

26-0923wc Neighborly Apologetics

Dr. Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar Series

26-0923wc - NA- 2-Truth & Relativism, Part 2, Dr. Del Tackett

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Neighborly Apologetics Transcript

26-0923-Transcript: 2 - Truth & Relativism, Part 2 (0:04 - 49:35)

Title: *Those on the Side of Truth Listen to Jesus*, **Facilitator:** Scott Reynolds

1st Half

(0:04) What a privilege it is to be here today. Let me go ahead and thank every one of you for (0:11) joining us tonight. I know it's not easy sometimes to take time out of a busy life, (0:17) but I thank you for doing that.

We're going to continue our talk on the issue of absolute truth (0:27) and relativism. If you were here last time, then you would recall that we began with a little bit (0:36) of an introduction to this topic, but I also want to, again, set the stage as to why we're doing (0:45) neighborly apologetics as opposed to what I might call academic apologetics. I'm not dissing that, (0:52) I love it, but I think in order for us to fulfill the royal law, for us to love our neighbor as the (0:59) Lord has called us to do, because he's entrusted the primary work of the kingdom, I believe to the (1:05) common Christian family, has called us to be royal priests and we are to fulfill that royal priesthood (1:14) role in our neighborhoods according to the royal law.

And so what is before us here is the notion (1:21) of how do we then engage Mrs. Smith across the street? And the odds are that Mrs. Smith is not (1:29) going to receive well an academic approach to apologetics. It's good for us to have that, (1:38) but we're going to approach Mrs. Smith from the standpoint of loving her and being kind and (1:46) considerate and so forth. So last time you recall, we began with an introduction to what is truth.

(1:53) It's critical to do that. We can't really talk about relativism and what's happening in our (1:58) culture at a deep, deep level without first reminding ourselves as to what truth really is. (2:07) And of course that led us to this amazing event, Jesus before Pilate, that Paul refers to later on.

(2:16) He refers back to this moment that Jesus made the good confession and where Jesus made that (2:24) incredible statement that he was born and he came into the world to testify to the truth. (2:30) And that is a deep and stark statement regarding the criticality of truth. Remember Pilate responded (2:40) not with a genuine question.

He really wasn't waiting for Jesus to answer this because he (2:47) scoffingly said, what is truth? Had he waited, he might've heard Jesus respond, I am the truth. (2:54) And he said he was the way, the truth and the life. So this is the fundamental (3:01) foundation upon which we begin this whole issue and virtually all of the things we're going to (3:08) be talking about that Jesus declared he was the truth.

So truth is bound up in a person. (3:16) It's not bound up in any kind of notion or whim or so forth. So we look at what truth is (3:23) not.

This is just a little bit of review that if Jesus is the truth, then I am not the truth. (3:30) We talked about that threat that is impinging upon our culture today. We looked at the seven (3:37) threats before in our webinars.

And one of those threats is the rise of homo Deus. This is this (3:44) increasingly descent of our culture into a deeper and deeper selfishness to the point where we begin (3:52) to believe that not only is all about me, but I am somehow divine. And we act as if we're divine.

(3:59) We act as if we're God, but I am not the truth. Truth is not what my heart says, which is one of (4:06) the big pathologies we have in our culture today. Truth is not what I just simply believe.

Truth is (4:12) not what I want it to be. My passions and desires, I want something to be true, which is oftentimes (4:20) just a rationalization for us to be able to get our own way. It's not just simply a democracy.

(4:27) It's not simply because the majority of people think. It's not what the law says. It's not what (4:32) makes sense.

Just because we think something makes sense does not make it true, nor is (4:41) being sincere about something or meaning well. When we talked about what truth is, (4:47) and this will be important for us tonight, that truth is reality. And from an academic perspective, (4:55) there is a thing called the correspondence theory, which says that truth is that which corresponds (5:01) perfectly with reality.

And I would agree with that from an academic perspective. But for us, (5:09) and neighborly apologetics, we're talking about truth is real. Truth is what is real.

