to an intermediate place of discipline to be “purged” from their sins.

Through various corrupting influences, there was a belief that Christians on earth could help their ancestors ascend to heaven by purchasing “indulgences” from the church and interceding for them. And so, on top of November 2nd as a day to celebrate those in heaven, the church began to celebrate November 1st as a day to intercede for those in purgatory. This is why October 31st became known as “All Hallows Eve”. It was the Eve of the day where people could intercede for people in purgatory. Naturally superstitions began to emerge about this day, and many considered it a day where demons, ghosts, and ghouls could wander the earth and many other strange practices emerged from this. If you would like a more full explanation of this and what I think of Halloween, I gave a sermon about it last year that you can listen to.

For the purposes of this paper, I instead want to encourage us to meditate on the life of a recent saint who has gone to be with God. By doing this, I would like for us to receive the two blessings that I mentioned before. That we can gain courage from this person’s testimony, and also to learn from their legacy. And so, I would like to talk about Charlie Kirk.

The Two Witnesses

To some this might sound like an odd choice since Charlie Kirk was more of a political figure than a religious one. However, I would actually disagree with that statement. While it is true that Charlie Kirk began his career as a purely political persona, he ended his career by really digging into his faith and trying to encourage the church and share the gospel. The evidence for this shift can be seen in his legacy. After his death there was an almost global revival that occurred and is still underway. His memorial had, arguably, the largest gospel presentation in human history with hundreds of millions of people that have viewed his memorial since it happened.

And I believe that by studying this shift in Charlie Kirk, we will gain a greater understanding of the current moment that we are in, but also we can honor the life of someone who, I believe, finished the race well and was cut down far too soon. So I will not be defending all of Charlie’s views, nor will I even talk much about his political ideas, but instead I want to focus on his shift towards his faith and what he did that was so effective.

“When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

-Revelation 11:7-13

The book of Revelation is a much debated book in Christian circles, and I have no intention of trying to argue the varying views in this teaching, but instead I want to use the above passage to point out an interesting point. I more or less subscribe to C.S. Lewis' view on this book, that while I believe it will have a literal fulfillment in the future, it also contains a pattern for how various societies will reject God, try to construct their own Tower of Babel and will eventually be destroyed. We have seen this with Rome, the Holy Roman Empire during the Middle Ages, France, the Ottoman Empire, Germany, the Soviet Union, and many others.

The patterns that we see in Revelation continue to repeat themselves in more and more literal fashion as we move closer to the return of Christ. And the above passage is a part of this pattern. When a society is close to its collapse, there will be “two witnesses” who will prophesy the collapse of that society. While these “witnesses” will most likely be more miraculous individuals when this pattern comes to a close, but in previous societies they have had more natural iterations.

These are merely members of the society who are witnesses to the power of God, and the corruption of their society. They will vocally call out the culture for what they are doing wrong and call for repentance. However, when a society is ready to fall, their message is rejected and these witnesses will be martyred in some sense, this could be exile or literal execution, and the culture will celebrate their death. But, they will be raised from the dead and ascend to heaven. Again, in the end this will be more literal but a way to understand the previous iterations of this pattern, it symbolically refers to their warning being vindicated after the fact.

In the past our nation has had men like this, men like Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. Both saw the corruption of their age, both fought against it, and both were murdered. However, the nation didn't collapse, because their deaths were not mocked, but instead they were instantly heeded and a type of societal change followed their deaths. With everything that we are seeing right now, both globally as well as domestically, I think we are in a similar moment. I believe that we are on a type of knife's edge, an inflection point that will have pretty dire consequences. And I believe men like Charlie Kirk were witnesses to the current corruption and had a message to bring us back from the brink. How our nation responds to his murder I think will have a lot to say about the future trajectory of our culture overall.

Loss of Freedom

But what was it that Charlie saw that I believe is so important to talk about?

"There may not be a simpler sentence that better reflects an incontrovertible truth than the one used by Milton Friedman and others that there is no political freedom without economic freedom."

-Charlie Kirk - "Time For a Turning Point"

This is a quote from Charlie's first book. As stated before, Charlie began as a purely political figure, but transitioned around 2017 or 2018. But it was what Charlie saw that was wrong with our nation that ultimately led him to God. And because this was at the heart of his message, it is why one of the main responses to his death has been a type of Christian revival.

