

ILLUSTRATED MESSAGE

TITLE: Tobacco

OBJECT: A large cigarette pack

DOCTRINE: Justification

STORY WITH THE OBJECT

Why do so many people smoke when every cigarette pack has warnings about the risks of smoking? It must be because when someone smokes a cigarette, they don't die instantly, and it seems like nothing bad happens. That's why people keep on smoking.

TRANSITION TO THE SPIRITUAL

The same is true with us. God has given us warnings about disobeying His commands, but we don't pay much attention because when we do break His commandments, it seems like nothing bad happens. So we keep on living however we want.

THE PROBLEM (LAW)

God tells us that lying is wrong. But when we lie, we get away with things, and many times nothing bad happens to us, so we keep on lying. We know it's wrong to look at pornography or have sex outside of marriage, but when we do it we don't get caught and we like it, so we keep on doing it. Or we know that it's wrong to steal, but when we do, we end up with a cool shirt or jewelry and we didn't get caught. It doesn't seem so wrong. We ignore the rules because it seems like nothing bad happens, and no one will find out.

THE CONSEQUENCES (ETERNITY)

But that is not true. One day we will die and then we will be judged. Everything we did that we thought no one saw has been recorded and we will have to give an account for it all before God. The punishment for disobeying His laws will be eternal separation from Him in hell.

THE SOLUTION (CROSS)

But wait, there is still hope. God knew you were going to live with your back to Him, and for that reason He sent His Son to save you. Jesus lived a righteous life to pay for your unrighteous deeds. God put all our crimes on His Son and Jesus paid for them on the cross. His resurrection shows His authority to forgive you and declare you innocent before God.

THE CALL (REPENTANCE AND FAITH)

In order for you to be innocent before God, you must repent, turning your back on the things you've done that have offended God, and asking His forgiveness. Surrender your life to Him, and He will give you power to live a life that pleases Him.