It's reality. (5:16) And Jesus is not simply corresponding to what is real. He is real.

He is the truth. (5:25) And so truth is real. It's reality.

Truth is absolute. God does not change. He is an unchanging (5:39) creator of the universe, eternal.

He is absolute. He's logical, rational. So truth is logical and (5:46) rational.

It's not contradictory. It is not bound. It is bound up in a person, (5:53) the person of Jesus Christ, God himself.

And truth is free. We talked about last time, (6:00) and it is critical. Again, as a little bit of a summation, we looked at a few verses.

There are (6:07) many verses, as you're aware, in the scripture that talk about the reality of what

happens if (6:15) you disobey God, if you go against his truth, then it does not go well. If you follow him and follow (6:23) his truth, then in most cases there is a blessing. And so Jesus mentioned this in the imagery of (6:33) someone who builds a house.

If they are following him, then that house they built is on the rock. (6:44) And the winds and the storms and the floods of [life] do not crash, cause that house to crash. (6:55) If you go against those words, if you do not do them, then the house falls and it collapses great (7:03) as Jesus ended that with.

Well, there is another part of this good confession that (7:09) as Paul talks about it, that Jesus made before Pontius Pilate. We listed it, but we didn't talk (7:16) much about it. I want to talk a little more about it tonight because it's critical for us and the (7:21) topic we have here.

Everyone, Jesus said, on the side of truth listens to me. This is an incredible (7:28) statement. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.

The first thing we note here is that there (7:35) are sides and people will take sides when it comes to Jesus. They'll take sides when it comes to his (7:44) word. They'll take sides when it comes to real truth.

And oftentimes as we find today, we've (7:51) talked about one of the threats, the rise of the scoffer and the rise of the depraved mind or (7:57) the judgment, even better of the depraved mind, that people can be very vicious in this battle. (8:07) They can become militant and irrational. And we're seeing more and more of that, (8:12) unfortunately, in Western culture.

So good reason for us to be talking about this tonight. (8:20) What Jesus is expressing here is that this is not an I'm okay, you're okay world as far as God is (8:27) concerned. That there are sides associated with the issue of truth.

On one side is truth, on the other (8:34) are falsehoods and lies. One of the things that's just so fascinating to me is how consistent the (8:44) scripture is, how non-contradictory it is, how much it fits together. Jesus said there before (8:52) Pilate, everyone on the side of truth listens to me.

And if we take a look then at 1 John 4, (9:01) Jesus said, we are from God and whoever knows, or John is speaking, we are from God and whoever (9:08) knows God listens to us. But whoever's not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize (9:15) the spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

This is this divide between these sides that (9:25) Jesus is talking about. Everyone on the side of truth listens to him. Everyone who is not on that (9:32) side does not listen to him.

And when we look at this battle that is going on between truth and lie, (9:41) we find that men do not react well to the truth of God. In Acts 20, we were told that (9:51) he distorts the truth. Romans 1, he exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

(9:56) Romans 2, he rejects the truth. He follows evil. And Romans 1, he suppresses the truth.

(10:05) And when we read in 1 John 3, this is how we know who the children of God are and who the children (10:12) of the devil are. Boy, what a stark statement, a statement that would not fly well in our culture (10:20) today. And yet the scripture clearly tells us, again, we have the issue of sides

associated with (10:26) this.

We find it throughout the scripture from beginning to end. And in the truth project, (10:32) you know, we call this the cosmic battle, the battle between truth and lie, between reality (10:40) and illusion. And my goodness, when we did the truth project, little did we understand how far (10:46) we would go towards illusions today.

We are filled with illusions. Our culture is filled (10:53) with illusions. The internet fills us with illusions.

Hollywood fills us with illusions. (11:01) The metaverse fills us with illusions. We are crafting the capability with AI and robotics to (11:10) make us think things are real when they are not at all.

It's becoming more and more difficult (11:16) to tell the difference between reality and illusion. This is how we know who the children (11:23) of God are and who the children of the devil are. There are sides.