Charlie realized that the individual liberty in our nation, especially for the youth, was being stolen through economic problems and a shift towards more socialistic ideals. Again, my intent here is not to defend his economic ideals, but instead to give context for the greater point I will make later. But he was genuinely worried about the heart of dependency and entitlement coming from the younger generation. He really believed that this would result in more government power and less individual liberty. For the less say we have over our own money, the less free we really are:

"In order to gain control over a people nonviolently you need to get them to surrender their freedom voluntarily. One of the better ways to do that is to convince them that by surrendering their freedom they are helping out others. The best way to do it is to convince them that they are helping themselves."

-Charlie Kirk - "Time For a Turning Point"

“Controlling power is best wielded from the highest perch. Liberty is best preserved at the closest, local level. To the extent that we continue to move away from local control to federal control we will continue to lose liberty. Big government doesn’t just suck, it makes dependent slaves out of all of us.”

-Charlie Kirk - “Time For a Turning Point”

The New Babel

“And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’”

-Genesis 11:4

Since the original tower of Babel was constructed, its shadow has fallen upon human civilization and caused the same types of destruction that it did in the beginning. This is why the first empire to conquer Israel was Babylon, and why Babel is “rebuilt” in the book of Revelation. A way to understand this structure is that it is an attempt of the ruling class of a culture to bring total stability to their culture and unify all people under this system.

For most of human history, this structure has been political. It has originated in the ruling class and therefore has manifested itself in a type of empire. It was C.S. Lewis who first pointed out that the new tower of Babel in the west would not be political, but instead it would grow in the university system. That from the universities, the ideologies of the elites could be impressed upon the youth who would go on to lead the nation as our political and economic leaders.

While many people have complained against the bias on college campuses for a while, Charlie was one of the few people willing to actively fight this problem. What he saw is that the good students were basically bullied into silence as those around them were actively indoctrinated into ideals that would rob them of their freedom and their faith:

“Most students show up, at least they should, for the purpose of getting an education to prepare them for the rest of their lives. Once they realize that their future can be jeopardized by speaking up, they quickly, and you can argue prudently, retreat into the shadows. It is especially easy to make that choice when you are without support.”

-Charlie Kirk - “Time For a Turning Point”

Charlie realized that there were many students who did not agree with the agenda of the universities they attended, but they felt isolated, as if they were the only ones who felt the way they did, and that they had no power to speak these opinions in public. By

boldly speaking out on campuses, Charlie gave a voice to all these disenfranchised students, he gave them the courage to speak up, to have a voice, and to have a community that saw the way they did.

It was these two points that led Charlie's organization, "Turning Point", for the beginning of its existence. But then something changed, Charlie saw something else that many people are just now seeing.

Spiritual Shift

It was in this unique vantage point that Charlie noticed something else. By diving into the American ideals of liberty, he started to see how rooted in Christianity these ideas were. And that caused him to seek more fervently the God who inspired these ideas. This is a quote from Charlie a few months before he was killed:

"...I was reading Hayek, "Road to Serfdom" and I had kind of an aha moment and said 'there's a lot of good and evil claims in this book, by what standard are they saying something is good?' so it brought me back to my Christianity... As I started to pursue the Scriptures more and take it seriously... simultaneously the woke stuff all of a sudden reared its ugly head which is a manifestation of a spiritual struggle."

-Charlie Kirk - on "The Jordan Peterson Podcast"

Weirdly, it was his economic interests, and fervor for liberty that inspired him towards his faith. It reminds me a little of the movie "National Treasure" with Nicholas Cage. Even though it is a little cheesy at times, overall it is a solid heist film. But, what the movie is about is a man whose family has been chasing a treasure that they believed the American founders were entrusted with and hid. To spoil the end of the movie, he eventually finds the treasure through clues hidden on historical artifacts like the Declaration of Independence. Symbolically what this movie is about is the vast "treasure" that our forefathers have left us.

The main character's own father, played by John Voigt, has grown cynical about the treasure, having never found it himself. This could be a symbol of many older Americans, specifically the "Baby Boomer" generation, who saw the promises of our founding as a lie given the varying hypocrisies of our nation, like slavery and racism. But the main character's ardent belief inspires his dad and they find the treasure together, hidden beneath a church. This is a surprising symbol for a Hollywood movie, although it was two decades ago. The real treasure of our founding is not in the founding political principles, but it is hidden in the church, the *faith* that inspired our founders.

Charlie had a similar revelation. The genius of our founding, the freedom and prosperity that he so loved, was not political, it was spiritual, it was religious. And he realized that the attack on the political ideals of our founding were both a sign of our lack of faith, but also a cause of secularism.

