

Lecture 24 – God & Gender Language

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20

Key Terms

Inclusive, gender vs. person, figure of speech vs. name, particularity

Objectives

- *Identify and summarize major issues in the discussion of inclusive language.
- *Respond graciously and biblically to various positions.

God & Gender Language

I. Introduction

A. Does it matter what we call God?

II. Arguments for Inclusive Language in Reference to God

A. Inability to relate to the male God of the biblical tradition

1. The issue is not gender but person.
2. God is not all things to all people.
3. We need to have our conceptions of maleness and fatherhood rehabilitated.

B. Inclusive language is a response to the gender bias of the traditions.

C. The masculinity of God in Scripture is the product of historical-cultural conditioning.

D. Feminine imagery in Scripture legitimates inclusive language (Isaiah 49:15; 31:5; 66:13; Deuteronomy 32:11-12, 18; Ps. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 91:1,4; 131:2; Matthew 23:37).

1. The difference between figures of speech and names.
2. Calling God *Mother* violates the third commandment.

III. The Issue of Particularity

A. Modern day dealings with the issue

B. *Father* as the privileged reference for God, the name of the first person of the Trinity

1. Jesus and the use of *Father*
2. Could Jesus have referred to God as *Mother*?
3. In the name of the Father (Matt 28:19)

C. The issue is personhood and particularity

D. Donald Bloesch: Criticism of divine impersonalism

E. Language and Pascal’s wager