When we look at 2 Timothy 2, (11:31) the Lord's servant must gently instruct his opponents. What an incredible admonition to us, (11:39) exhortation to us as we engage our neighbors, that we are to gently instruct our opponents. (11:48) Colossians 2 talks about a speech always being with grace.

This is important in the hope that (11:52) God will grant them repentance. That's why today we were praying at noon Eastern for repentance. (12:00) I would encourage you, if you can, to join us on Tuesday.

Just call in with five minutes of (12:05) entreating before the Lord. He might grant us repentance in the hope that God will grant us (12:12) repentance. He's the one who does that, leading them to a knowledge of the truth (12:17) and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil who has taken (12:25) them captive to do his will.

This means that in this cosmic battle, there are captives. (12:33) The people are taken captive to this. We need to recognize that we're not free from the threat of (12:43) this battle.

We're not free from the threat of being taken captive. Colossians 2, see to it that (12:49) no one takes you. Paul is writing to the believers in Colossae.

See to it that no one takes you (12:58) captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy. Our world is filled with hollow and deceptive (13:06) philosophy. We need to make sure that we are not taken captive by that hollow and deceptive (13:12) philosophy, which depends not upon Christ, which depends upon human tradition and the elementary (13:19) principles of this world, rather than on Christ.

What an incredible warning for us in our day. (13:32) And then one of the most difficult and dramatic statements from the Lord Jesus (13:41) is a statement he makes here in John 8. (13:45) Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Here again are these [sides].

Yet because I tell (13:52) you the truth, you do not believe me. If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? (13:56) He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong (14:05) to God.

And then he continues with the more difficult portion of this passage. You belong (14:13) to your

father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from (14:20) the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks his (14:28) native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. And so when we come to this picture, (14:40) we'll have an image here associated with this battle that God, and I hate to even draw a box (14:48) here, but I tried to run it off the left, you know, so to represent the fact that he is not (14:53) contained in a box. He is eternal.

He is omnipresent and so forth. But for our purposes here to represent (15:00) the battle that exists, we have God on one side and Satan on the other. Satan is the father of (15:08) lies.

When he lies, he speaks his native language. And both God and Satan are then responsible for (15:20) providing truth claims to people in the world. God has given us graciously a lot of true truth (15:28) claims.

And that exists not only in the special revelation that he has given to us in his word, (15:35) but it also exists in the general revelation of the created realm around us. That's what we read (15:42) in Romans 1, that God says that men are without an excuse. Why? Because God has made it plain (15:49) through what he has made.

Satan, of course, floods the world with his false truth claims, his lies. (15:58) And the people who are now caught in between here are going to either believe the false (16:07) truth claims or they're going to believe the true truth claims. And in another image that Jesus gave (16:16) to us, you know, one road, the broad path leads to death and destruction.

The narrow path leads (16:23) to life. And so if we look at God and there are a lot of attributes of God, (16:34) some of you may be following, and I haven't written for a long time, I'm going to pick that (16:39) up in a couple months of writing about each of the attributes of God in an alphabetical order. (16:45) But for our purposes here tonight, he is absolute.

God is absolute and he is unchanging. And so the (16:55) truth claims that he gives to us are absolute truth claims. They are truth claims that do not (17:02) change.

God does not speak a truth claim today and then tomorrow changes his mind. (17:10) There are a lot of people who change their minds and sometimes they do it for nefarious reasons. (17:17) But God does not change.

His nature and character does not change. And the truth, (17:25) as we talked about last time, truth proceeds from the very nature of God. And so that nature (17:35) does not change.

Therefore, that truth does not change. They do not contradict each other. (17:42) That is the nature of truth.

It does not contradict each other. And that comes from the very nature of (17:48) God. We were told he cannot deny himself.

He cannot contradict himself. And so the truth claims of (17:56) God do not contradict themselves. That's the nature of truth.