“...if you do not have a religious basis, specifically a Christian one, for your society, something else is going to replace it. This is where the political meets the spiritual and the political meets the religious. When you become less religious... then you have a gaping sized hole in your heart and something must fill it, and out of the lack of Christianity is where we get wokism... Of course there should be some separation, some distinction (of church and state) but do we have a separation of morality and state?... If a society becomes less Christian, if a society becomes less grounded to our foundational roots, be very careful what will actually replace it.”

-Charlie Kirk - Texas A&M Speech

In the modern church, the separation of church and state has been a much debated topic. Once again, I have no interest in giving a particular philosophy here, but instead I want to point out that what Charlie saw was that these things are inextricably linked. To put it more simply, the religious and the political are not as separated as we have been led to believe, they are distinct, but they are not separate. When the universities began to indoctrinate students into political ideologies many failed to see, and many still fail to see, that this has religious implications.

This doesn't mean that every Christian has to share Charlie's economic views, but it does mean that our views, even our economic views are built on something, and if they have the wrong foundations, or the wrong conclusions, embedded within them, they might just lead us away from God. While the current left-wing economic rhetoric seemed to be merely politically, what Charlie saw is that they emerged from a religious void. Meaning that people were seeking transcendent meaning and were looking for it in academia instead of the church.

So when Charlie talks about the growth of “wokism” this is what he is talking about. They begin with theories about politics and economics, and then they move into social theories about oppression, social justice, and equity, which in turn has moral implications for how we should live and what behaviors are “good” and which are “damaging”. To put it another way, what begins as a political idea takes on ethical dimensions which in turn takes on religious dimensions. The opposite is supposed to be the case. We are supposed to start with a religious foundation that informs our ethics, and this affects our politics.

The reason why everything is political now is because this is the shape our current culture is taking. Politics really *has* become an expression of our religious and spiritual needs. So Christian parents send their kids to these schools, and they aren't very concerned when their kids start learning more left-wing political theories, which turn into left-wing social theories like queer theory and critical race theory. They are then surprised when their kids leave their faith in an attempt to have solidarity with these communities, especially the LGBTQ community.

So just as Charlie dug more into the roots of America and became more Christian, as kids are taught to hate our country, they begin to hate its roots. What was a spiritual revival for Charlie became a spiritual revolution for many young people.

Revival

"...whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

-2 Corinthians 4:4-6

This is another reason why I think Charlie Kirk is worth talking about. He represents a very unique revival that I believe is well underway in our current culture. Last year I gave a sermon about this revival, and I will leave a lengthy quote from my essay on this topic at the end of these comments. But I truly believe we are in a very unique revival. Unlike previous revivals, it isn't beginning in the church. Instead it is coming from individuals like Jordan Peterson, who isn't a Christian, and people like Charlie Kirk, Ben Shapiro, and others. Even more obscure figures like the English historian Tom Holland. Tom, in a similar way to Charlie, moved towards Christianity by discovering the beauty of the Christian message that was at the foundations of everything he loved about western culture.

It isn't from preachers proclaiming the gospel, but instead it is from these individuals who are preaching the beauty of traditional western values, which are Christian, the importance of individual liberty matched with personal responsibility, and rejecting the current "woke" ideologies. Many young people have felt spiritually bankrupt for some time, and they are looking for purpose in more traditional sources. And so what we are seeing, even now, is not merely a revival in terms of numbers of young people coming

to church, but a type of reformation where the churches that they are seeking are more traditional, conservative, and disciplined.

To put it another way, the same trajectory that Charlie Kirk followed, is the exact one that many young people are following right now. Which is why his movement began as a purely political movement and has become increasingly spiritual over the years. In fact, “Turning Point Faith”, which is Charlie’s attempt to provide more spiritual resources for young people, to unify more sound churches, and to embolden ministers to stand against current government overreaches and current issues that are presenting themselves as “social” but are really religious.

Below I have added a quote from my previous essay entitled: *“The Next Revival”*. Where I talk about C.S. Lewis and how he predicted the exact type of revival that we are seeing right now:

“In “The Pilgrim’s Regress” though, (C.S.) Lewis uses his own conversion to Christianity to “predict” a coming Christian revival in the west, and to explain the types of messages that God has used within the church throughout the last few centuries:

“The Landlord sends pictures of many different kinds. What is universal is not the particular picture, but the arrival of some message, not perfectly intelligible, which wakes this desire and sets men longing for something East or West of the world; something possessed, if at all, only in the act of desiring it, and lost so quickly that the craving itself becomes craved; something that tends inevitably to be confused with common or even with vile satisfactions lying close to hand, yet which is able, if any man faithfully live through the dialectic of its successive births and deaths, to lead him at last where true joys are to be found.”

