

***“The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment – Speaking The Truth”***

Ephesians 4: 25 -5:5; James 3: 1 – 8; Colossians 3: 1 – 17; **John 8: 42 – 47;**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment is: ***“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor”*** (Exodus 20:16)

The context of this commandment refers to a witness testifying in a court of law.

The Jewish legal system that God established required two witness before a person could be found guilty. (Deuteronomy 19:15-19)

Deuteronomy 19:15-19 tells us if a witness proves to be a liar by giving a false testimony against a fellow Israelite, the false witness was to receive the same sentence that was intended for the accused defendant.

God set these rules of justice up to insure against a witness giving false testimony.

Today our whole judicial system depends upon a witness telling the truth.

When witnesses do not tell the truth innocent people are put in jail and guilty people are set free to commit more crimes.

While many of us will not be called to testify in a court case, this commandment to tell the truth also applies to every aspect of our daily lives.

We should all be concerned about other people telling the truth.

And as Christians we must always be very careful to always tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

There are many forms of lies and we have many different ways of speaking about lies.

We call them; white lies, bald-face lies, half truths, falsehoods, misrepresenting the truth, shading the truth, saving face, exaggerations, perjury, excuses, propaganda, flattery, slander, gossip, etc.

The book entitled; *The Day America Told the Truth*, stated that 91% of those people who were surveyed admitted that they lied about matters they considered to be trivial and 36% of the people surveyed admitted that they lied about “important” matters.

Sadly we live in a day when most people no longer seem to care about always telling the truth.

Lying has become so prevalent in our society that it does not seem to bother us.

We do not get upset anymore when someone exaggerates, falsifies, fabricates, and / or misrepresents the truth.

We live in a day when we are use to exaggerated advertisements, broken campaign promises, tampered evidence, erased tapes, and cover ups.

Sadly, most people accept the fact that many people lie.

Now just a few examples of lies that we hear almost every day: *“I will be there in a couple of minutes.”*

*“ The reason I was late was I was stuck in traffic”*

*“I only need a few minutes of your time”.*

We are lying we make an excuse to cover up when we have forgotten to do something we said we would do and we are lying when we make excuses for being late to appointments.

As you know most excuses are nothing but a candy coated lie.

But as Christians we are called to always tell the truth because we serve a God who is truth.

John 1:14 states ***“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of The One And Only Son, who came from The father full of grace and truth”.***

When we became a Christians we said we would live our life the way Jesus taught.

And in John 14:6 Jesus plainly stated that He is The Truth.

We also lie when we slander another person.

We lie when we intentionally withhold accurate information about ourselves or about some one else.

Proverbs 25:18 says; ***“Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is one who gives false testimony against a neighbor”.***

And Proverbs 11:9 says; ***“With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors”***

As Christians we are to always tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Ephesians 4: 25 says; ***“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body”.***

And Colossians 3: 9 – 10 says; ***“But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”***

Then The Apostle Paul tells us: ***“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”*** (Ephesians 4:29).

Christians are to use our words to encourage others.

You see you are like Jesus when you speak the truth.

And conversely you are never more like the Satan than when you lie.

Satan is called “*the father of lies because no truth was found in Him*”. (John 8:44)

Remember, when we first read about Satan in The Bible, Satan is lying to Eve. (Genesis 3)

Satan lied by misquoting scripture to Eve.

Next Satan lied to Eve about God’s authority.

Next, Satan in lied to Eve about God’s motives and about God’s goodness.

Then Satan lied to Eve by contradicting God’s command not to eat from The Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil.

As a result of Eve believing Satan’s lie sin entered the world.

And Satan is still peddling those same lies to people today.

The biggest lie Satan uses is that we cannot trust God, so we should follow Satan’s way of life and live it up.

But Jesus tells us the opposite; Jesus tells us the truth.

***“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”.*** (John 10:10)

God is very serious about us telling the truth.

Proverbs 6: 16 tells us; ***“God hates a lying tongue”*** and Proverbs 6:19 tells us ***“God hates a false witness who pours out lies”***.

God hates lying and false witnesses because lying and a false witness is the exact opposite of the character of God.

Proverbs 12:22 tells us; ***“The Lord detests lying lips, but delights in people who are trustworthy.”***

Titus 1:2 tells us; ***“God does not lie”*** and Gods’ people are called to be like God.

1<sup>st</sup> John 2:4 is crystal clear; ***“Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.”***

The Bible clearly warns us about lying in Revelation 21:8

***“But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”***

I trust you noticed liars are included in the same category as unbelievers, murders, idolaters, and immoral persons.

And that liars will be thrown into the lake of fire.

The second death is spiritual death.

The fiery lake of burning sulfur speaks of the intense pain and the endless torture of the second death which is permanent separation from God.

Then in Revelation 22:15 we are told; ***“everyone who loves and practices falsehood”*** will not be in heaven.

The Apostle Paul gives us the prescription for always telling the truth in Philippians 4:8.

***“Finely, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, what ever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”*** (Philippians 4:8)

We need to build up and encourage other people.

As Christians we are not to ***“... let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”*** (Ephesians 4:29).

The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment should really make us think about God’s desire for His people to be truthful, honest, fair-minded and upright people.

Compliance with The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment is essential for us to get along with each other and to live peaceful lives.

When we were growing up most of our parents told us *“If you can’t say something nice about someone, then don’t say anything at all.”*

When we withhold the truth or part of the truth we are violating the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment

The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment, ***“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor”***, may be an old commandment, but our compliance with The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment represents our new way of life in Christ. Jesus.

Ephesians 5:1 reminds us to; ***“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love.”***

As Christians we are to always be honest and truthful.

Revelation 1:5 and Revelation 3:14 assure us that; ***“Christ is the faithful and true witness.”***

Then in Acts 1: 8 Jesus said; ***“You will be my witnesses.”***

As Christians we are call to witnesses for Jesus Christ.

So the question for each of us is; *“am I a good witness for Jesus Christ”?*

God’s word to us this morning challenges each of us to examine ourselves by asking ourselves;

- Do I stretch the truth by exaggerating?
- Can people believe that what I say is reliable?
- Do I show up on time for appointments?
- Do I attempt to deceive in any way?
- Am I truthful when filling I fill out an application.
- Do I come clean with The Lord in confession?
- Have I been faithful in fulfilling my vows to serve Jesus in His church?

Remember Jesus said ***“unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter The Kingdom of God.”*** (Matthew 5:20)

As Christians we are called to always speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

When you die will people say that they could always depend upon you to do what you said you would do?

God’s word to us this morning is crystal clear.

God expects us to be people of integrity.

Since Jesus is ***“The Truth”*** (John 14:6) and we are Jesus’ disciples everything we say and do should be the truth and nothing but the truth.

And the only way we can do that is to take our discipleship seriously, walk closely with The Lord, and ask The Holy Spirit to strengthen us each and every day.

**AMEN**