That's how we run a trial. (18:03) We're trying to find enough truth so that the contradictions will stick out (18:07) and then we'll know it was a false claim. They match true reality and they are

logical.

They (18:16) are rational. If you look at the false truth claims of Satan, they also follow who he is. (18:22) They are relative.

They're not absolute. They're relative. They can be one thing today and they (18:28) can be another tomorrow.

They change, constantly change. They're contradicting themselves. (18:35) They're irrational.

They don't match reality. And they're based upon worldly passions. (18:41) They're based upon all kinds of worldly things, as we will look at here in just a minute.

So (18:50) turning away now from the issue of absolute truth, which we have done in such a short way, (18:58) but we are constrained. And so now let's look at relativism. And we're going to give you the (19:06) neighborly apologetics position here.

Relativism basically is there are no absolutes. And at this (19:14) point, hopefully some of you might say, and we might learn at least from this, that there are a (19:22) lot of contradictions in the false truth claims in our world. And we need to spot them and realize (19:31) that they contradict themselves.

That's the characteristic of lies or they're contradictory. (19:37) And so here we'll begin right at the front of this. Relativism would declare there are no absolutes.

(19:44) One might say, if you're speaking with Mrs. Smith, that she said, you know, there are just no (19:49) absolutes. And hopefully you've built a relationship with Mrs. Smith enough that at (19:54) this point you could say, Mrs. Smith, that's interesting. When you say there are no absolutes, (20:02) are you absolutely sure of that? Because what is stated here is an absolute truth claim, (20:10) that there are no absolutes.

Well, that is an absolute itself. So anyway, as we go through here, (20:18) you also look for these times where the lies of the world are self-refuting. There are a lot of (20:28) ways, and we will talk about them later as we go through some of our other neighborly apologetics (20:35) of how to recognize the inconsistencies in the lies of the world around us.

And we do that, (20:43) again, not so that we can lord it over or make Mrs. Smith feel like she's a dummy, (20:50) but that we can help lead Mrs. Smith hopefully to an understanding that maybe her thoughts need (20:59) to be re-evaluated. So the notion of relativism really, and everything we're going to focus on (21:08) from this point, is not relativism in general. It's primarily moral relativism.

There are no (21:17) doubts sometimes where you will deal with people who are caught up in a pure relativistic position, (21:26) but 99.9% of the time, when you come across relativism, it's going to be moral relativism. (21:35) It's going to be dealing with ethics and moral values that we will find relativism (21:44) exhibited in people's speech and manners, thoughts, and actions. So what this really (21:52) means is that when it comes to moral values and moral situations, ethical situations, (21:58) moral relativism would say there are no absolutes, or maybe more precisely, there is no absolute (22:04) source for moral values.

And so we want to take a look at this because we could also say at this (22:12) point, again,

hopefully you're astute now to say, well, you could say really, because that in itself (22:19) is an absolute statement. But deeper than that, there is also the realization, and it's important (22:26) for us to recognize this so that when we are loving our neighbor, we can, at the proper time, (22:34) we can begin to discuss these things with gentleness and respect and so forth. (22:40) But at a deeper level, you will find that most people do have a sense of ethical moral values.

(22:51) There are certain things, for example, you might ask Mrs. Smith when she says, you know, (22:56) there is no absolute standard for moral ethics, for moral values. Then you might say something (23:05) like this. And that is, well, Mrs. Smith, do you think, is there anything you can think of (23:11) that would be wrong, not only here in America, but wrong also in Iran? And you'd be surprised to find (23:21) that yes, she would say yes.

And so Mrs. Smith does believe that there are certain things that (23:28) are wrong. And they are wrong today, and they'll be wrong tomorrow. And they're wrong here.

And (23:36) they're wrong across the ocean in other countries. So this is important because we want to help (23:43) people begin to think through, because most people haven't thought through these things. (23:49) They're taught all of this.

