

Series: 10 Commandments: The Heart of God for the Heart of Man

Sermon: You Shall Not Bear False Witness

Scripture: Exodus 20:16

Teacher: Jeff Norris

Date: November 12, 2023

Exodus 20:16 (ESV)

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

"Rightly has it been said, 'There is no word of the Decalogue more often and more unconsciously broken than this ninth commandment,' and men need perpetually and persistently to pray, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.'"

- Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus*

Hebrews 6:17-18 (ESV)

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

An unbridled tongue can destroy lives – others and our own.

James 1:26 (ESV)

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

James 3:6 (ESV)

And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

Proverbs 18:21 (ESV)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

"A scorpion has all its venom in its tail; human beings have all their venom in their tongue."
- Alistair Begg, *Pathway to Freedom*

God makes clear His disdain for lying in general.

Psalms 12:3 (ESV)

May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts.

Proverbs 12:22 (ESV)

Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.

Proverbs 19:9 (ESV)

A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will perish.

Matthew 12:36 (ESV)

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.

John 8:44 (ESV)

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

God makes clear his disdain for lying against neighbor.

Heidelberg Catechism Question 112: What is the aim of the ninth commandment?

Answer: That I never give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, not gossip or slander, nor join in condemning anyone rashly or without a hearing. Rather, in court and everywhere else, I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind; those are the very devices the devil uses, and they would call down on me God's intense wrath. I should love the truth, speak it candidly, and openly acknowledge it. And I should do what I can to guard and advance my neighbor's good name."

"Gossip is passing along a report or rumor that cannot be substantiated. But gossip is more than that. We also gossip when we pass along a true report unnecessarily."

- Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*

"Those who do not markedly suffer from this disease are rare indeed. We delight in a certain poisoned sweetness experienced in ferreting out and disclosing the evils of others."

- Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

"I lay it ... as a fact that, if all men knew what others say of them, there would not be four friends in the world."

- Blaise Pascal, *The Thoughts, Letters, and Opuscles of Blaise Pascal*

Our only hope is found in our union with Christ, who is truth.

John 14:6 (ESV)

I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.

John 16:13 (ESV)

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...

1 John 5:20 (ESV)

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Ephesians 4:15 (ESV)

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

Ephesians 4:25 (ESV)

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Ephesians 4:29 (ESV)

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

"All the merit of Christ, who perfectly kept the law, perfectly obeyed the truth, is given to you. You give Him all the filthy rags of your lies. He who never lied hung on the cross as a liar. When God looks at you and me, He sees the perfect righteousness of Christ's truth-keeping."
- Skip Ryan