

LESSON TWELVE: LET'S FACE IT

Let's face it. We all have a terminal disease. It's called sin. The prognosis is death. We may not know the method death will come or the time, but rest assured, we will all die. That is why life is so precious to us. We have been advised to live every day as if it were our last. Fortunately, death is not the end for us. Even though we rebel against God with our continued sinning, God is not willing to leave us alone. He sent Jesus into the world to be our Savior and Lord. Jesus sends His Holy Spirit who calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps us in faith in God. That is how we have been prepared by God for a life that will last forever. That is another fact that we must face.

PRAY: Father in Heaven, You have made us and we are Yours. Thank You for directing Your love toward us through Jesus. Do not let the light of faith in our hearts ever go out. Rather, use that light to shed the truth of Your love in our sin-darkened world. Empower and equip us to seek Your face always. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

INTRODUCTION: "The only essential difference that I can tell between Christians and non-Christians is not necessarily morality, it's that Christians have acknowledged that we're sinners and we can't make it on our own. We're failures and will continue to fail. And the church in the year 3000 will be just as full of problems as the church in the year 2000, as it was in the year 1000. No other institutions that I know of recognize that. Governments don't, a lot of other religions don't. But that's the baseline of Christianity. If we deny that, and try to put on a good face, then we fall into the trap of the original Pharisees of just trying to make ourselves look good and even make God look good. But God didn't seem all that concerned with it. He became sin for us, as Paul said."

—Philip Yancey, quoted by Doug Duncan, Thoughtful Evangelical: Philip Yancey Interview, *The Door*, May-June, 11.

BIBLE BASE: Read John 20:1-18.

DISCUSS: (The following questions are for discussion. You may fill in the answers in the space provided.)

Why doesn't John tell us only about Mary Magdalene and not the other women?

Why did Mary report that the stone was already taken away from the mouth of the tomb?

What did Mary think had happened to Jesus' body?

Why did Peter and John run to the tomb?

When Peter and John got to the tomb, what did they see?

Why did Mary not recognize Jesus when He appeared to her?

After the encounter with Jesus, how had Mary changed?

CHALLENGE: Talk about what your group can do to communicate the objective truth of the resurrection in this post-modern age that denies there is any objective truth.

CLOSING THOUGHTS: Two millennia [after the birth of Christ], two billion people call themselves Christians. It is the world's largest religion, and in more than 20,000 sects and denominations, it offers an astonishing variety of ways to worship. Since the beginning, Christianity has been outlawed, persecuted, split, split again, warred against and—in the face of scientific advance—declared obsolete. But it has reshaped itself and mended itself, and even at the end of the 20th century, a century that has threatened Christianity in new and unpredictable ways, it lives. “What is Christianity’s greatest accomplishment in our century?” asks Peter Gomes, preacher to Harvard University. “It has survived.”

—Robert Sullivan, 2000 years of Christianity, *Life*, December, 1999, 53.

Yes, Christianity has survived because of the objective truth of the resurrection of Jesus. Face the facts. Because Jesus lives, all those who believe in Him will also live, now and forever. Times may change, but neither God nor His plan of salvation will ever change.

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear Jesus, we cannot begin to thank You enough for our forgiveness and salvation. You felt the pain of Your Father’s wrath over the evil we are and have done. You died for us. Now You live so that we might have life also. Only because of Your forgiveness are we able to seek Your face. Preserve, O Lord, our faith in You so that we can live with You. In Your Name we pray, O Lord. Amen.