-C. S. Lewis - “The Pilgrim’s Regress”

In his book the “Landlord” is an allegory for God, and He is leading people to Himself, sometimes through the “roads”, which are a picture of the law of God, but sometimes through a “picture” or an “image” that eventually leads people to God through an intermediate longing. Lewis then identifies the people who are drawn to God through the law as “Shepherds” and those who are drawn to God through the pictures as “Pagans”. What Lewis reveals is that a “correct” revival is when the law takes center stage. This is a revival that begins within the church and expresses to people their need for salvation due to sinning against God’s laws. This is more in the mold of the First Great Awakening that took place in the west and was spearheaded by men like Jonathan Edwards and his famous sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”.

However, Lewis also mentions that most people aren't built like this. The law doesn't actually convict them, but it scandalizes them and drives them away from God. For these people, a revival can't come from the church itself, but from a different source that prepares them to go to the church and receive salvation through the gospel. While he admits this is the "wrong" way to come to God, he also says:

'But it is more than dangerous. You said it was beginning at the wrong end, while the Shepherd people began at the right end.' *'That is true. But if you are a Pagan by birth or by nature, you have no choice. It is better to begin at the wrong end than not to begin at all. And the most part of men are always Pagans. Their first step will always be the desire born of the pictures: and though that desire hides a thousand false trails it also hides the only true one for them, and those who preach down the desire under whatever pretext—Stoic, Ascetic, Rigorist, Realist, Classicist—are on the Enemy's side whether they know it or not.'*

-C. S. Lewis - "The Pilgrim's Regress"

Although the journey to God that doesn't come immediately through the law is not preferable, for some this is the only way. The truth is, there is no "one way" to come to Christ. Some will come out of fear of death, or desire for political change, or a desire for the spiritual, but regardless of why someone might come to God, the purpose of the church is to welcome them in and help them accept the truth of the gospel.

To sum this point up, the pursuit of God always begins with a hunger and a thirst, an intense longing that can't be put into words. The "picture" that God sends is designed to fan the flame of this desire, and He doesn't care what this intermediate picture might be, whether it is a desire for justice, beauty, an afterlife, the transcendent, or any other intermediate thing. The job of the church is to capitalize on this picture and show that Christ, ultimately, fulfills this longing. What Satan does is corrupt the image and convince people that their longing can be satisfied by the thing itself. Therefore, he makes an idol of justice in a political movement, or an idol of nature in a sort of neo-paganism, or an idol of goodness in legalism. The church should be careful not to condemn the image God is using, but to also avoid the snare of Satan in making a god of these intermediate things."

"Men despise religion; they hate it and fear it is true. To remedy this, we must begin by showing that religion is not contrary to reason; that it is venerable, to inspire respect for it; then we must make it lovable, to make good men hope it is true; finally, we must prove it is true. Venerable, because it has perfect knowledge of man; lovable because it promises the true good."

-Blaise Pascal - "Pensées"

Acts 17

Since Charlie was most well-known for his on-campus debates, I thought it would be good to end this essay looking at Acts 17. In this chapter of the Bible, the apostle Paul engages with the intellectual elites of his day in order to express the gospel to the Greek world. In this passage I think we get a good look at the heart of evangelism which has animated the church for millenia and was a main motivating factor in Charlie Kirk.

Heart of Care

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.”

-Acts 17:16-17

The first thing that we notice is that Paul was not moved by anger or despair, but genuine sympathy and compassion for the Athenians. In context, Paul was merely stopping by Athens on the way to another mission trip. It was his heart for the people that moved him to speak and this comes out clearly in the level of respect and care he shows those he communicates with. The word “reasoned” used in verse 17 is the Greek word “*dialegomai*”.

Paul didn’t talk *at* the people in Athens, he dialogued with them, he listened to them as much as he spoke to them. We can see the level of listening he did when we finally hear him speak later in the chapter. He quotes their own philosophers showing that he really had taken the time to learn what the Athenians believed. And he did this in plain sight, in the ancient equivalent of the university, speaking to the most educated people of the day.

The thing that stands out to me when I read Charlie’s writings, or listen to him speak, is this same genuine care. He never really talked down to people, nor did he look at the youth of this country as “the problem”. He really did care for the people he spoke to and this is what made his message so appealing. I think that it is all too easy for Christians to be so angered by our current cultural situation that we speak against it with a heart of anger and even despair.

