



Godly truth

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Objective The confirmands want to adjust their life in accordance with the godly truth.

Contents Human truth is relative.
Jesus Christ is and testifies of the truth.
The Eighth Commandment.

1 Lead-in

Tell

At the wrong table

An elderly woman wanted to have some soup in a self-service restaurant. She served herself, paid the cashier, and sat down at an empty table. Then she noticed that she had forgotten to take a spoon. She got up to get one. When she came back a man was sitting at her table eating her soup. Angrily she sat down facing him and wanted to confront him. However, he did not seem to understand the local language. So she dipped her spoon into the soup bowl. The man smiled and pushed the bowl into the centre of the table. Together they now ate soup. Afterwards the man got up, waved goodbye to her, and left. The elderly woman also left.

Another woman was busy clearing the tables. She had seen how the elderly woman had gotten a bowl of soup for herself and had sat down with it at table number five. The woman clearing the tables then had to clean at the other end of the room. She saw the elderly woman leave. When the woman clearing the tables came back to table number five she found a full bowl of soup. Why had the elderly woman not eaten her soup?

Explain

The facts become quite clear to us. The elderly woman had gotten a spoon. But instead of sitting back down at her table, she sat at the foreigner's table. And she had eaten some of his soup!

2 Human truth is relative

Explain

Let us now imagine that the man from another country meets a fellow countryman. He tells him what happened:

Tell

From the foreigner's perspective

Something strange happened to me today. I had lunch at a self-service restaurant. Suddenly an elderly woman comes, says something which I don't understand, and sits down facing me. In her hand there's a spoon. She starts to eat my soup. Now I don't want to have an argument so I just smile at the woman and move the bowl to the centre of the table.



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Hint

The confirmands should now try to put themselves in the position of the other two women and convey their version of what occurred.

A student tells

The elderly woman tells an acquaintance what happened to her:

From the elderly woman's perspective

Today I ate lunch at a self-service restaurant. I got a bowl of soup for myself and ...

From the perspective of the woman clearing the tables

That evening the employee at the self-service restaurant tells her family what she saw.

Elaborate

These three versions are indeed very different. And yet they concern the same event. We describe all things from our own viewpoint. Sometimes we repeat something which we have only heard, but did not see ourselves and therefore could not verify. Here we want to be very careful. All too easily we get a false impression of someone or misjudge a situation because in each case we have seen or heard only a part of the whole.

When we repeat a half-truth there is the danger of bearing false witness and thereby violating the Eighth Commandment.

A student reads aloud

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

Explain

The following is to help illustrate this. Here a wise man is giving someone advice.

Tell

One day someone came running to a wise man and said, "Listen, have you heard the latest news? I have to tell you that your friend ..."

The three sieves

"Stop!" the wise man interrupted. "Did you first put what you want to tell me through the three sieves?" The other one was surprised. "Three sieves? What do you mean?" he asked.

Is it true?

"Yes, my good friend, three sieves," the wise man said. "Let's see if what you have to tell will pass through the three sieves. The first sieve is called 'truth'. Have you verified beforehand that everything you want to tell me is true?" "No I haven't," the other one replied. "I overheard someone talk about it. Everyone knows it. The entire town is talking about it."

Is it well-meant?

"Surely then you have verified it using the second sieve," the wise man continued. "It is the sieve of kindness. Do you want to tell me this because you are doing it for his or my good?" The man blushed in embarrassment. "No," he answered. "I must admit I did not do this either."

Is it beneficial?

"Then you at least considered the third sieve," the wise man said. "You asked yourself whether conveying what you wish to tell me is beneficial and necessary?" "Beneficial? Actually no," the other replied. "You see," the wise man concluded, "if what you want to tell me is not true, well-meant, or beneficial, then it is better you keep it to yourself!"

Workbook exercise

Now the confirmands are to determine for themselves which of the statements in their workbook will pass through the three sieves.

- When a statement is true, it will pass through the first sieve.
- When it is also for someone's good, it will also pass through the second sieve.





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– In addition, when it is beneficial it will also pass through the third sieve and can be passed on.
Afterwards the answers are discussed together.

Elaborate

- “I heard that ...” We cannot be sure that this is true! This statement will not get through the first sieve.
- A mother says to her son, “Our sister ...” This statement is certainly true, it also is well-meant, and ultimately it is beneficial. If someone gets a few things for her it is surely a great help for this sister. This statement can and should be made.
- An elderly sister says to a sister who is not able to walk properly, “Our sister is having more and more ...” This is true and probably born out of genuine concern. It is well-meant. But is it beneficial to tell this to a sister who is not able to walk properly?
- “Did you notice how often our Priest ...” This likely is true, but such criticism is certainly not well-meant and benefits no one.

3 What is truth?

Tell

Guilty or innocent?

A judge of a high court had to administer justice in an important public trial. The accused was a young man. He was accused of blasphemy. According to the laws of the land at that time this was a serious crime and subject to the death penalty. The judge however, sensed that the accused was innocent. But many accusers came forward against him. All of them attested to his guilt. The judge did not know which way to turn any more. Finally he asked, “What is truth?”

Ask

Why would the judge ask this question?

Elaborate on answers through further questions

Many times during his life this judge likely had to administer justice in complicated trials. To do so he had to find the truth first. Often he had encountered liars and false witnesses. Therefore in complicated cases he likely had become very sceptical.
This statement was made by **Pontius Pilate who could not understand what Jesus meant when He said, “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth”** (John 18: 37; cf. John 18: 28 to 19: 16). Pontius Pilate sought human truth. Jesus however, was speaking of godly truth.

4 Godly truth

Explain

Jesus Christ is the truth and testified to the truth. Many examples from Jesus’ teachings could be cited. Let us just consider the Sermon on the Mount or the many times when He explained God’s kingdom to the people.

Hint

The following two examples are provided as being representative of Jesus’ teachings. Depending on the time available the confirmation teacher can select which one he wants to elaborate on with the confirmands.





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The rebirth

The Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3: 5).

Explain

The rebirth out of water and the Spirit is the prerequisite for entering the kingdom of God.

Jesus’ coming

The Lord Jesus said to His own, “I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14: 3).

Explain

We believe in this promise.

Ask

What happens when we adjust our life in accordance with this promise?

Listen to answers and supplement

If we wholeheartedly believe in Christ’s return we will lead a God-pleasing life. We will develop a different vision for many things. Many things which previously were great and important become insignificant and small. Being God’s child and the promise of Christ’s return are the focus of our life.

We prepare ourselves for Christ’s return

The main points

I also want to ...

... arrange my life in accordance with the godly truth!

Homework

The confirmands learn the Eighth Commandment by heart. In the Bible they read one of the following two passages and prepare to retell what they have read:

- Genesis 4: 3–15
- Genesis 8: 18 to 9: 13