And the fallen nature of man wants to accept that, which we'll get to (23:59) in a little bit, that my motives of my fallen nature will drive me towards moral relativism. (24:08) That could well be the most important thing we talk about tonight, that this is not an academic (24:16) issue here. This is a hard issue, that people want to believe this because they want to do (24:26) what they want to do.

And oftentimes, issues of moral relativism will allow them to do that, (24:33) and they will fight for it because of that. That is why it is important to have a deep (24:42) relationship with people, because these are not things that can happen in an elevator. (24:50) These are things that have to happen over a period of time in which a trusted relationship (24:57) has been built, that you can begin to discuss these things.

Because in reality, most of the (25:03) issues that we find here under this topic are going to come back to the heart issue. (25:09)

2nd Half

(25:10) Okay, so let's look at the claims that moral relativism would make as to where (25:20) those truth claims come from. And opposed to the biblical Christian perspective of an absolutism, (25:30) we could say, absolute truth and absolute moral values, that moral relativism would claim (25:38) that what I believe is what determines what is right and what is wrong.

So, (25:46) Mrs. Smith might say, well, I, you know, in your discussion, and I've heard, I've heard this, (25:51) I've probably heard this a thousand times, and you may have as well. Well, I just believe that, (25:57) I heard from students over and over and over again. Well, I just believe that.

And so, (26:03) what they're saying is that because I believe that, then it must be true. But no one normally (26:11) challenges that in a loving way. No one challenges that gently and challenges that in a trusted (26:18) relationship.

Oftentimes we challenge that more from the combative standpoint, and the scripture (26:25) doesn't call us to do that. Or another one, my heart tells me it's very closely associated with (26:33)

the first one, but this is really the plague of our culture today, that we have descended, (26:40) as we've referenced before, into this gap of selfishness and self-centeredness, (26:48) and it's all about me, that we now act as if we are God, and our heart will lead us, (27:00) and in fact, it determines, my heart determines what is good and what is evil. If you recall, (27:06) we were talking about, you know, what the scripture says in the very beginning when Satan laid that (27:15) test and laid that temptation before Eve, the promise to Eve was that she would be like God, (27:27) knowing good and evil, but that word knowing is yada, which I believe should be understood in this (27:33) context, that you will be like God determining what is right and what is wrong.

So, the determination (27:42) of what is right and wrong will come from you, Eve, and today the Satan's lie is just as strong (27:50) and just as targeted on the individual to say that you, your heart, will determine what is right (27:59) and what is wrong, and even to the point where today the culture around us must therefore bow (28:07) down to that divine statement. So, if a young person says that they're a cat, then, you know, (28:18) we have to provide litter boxes in the school. How foolish of us to think that the heart of (28:26) an individual is divine.

It is not. What I want, this is what we talked about before, (28:34) this could be one of the most critical of all, because when people are trying to defend (28:41) a position in their moral relativism and they become very emotional about it, my guess is that (28:49) you can then begin to assume what you're dealing with is not something you're going to argue them (28:56) out of, because there is a heart issue associated with this. They are arguing this (29:03) because they want it to be true.

I have found, to take a specific issue, that when I have (29:10) discussed this issue, and I've tried to do it as gently and with respect as I can (29:15) on the issue of abortion, that people can become extremely emotional about it, and what you will (29:25) find, all of the academic arguments, and I'm not dissing them, they're valuable, and in many cases (29:34) they are what will lead the discussion about the reality of human life, about the killing of a (29:45) human life, because, well, it's okay, because, you know, of rape. And I'll be honest with you, (29:54) this is very difficult for people, but what we need to talk about is not the emotion associated (30:02) with what happened to a woman. So I have often thought, you know, what if we had a neonatal (30:12) surgeon who is standing there, and she said, you know, I am the product of rape, someone raped my (30:26) mom, and do you think I should be dead? Do you think I should have been killed in the womb? (30:35) Someone might say, well, but your mom wanted you, and she said, no, she didn't.

