

The Consequences of Ideas
Lesson 23: Witnesses For The Truth

I. Why We Are Witnesses for Truth

- a. Christians are those who have been set free from the condemnation and power of sin by Jesus Christ, Who is the **Truth** of God. *John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: KJV*
- b. As followers of Jesus we are called to live and proclaim the Truth, which we are **enabled** to do by the indwelling Spirit of God. *John 14:16-17 that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. KJV*
- c. As the Truth of God speaks to every area of life, it is critical that believers be prepared to speak the Truth in love to their generation, at precisely those points where Truth is most under **assault**. *Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: KJV*
- d. However, before we stand in front of others to **correct** their errors and before witnessing to the world about the Truth of God we must deal with our own glaring hypocrisy and sin. *Ps 51:10-13 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. KJV*
- e. It is not that we must be sinless or perfect before we testify to the Truth of God but we must be earnest and diligent before God in **acknowledging** what we know to be our own errors and besetting sin. *Ps 77:6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. KJV*
- f. We may spend a lifetime on earth undergoing sanctification, but the Holiness standard of God does not allow Him to merely **wink** at our sin while we speak to others on His behalf. *1 Peter 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? KJV*
- g. Individual imperfections notwithstanding however, our Christian mission is to **warn** those outside about the Truth of God regarding moral matters that God has addressed in His Word. *Ezek 3:18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. KJV*
- h. When we speak the Truth about moral matters of our day to those who do not know the Truth, we are confessing Christ. In those moments it is the **Holy Spirit** speaking what needs to be said. *Luke 12:8-12 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. KJV*
- i. Christ sent us as the Father sent Him. Our work is of the same kind with His, and we are to go on where He left off. As He was sent to bear witness to the truth, so are we as preachers and **publishers** of it. *John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. KJV*
- j. While the Gospel is primarily a call to salvation, that message **can not** be separated from the believer's duty to proclaim other Truths set forth in the Word of God. *Acts 4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. KJV*
- k. Like the OT prophets sent as messengers to Israel, ours is a duty of bearing the message; regardless of the response. Our duty is not to **change** others but to proclaim the Truth to them. *1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. NIV*
- l. Briefly summarized, all these passages taken together teach us that the Christian's responsibility is to stand for and **declare** the Truth. It is our solemn duty before God.
- m. One way that we may begin to fulfill that duty is to **align** ourselves individually with the thousands of other signers of the Manhattan Declaration. (www.ManhattanDeclaration.org)

II. Manhattan Declaration

- a. We who sign the Manhattan Declaration take that duty **seriously**. We sign as individuals, not on behalf of organizations, but speaking to and from our respective communities.
- b. Acting **together**, we act in obedience to the one true God, who has laid total claim on our lives and by that claim calls us to seek and defend the good of all who bear his image. *1 Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. KJV*
- c. We make this declaration in light of the truth that is **grounded** in Holy Scripture, in natural human reason and in the very nature of the human person as a special creation of God.
- d. Appealing to everyone's conscience in the sight of God, the signers call upon all people of goodwill, believers and non-believers alike, to consider carefully and reflect **critically** on the issues we address.
- e. While the signers share a concern for the whole scope of Christian moral issues, including a special concern for the poor and vulnerable, the most compelling issue today is the **devaluation of human life**.

The Consequences of Ideas
Lesson 23: Witnesses For The Truth

- f. We are especially troubled that in **our nation** today the lives of the unborn, the disabled, and the elderly are severely threatened by programs and policies that deny them dignity and worth as humans.
- g. The signers also recognize that the institution of marriage, already buffeted by promiscuity, infidelity and divorce, is in jeopardy of being **redefined** to accommodate fashionable ideas about homosexual unions.
- h. Finally, we acknowledge that freedom of religion and the rights of conscience are gravely jeopardized by those who would use coercion to **compel** persons of faith to compromise their deepest convictions.
- i. These issues – the sanctity of life, the sanctity of marriage, and religious liberty – are all under assault in our day. They are **interrelated**; if one is compromised or suppressed, all three are in jeopardy.
- j. That is, if Christians remain **silent** when one of these issues is assaulted – by abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, or any other means – it won't be long before all these issues come under assault as well.

III. What We Affirm

- a. Whereas the Truth of God clearly teaches the **sanctity** of human life;
- b. Whereas the Truth of God clearly establishes the dignity of marriage as a union of **husband and wife**;
- c. Whereas the Truth of God clearly asserts free men must be free to act in accordance with a **free conscience**; and,
- d. Whereas the Truth of God establishes freedom of religion as a **foundational** principle of justice and the common good;
- e. We are **compelled** by our Christian faith to speak and act in the defense of the truth. In this declaration we affirm:
 - 1. The profound, **inherent**, and equal dignity of every human being as a creature fashioned in the very image of God, possessing inherent rights of equal dignity and life;
 - 2. Marriage as a conjugal union of man and woman, ordained by God from the creation, and historically understood by believers and non-believers alike, to be the most basic **institution** in society and;
 - 3. Religious liberty, which is grounded in the **character** of God, the example of Christ, and the inherent freedom and dignity of human beings created in the divine image.

IV. Application: Our Response

- a. We are Christians who have joined together across historic lines of ecclesial differences to affirm our right—and, more importantly, to embrace our obligation—to speak and act in defense of these truths.
- b. We pledge to each other, and to our fellow believers, that no power on earth, be it cultural or political, will intimidate us into silence or acquiescence.
- c. It is our duty to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in its fullness, both in season and out of season. May God help us not to fail in that duty.
- d. What does taking a public stand mean to you personally?
 - 1: I fear: _____
 - 2: I trust _____
 - 3: I may lose _____
 - 4: I may gain _____
- e. Besides signing the Manhattan Declaration, what specific activities might one participate in to take such a public stand for the truth?