



LESSON FIVE: REALIZING THE TRUTH

*Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Columbus, OH
October 28, 2018*

RELATING TO THE WORLD'S STORY

Do you long for a return to values and morals in a world that has lost respect? What does that look like? We might associate morality and holiness with the word “righteousness”—doing what is right. But who determines what is morally right? Different cultures and individuals differ and even clash over this.

- 1) Who are considered the moral and respectable people in your community? In the world? Why?

LEARNING FROM LYDIA'S STORY

- 2) Read the story of Lydia in  Acts 16:13-15, and watch the third segment of  *To the Ends of the Earth* (13:32-19:38).

Lydia was a successful business woman. She was a “worshipper of God”—possibly a Gentile (non-Jew) who followed Jewish laws. The Pharisees in Jerusalem influenced much of those Jewish expectations. Based on the following passages, discuss the Pharisees’ approach to morality. Include in your discussion (a) the positive characteristics of their approach; (b) the negative characteristics of their approach; and (c) the effect their approach and teachings would have on others.

 Matthew 23:5-7,27-28

 Luke 18:9-13

- 3) No matter how good we may look on the outside, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.... If we claim we have not sinned, we make him (God) out to be a liar and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:8,10).

Read  Romans 3:9-12,19-20. Summarize the truth that levels out the playing field and puts everyone in the same category no matter what culture, social standing, moral life, or religion.

- 4) Explain what Paul says is the law’s main purpose. When does it most have this effect on you?

We may feel we are good...that our decent actions at least outweigh the bad. Think about it. Would a judge accept 51% honesty? Would you drink water that is only 51% pure (and 49% poison)? Would a spouse accept 51% or even 80% sexual faithfulness? God’s holiness is the measuring line. Anything less than 100% disgraces God’s honor. It defaces the dignity of God. God’s holiness is an impossible target to hit so we try to hide the shame and cover our failures.

LEARNING FROM PAUL’S STORY

- 5) Lydia seemed to have it all together, but she may have had the nagging voice inside that asks, “Have I done enough?” “Am I good enough?” Was there also some hidden pain she covered up? Paul had to learn to abandon his trust in his own ability to save himself and completely trust in “the Righteous One,” Jesus his Savior. (See Acts 22:14-15.)

Retell in your own words the message Paul was explaining in  Romans 3:21-31? How does that also level things off no matter who we are and give certainty about our relationship with God?

- 6) Summarize Paul’s picturesque descriptions of what Jesus did for us:

 Romans 5:5-11

 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

- 7) An understanding of sin and grace changed Paul’s life. Read  Philippians 3:2-12. Describe how Paul viewed his previous achievements and status. What was now most important?

Want to learn more?

See how passionate Paul was about keeping the gospel clear

Galatians 1:6-2:24;
3:1-5; 4:8-11; 5:1-9

The righteousness we receive through Christ is the heart of Christianity. It is a gift, not something we worked for or achieved—earned by the merits of Jesus, not us. All this becomes ours in our relationship to him by faith.

TELLING YOUR STORY

- 8) Sometimes, sinners feel like proud Pharisees, denying their need for God or his forgiveness. At other times, they feel like “tax collector,” buried under a load of guilt. And at other times, they may be like Lydia, wondering whether they’ve done enough. How would you use God’s law in witnessing to sinners in each of these conditions?

THIS WEEK:

- *Learn this Bible Story to share: **The Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector** (Luke 18:9-14).*
- *Analyze areas of your own life where your “righteousness” creates an attitude barrier in the way you interact with others. What prejudices and “rules” still linger that need to be removed?*

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