

Getting Honest

- Opening Announcements
- Opening Prayer

Q: Why is "honesty the best policy"? What are the benefits of honesty?

Q: What are the challenges of being honest?

Q: What are the challenges worth it?

Q: What characteristic and attitude is necessary in honesty? (Hint: H - - - l - - y)

Table Time...

READ: Deuteronomy 19:15-21 "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. ¹⁶ If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. ¹⁸ The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, ¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. ²⁰ And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. ²¹ Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."

Q: What are your impressions of this section from Deuteronomy?

Q: How does the above passage, impact our current legal system?

Q: How does it differ? What's missing in "ours" that was present in theirs?

Q: How does verse 21, explain the "stigma" that is associated with the guilty?

Q: Why is God so serious about "false witnesses"?

READ: John 1:6-8 "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light."

Q: What was John's mission?

READ: Mark 14:55-56 "Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree."

Q: How was John's "witness" different from the witnesses above?

Q: According to verse 55, what was the truth about the charges against Jesus?

Q: So, according to the Deuteronomy passages we read, what SHOULD have been the punishment for these false witnesses?

Q: When Jesus said: "Father forgiven them, they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34), was He praying for these false witnesses?

Q: How did Jesus fulfill the punishment Deuteronomy prescribes for even these false witnesses and Chief Priests?

Q: How might that inform OUR attitude towards those who are "false witnesses" against us?

Big Group Debrief...

READ: Exodus 20:16 "'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"

Q: WHAT IS a "false witness"?

READ: Martin Luther's Small Catechism (explanation to the 8th Commandment):

Q: What does God forbid in the 8th Commandment?

A: "God forbids us to tell lies about our neighbor in a court of law or elsewhere, that is, to lie about, to lie to, or withhold the truth from our neighbor".

A: "God forbids us to betray our neighbor, that is to reveal our neighbors secrets.

A: "God forbids us to slander our neighbor or hurt our neighbor's reputation."

Q: What does God require of us in the 8th Commandment?

A: "We should defend our neighbor, that is we should speak up for and protect our neighbor from false accusations."

A: "We should speak well of our neighbor, that is we should praise our neighbor's good actions and qualities."

A: "We should put the best meaning of everything, that is, we should explain our neighbors actions in the best possible way."

Q: Why is treating others like this, critical to "developing relationships for life"?

Q: What happens when you stumble in this? Gossip? Get caught up in the complaining of others about injustice, or wrongdoing or bad situations?

Q: What does God invite us to do when we stumble?

READ: 1 John 1:8-10: "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Q: How does THIS section apply to our "witness"?