



GOD'S ANSWERS: Session Four

What does this mean? The role of God's truths and our culture's worldviews in shaping our thoughts.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, Your Word is truth. Keep us steadfast in Your Word even as the evil one seeks to whispers his lies into our ears. Keep us with Your Son who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

God's revealed truth – Augsburg Confession Article Four

Read Aloud:

“Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4. God's Word declares, “For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:21-24).”

Q: How is this Truth undercut in our world?

A: If you desire, allow for some discussion about this question if general, then focus the thoughts on the fact that this truth is so contrary to how all of us think about most things in our world. We think that nearly everything must be earned. Also mention that the world opposed to Christ both intentionally and unintentionally wars against this teaching constantly since this truth is the power of God unto salvation. Choose one or more of the examples on the next sheet entitled “Cultural Attempts to undermine this truth” to help show how salvation is spoken of in our culture. Then return here to finish this session.

Q: How is this truth revealed in the Scriptures. Why does it matter?

A: Read the following verses that speak about Jesus alone working our salvation. Be clear that getting this teaching is essential. It literally is the power of God to save us from our sinful selves and lead us to Jesus. There is no truth more important to rightly understand and believe.

- Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
- Galatians 2:21: “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”

- Galatians 5:2-4: “Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.”

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, we can bring nothing to you but our sins. Forgive us this day and always because of your Son Jesus and His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection. Amen.

Cultural Attempts to undermine this truth:

Example 1:

Play the clip from the television show Seinfeld which can be found at <https://youtu.be/ie1XGTYueHw>. Note how the funny exchanges between characters reinforce the idea that nothing truly valuable could ever be given freely and without condition.

Example 2:

Play the clip from Oprah's online web show Super Soul Sunday found at <https://youtu.be/q0qPzqp9Ael>. Note how Oprah visits with a Christian pastor who tries to share the Gospel by saying that Jesus is Salvation. However, she quickly ignores and replaces that teaching by suggesting that Jesus is merely a role model to be imitated. Not only does she replace the gospel, she then manipulates her guests into agreeing with this deception. Talk about how what she said is true in one sense but was used to erase the true message of salvation through Jesus alone.

Example 3:

Play the clip from Catholic Minute by Catholic speaker Ken Yasinski found at <https://youtu.be/G0uVWgIH410>. Note how this video though presented by a young, modern looking catholic presents the old Roman Catholic doctrine that Jesus' work on the cross and at the tomb is not enough for salvation. While many of the things he presents are very close to the truth, lauding faith, repentance, and the Word and the sacraments, and even obedience, he teaches that these things must be added by us to what Jesus has done. In the end, without us, there is no salvation. This strikes against the teaching taught in the Bible.

Example 4:

Play the clip from a local newscast found at <https://youtu.be/b9pNQoKzaCE>. Note how only one emailer even comes close to getting the answer right biblically. All of the others who seek to answer the question which was asked point people to their own good deeds or works for salvation at least in part.