(30:41) She wanted to abort me, but she couldn't find anybody to do that. (30:47) So do you now think I should have never lived? Do you think I should have been put to death? (30:52) These are very difficult things to talk about, and what I have found when we talk about these (30:57) things, that there is a great deal of emotion that raises in the midst of this, and so the, (31:08) I think the clue here when that happens for us, and of course, I think it's important for us (31:15) to back away. We have a trusted relationship here to back away to a certain point and pray again, (31:24) waiting for God to give you another opportunity to talk about things that (31:28) they're willing to discuss.

But this is a deep emotional thing. A lot of these, (31:34) so we're talking, you know, we're talking moral relativism, and it's just kind of sitting there (31:39) in two words, but the depth of what we're talking about tonight goes down to the deep nitty gritty (31:46) of our culture, and so it's important for us to be ready. It's important for you to pray as a (31:53) family for Mrs. Smith.

Pray diligently for her that God will soften her heart, open her eyes and ears, (32:02) and that you might be given an opportunity in this trusted relationship to (32:08) answer her questions properly,

and that she might give an audience to what you're saying. (32:14) Another thing that we find existing in Western culture is the notion that the majority somehow (32:21) determines what is right and what is wrong. You'll hear this in various ways.

I'm just putting down (32:28) a few examples here. You know, everybody knows that. Everybody thinks this is true or whatever.

(32:38) They're kind of appealing to the sense that, well, if the majority of people think this way, (32:45) then it must be true. That's not, and again, in a trusted, gentle, respectful way, this too can be (32:53) argued in terms of, well, you know, and sometimes people think we bring this up too much, but it is (33:00) a great example that if the majority of people in Germany felt that Jews should be incinerated, (33:07) do you think that that was right because the majority of people did, or what if the majority (33:12) of our people today, as we see the rise of antisemitism, even today, you know, the big (33:21) riots and so forth, what if within a matter of years or so, we too, as a majority of a culture, (33:30) fell into that same hatred for Jews? Would that then make it right for us to hate Jews? Would it (33:38) make it right for us to do something hurtful or harmful to them? So all of these are very (33:46) easily dealt with, but remember that these are hard issues here and they have to be done within (33:52) the context of that trusted relationship and done with gentleness and grace. Colossians 4, (33:58) let your speech always be with grace.

It's not what the law says. And so for a long time, (34:07) people said, well, the Supreme Court ruled and that makes it right. And a culture then assumes (34:15) that's right.

And we go forward, but that's not true. And so also, as you can probably think (34:21) right now of a way to discuss this with someone, uh, if the Supreme Court made a ruling that was (34:28) X or Y, would you believe that that is true? Sometimes people talk about what works. (34:38) And so, well, it seems to be working.

Okay. That's not a good basis for determining what is right and (34:44) wrong. Um, oftentimes if it makes them happy, we're going to talk a little bit about that later (34:50) in terms of love and compassion.

Uh, Lenin made the moral declaration that if it furthers communism, (34:59) that it is moral. If it hinders communism, that is, it is immoral. Okay.

So there are a lot of ways (35:07) that, uh, when you begin to walk away from an absolute foundation upon which, um, you stand, (35:17) then you are in sinking sand and it doesn't take long for you to sink into some pretty vile, (35:23) vile notions. So let's talk about a couple more things there. These are, this is not, (35:30) uh, an exhaustive list.

These are just a few things, uh, for us to get you thinking. And I (35:37) think once we start this, then, um, you can apply that to your, Mrs. Smith, to your, uh, (35:44) Jane and Susie, to the dysfunctional family that lives next door, that in that trust of (35:51) relationship, as they begin to ask questions and in, um, in this growing relationship, you can (35:56) begin to learn more about what they think and so forth. So the issue of tolerance is a very (36:03) interesting one.

And someone might say, well, telling some, someone that they're wrong is (36:10) intolerant. And, um, uh, so you might ask in a trusted relationship, uh, that you would say, (36:16) so is it, is it okay to be in intolerant towards those who are intolerant? And now all of a sudden (36:24) we've opened up a very interesting discussion. Um, that is tolerance and absolute because the (36:35)

people today who stand on a moral absolute foundation, uh, are not tolerated.