This attitude comes out clearly in our speech and turns off those we are trying to reach. Even in his usage of social media, Charlie and his team had a sincere care for the youth of this country and really wanted their best. I think that, given our current political climate, the videos that were most viral from him were sharp debates with college

students and professors, but after his death, many of his more heart-felt videos have become more popular. Videos where he does share the gospel, and minister to the real felt issues of those he was speaking to. This is a great lesson, in order to help our nation or even our fellow man, we must first love them. Without love we will only condescend to those we disagree with.

The Spirit of Confusion

“Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.” For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; “for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you...”

-Acts 17:18-23

To contrast Paul’s spirit of care and faithfulness, we see from the intellectual elites of Athens. They are dismissive and condescending towards Paul, calling him a “babbler”, but they are also deeply confused. We can see this confusion in two places. First we are told that *“...all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.”*

Then we are told that they had an altar “to the unknown god”. Off the bat, this might be the height of folly and hubris. To actually erect an altar to worship the god of ignorance is beyond the pale when it comes to intellectual folly. While this place masqueraded as a place of knowledge and edification, it is actually a place of confusion. There is no clarity of thought, no deep conviction, only an altar to “the unknown”. The people who are mocked in this place are people like Paul, people with genuine convictions.

I think that most centers of higher education can easily fall into this trap. They want to be an “open marketplace of ideas”. By doing this they must venerate every idea and by doing so they disrespect every idea. As the Christian thinker G.K. Chesterton once said:

“Merely having an open mind is nothing. The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid.”

-G.K. Chesterton

Paul speaks about such people like this:

"...always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

-2 Timothy 3:7

The purpose of education is to come to the knowledge of the truth. By rejecting the very concept of objective truth, the universities became these vacuous places of intellectual snobbery. They no longer held any deep convictions and so they promoted confusion instead of conviction. But they didn't stay like this. This intellectual vacuum had to be filled by something and this is exactly what Charlie Kirk saw happen.

Even though there has been a very concerted effort by more socialistic thinkers to take over the western universities for close to a century now, the reason why things seem to be shifting so rapidly all of a sudden is because up until a decade or so ago, these socialistic views were just one view among many. This is not saying anything about the professors, most of them have been militant in their attempts to indoctrinate for decades, but more about the culture itself. Right now there is a vastly increasing number of so-called "nones" in our culture, these would be people with no religious affiliation whatsoever.

To be clear, these aren't atheists per se, these are people who simply don't subscribe to any particular belief. But, nature abhors a vacuum, this couldn't persist forever. Our modern youth who struggle so much with anxiety, depression, and a lack of meaning are thirsty for some answer to why they feel the way they do. They couldn't abide having an altar to "the unknown god"; they needed something solid to believe in, something that would give them a higher purpose and calling, this is where "wokeness" comes from. Quoting again from Charlie's speech at Texas A&M

"When you become less religious... then you have a gaping sized hole in your heart and something must fill it, and out of the lack of Christianity is where we get wokism... Of course there should be some separation, some distinction (of church and state) but do we have a separation of morality and state?... If a society becomes less Christian, if a society becomes less grounded to our foundational roots, be very careful what will actually replace it."

-Charlie Kirk - Texas A&M Speech

As I said about the current revival, what is happening right now is not so much a shift in raw numbers, but a shift in faithfulness. Our culture is so starved for something real that

people are tearing down the altar of the unknown god and they are seeking a replacement for their ignorance. But if we don't follow the example of the apostle Paul and fill that vacuum with God Himself, then our culture will be prey to something far worse. This is why Charlie became so vocal about his faith towards the time of his murder, and this is why we must learn to do the same.

"...while the present never satisfies us, experience dupes us and, from misfortune to misfortune, leads us to death, their eternal crown. What is it, then, that this desire and this inability proclaim to us, but that there was once in man a true happiness of which there now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present? But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself... And since man has lost the true good, everything can appear equally good to him, even his own destruction, though so opposed to God, to reason, and to the whole course of nature. Some seek good in authority, others in scientific research, others in pleasure."

-Blaise Pascal - "Pensées"

The Gospel

"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, "so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." So Paul departed from among them. However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

-Acts 17:24-34

After all that Paul presents the gospel. But notice he doesn't begin by talking about Jesus, He begins by quoting philosophers and ideas that were important to them. This

is what Charlie did so well. Some complain about how often he spoke about political or social issues, but this wasn't a flaw in his evangelism, this was his greatest strength. Charlie took the time to really *know* the issues that mattered to people and spoke fervently to people right where they were at. It was from this point that he was able to share the gospel.

To put it another way, he began with the practical wisdom of the Scriptures and then presented the God who gave us this wisdom. It is all these things that make Charlie Kirk one of the most consequential evangelists of the modern age, and the very reasons why it is good for us to meditate on his legacy.