



The Liberal Arts Tradition

with Dr. Kevin Clark and Ravi Jain

Lesson 15: Metaphysics

Outline:

Metaphysics

- Metaphysics guards the secrets of reality and discloses its transcendent unity.
 - Is there a study of all reality, of being itself? (Aristotle)
 - How did we come to talk about Goodness, Truth, and Beauty?
 - For Christians, reality consists of God and creation.
 - Reality exists.
 - At some level all of reality is good. God is Good, and God acknowledged a goodness before the fall, even after the fall it is still worth Christ pursuing.
 - To say something exists is to say that it has unity.
 - The Medievals talked about the transcendentals: Being, Goodness, Unity, and Truth (seen in all of reality).
 - All that exists has Being, Goodness, Unity, and Truth.
 - Beauty has ambiguous status in the Middle Ages.
 - We do not need to think of these transcendentals as static.
- What is the relationship between natural history and natural science (natural philosophy), humanities and the social sciences (moral philosophy)?
- Humans are part of creation, we are bodies (like nature) and we are made in the image of God. These questions are proper to Christian metaphysics.
- Many questions of metaphysics have to do with causality.

As school teachers, we should recognize that the Scriptures give answers to some of these questions.

- As we see the conversation about moral philosophy and natural philosophy, which bump up into metaphysics, it is important to recognize that Christians have answers to these conversations.

Three principles about metaphysics:

- Ontology of communion
 - There is a sacramental reality between what is created and how that mysteriously points to the Creator, and even how Christ as Logos helps to order Creation.
 - There is the sense of how many things can participate in one.
 - The church has one body, but many members.
- The Incarnate Logos
 - Christ came incarnate. There is an importance of the sensible and the intelligible.



- There is an embodiment when Christ came. There is an importance of Formal Cause and Material Cause.
- How does God govern his Creation?
 - God governs through covenantal love, covenantal charity.
 - God makes the covenant with man through self-giving love, through the blood of Christ.
 - How does natural philosophy reveal God's self-giving love?
- Metaphysics can direct the way that we study. Knowing that we are a human being is a metaphysical principle. Your school might not have a metaphysics class, but this is the understanding that directs our teaching and is the understanding that we want to give our students as they come out.
 - Metaphysics helps to unify what may otherwise appear as disparate discourses. This allows for conversations that may not have been recognized before.
 - Natural philosophy and moral philosophy cannot be completely disentangled.
- The way that we order space, time, and language as human beings is already always inculcating piety. We are always doing musical education. We are always doing gymnastic education. We are always doing natural philosophy.
 - Even a positivist scientist who claims to be just doing science, is operating on a basis of what the world is, what human beings are, and what knowledge is.
 - You will have a moral philosophy and a natural philosophy.