There is (36:44) intolerance towards those who hold a biblical worldview. And that is increasingly, uh, getting (36:51) more and more difficult in our culture. In fact, I guarantee you, you can think of several things (36:57) that if you were to, uh, stand in your, in your workplace or stand in your school or stand in (37:05) Congress and to say this is wrong, uh, then you will find how quickly the culture around you is (37:13) not tolerant at all, extremely intolerant.

So it's a little bit of a smokescreen, (37:23) uh, the notion of tolerance, it's, it's used as some sort of a moral high ground until (37:30) it bumps up against something that it doesn't like, it can be, it can be a viciously intolerant. (37:38) Uh, so the next issue I wanted to talk about is progressive ethics that, um, were also caught up, (37:49) uh, especially if you talk about, you know, we're in the election year. And, um, so I've, I've heard (37:54) this a hundred times already, and you'll hear it more and more that, um, we've come a long way.

(38:01) We're not going back to whatever. Uh, and that in itself is a statement that implies that this (38:09) progressive evolution of right and wrong is always right. It's not always right.

(38:17) Uh, in fact, we might have a great discussion where we're able to do that. I would love to do (38:22) that of what happens when a culture walks away from an absolute foundation. When we walk away (38:33) from the word of God, when we walk away from his truth, then the progression of moral standards (38:42) is going to not be onward and upward.

It's going to be spiraling downward. And for those who hold (38:50) a biblical worldview, you can see this happening in our culture today. And the important point for (38:59) us here is that we're dealing with a human soul who lives across the street from us who can get (39:07) caught up in to this.

And as Jesus said, that broad path leads to death and destruction. (39:16) And our love for Mr. Smith should compel us first of all, to be fervent in prayer. (39:23) We lead with that.

We depend upon that because God is the one who has to grant repentance. You (39:30) don't grant it. I don't grant it.

Uh, you can't argue them into it. God is the one who has to (39:35) grant that to them. So we lead in fervent prayer and then pray that in that trusted relationship (39:42) that we are asking God to help build, uh, as we read in Peter, that they will begin to ask the (39:48) questions, uh, that in their world, you cannot answer.

And then this third one, (39:57) we've dealt with this before in other webinars, but I want to raise it again because (40:03) I believe this has become the prime ethic in our culture today. (40:10) That is malevolent compassion. Now our culture wouldn't call it that.

They would call it (40:15) compassion, but it is a malevolent compassion because what it says is that malevolent (40:25) compassion drives us to embrace that and to affirm that which is actually destructive to people. (40:34) Loving compassion oftentimes will call us to do the hard things. It's what we did with our daughter (40:44) who did not want to eat anything green.

And so there were times where someone would say that we (40:52) uh, were hateful to our daughter because we made you sit in the high chair until you eat a green (41:01) pea or a green

bean. And, uh, she now loves green beans. So we knew what was good for her.

(41:14) Malevolent compassion would drive us to fail to do what is right and to affirm that which is (41:24) wrong. And so we've spoken of this thing in other areas and other times and other places, (41:32) but this has become the prime ethic in our culture. Virtually every public policy is being (41:38) driven by malevolent compassion.

If you listen to the, to the political and election rhetoric, (41:49) you will hear it over and over and over again. So we need to be aware of that as believers, (41:59) as we come to this issue. Again, it's not an academic issue that we're talking about the (42:05) wolf of our culture at this point.

And hopefully we're praying that as God gives us (42:14) an open door with our neighbor, that we will be able to discuss these things again with gentleness (42:21) and respect with kindness and love. The last one I want to talk about is this, the unseen force in (42:31) our times, the issue of the internet mob. I've used this example before.

I'll use it again. (42:39) J.K. Rowling, who the author of the Harry Potter books, who in the writer's hall of fame, (42:48) extremely famous. I know she's got to be at the top of books sold and money received for her (42:56) writing and so forth.

And for many, many years, deeply loved throughout the world until (43:03) she made a statement that was contrary to the current transgender ethical position. (43:12) And she immediately has become an outcast. And so how does that happen? That hasn't happened as a (43:25) result of a loss somewhere.

That hasn't happened as a result of some king's whim. It has happened (43:36) as a result of this force, primarily through the internet, that has created a mob that rises up (43:48) against someone who does not toe the line with the current majority thought. It's not a majority (43:58) thought.

It acts that way. And so we have to at least reference it and be aware of this thing (44:10) that's happening in our times where moral relativism is not simply just what an individual (44:18) is caught up in, what somebody else says. But now there is this unseen force in our times (44:25) that can arise.

It is a force that oftentimes is driven by the sphere of labor. (44:34) And I have a friend whose all of his Chase accounts were closed because he stated something (44:44) that was based upon an absolute moral value. And Chase said they did not want a hater as a client.

(44:53) So there are new forces that have arisen. We talked about that again in the Seven Threats, (45:00) the consolidation of massive earthly power. And that massive earthly power, when it is (45:07) disconnected from a moral absolute foundation, will then determine what is right or wrong (45:16) based upon its own desires and wants and a lot of the other things that we've just spoken of.

(45:24) There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (45:32) What a critical passage for us as we deal with this whole issue, because we live in a culture (45:41) today that has sold itself wholeheartedly to the fact that if it seems right to a man, (45:50) then that's the way you should go. But again, as we spoke earlier, (45:58) there are consequences for following that way.

And our culture is running pell-mell (46:05) in that direction. It cannot have a good end. And that is

why I encourage you, admonish you (46:15) with every fiber of my being to call the body of Christ, to follow the royal law, (46:22) to do what the Lord asks us to do, and to begin the process of praying for your neighbors, to (46:29) fulfill your role as a priest in your neighborhood, to pray for them, bring those names before the (46:38) throne of God, and ask God to give you a relationship with them, a deeper and deeper relationship in (46:44) which you can discuss these things as you pray that God may be healing their mind and their heart, (46:51) softening their heart.

So that is our section on absolute truth and moral relativism. (47:00) Our next topic is also a very dicey one for people, and that's the only one-way issue (47:15) and religious plurality. So we will deal with that next time.

(47:21) And so, Marc, I'm going to turn this back over to you. (47:28) All right. Thank you very much, Dr. Tackett.

As I mentioned at the top of the hour, we will (47:33) have a recording that we're going to send out just as soon as we can turn that around, probably (47:38) early tomorrow morning, along with Dr. Tackett's slides. So I'll include any other links in there (47:45) that I might have taken notes on that I think might be relevant to you. But again, I encourage (47:53) you to register for next month's live stream.

If you're not able to make it, that assures that (48:01) you get the link sent to you by email the following day. Again, thank you so much for (48:05) being with us tonight. It's a privilege to have you all on.

And I think with that, Dr. Tackett, (48:12) could you close our time in prayer? I'll sure do that. And again, thank (48:16) you so much for being here. Marc and I pray for you that God will somehow use our humble (48:26) actions here to do amazing things, not only just in you, but in what will happen (48:33) to your neighbors as a result of us fulfilling the royal [law].

Father, thank you again for this (48:38) opportunity. We pray, God, that you might bless what has been said here, that you would wash away (48:45) anything that was said in error or anything that was confusing. But Father, you would bless (48:53) truth, your truth, and that you would call us to be a people of truth.

And Lord, that we would (49:02) also be a people who begin to love our neighbors, as you've called us to do, to build those (49:08) relationships, to be diligently praying for them, bringing them before your throne, (49:15) that, Father, you might open eyes in parts and years that, Father, they may hear, they may see, (49:22) they may understand. All for your glory, Father. All for your glory.

[Soli] Deo (49:27) Gloria, in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you all.

All right. Thanks, everyone. We'll see you next (49:33) month, if not before. (49:35)