

Word #9

9.19.2021

Exodus Series

Exodus 20:16

16 Do not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Intro. You Can't Handle the Truth.

A. Jack Nicholson famously shouts in "A Few Good Men": "The truth, you can't handle the truth."

1. As Christians, we are called to truth.
2. Therefore, falsehood, deception, and lying have no part in our life.
3. This is why the 9th Word still applies to us today.

B. How can we ever tell the world about the truthful message of Jesus if they can't trust what we say?

1. Matthew 24:14 (CSB)

¹⁴This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

2. Our testimony must point people to Jesus.
3. And our testimony must be true.
 - a. Hypocrisy is a form of lying because it sows confusion.
 - b. Our testimony must be in alignment with the truth of Scripture and reality.
 - c. When our words and our actions are not in agreement, we are practicing deception and violating the 9th Word.

C. With this in mind, let us examine the 9th Commandment.

1. The original context involves justice.

A. Notice this Word does not say “do not lie”.

1. This is how we understand and apply this commandment.
2. But its original context is within the realm of justice.

B. God is portrayed throughout the Old Testament as a God who loves justice.

1. God holds Israel guilty for twisting justice.
2. Amos depicts justice and mercy flowing through the streets.
3. David cries out to God for justice all throughout the Psalms.
4. God certainly hates injustice.

C. Without truth, there is no justice.

1. **Law cannot thrive in falsehood.**
2. A False-witness damages and destroys people and society.

D. False-witness hurts the poor and marginalized while aiding the wealthy.

1. Time and again, God was upset with Israel because the wealthy would “buy” justice at the expense of the orphan and the widow.
2. Even today, we all know of stories of people who subvert justice through the use of bribes, manipulation, reputation, or any means necessary.

2. Because God is the perfect and ultimate judge, we misrepresent God’s character when we manipulate justice.

A. All throughout Scripture, God is described as judge.

2 Timothy 4:8 (CSB) ⁸There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.

James 4:12 (CSB) ¹²There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy.

Isaiah 33:22 (CSB) ²²For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King. He will save us.

B. When we twist justice by lying and bearing false-witness, we lie about God.

1. Our world is all about "justice" today.
2. But they are deriving their sense of justice from the standards of the world and not from God.
3. Christians are called to be the greatest advocates of truth and justice in our world.
4. **When we advocate for truth, we are pointing people to the One who never lies.**

3. When we walk in falsehood, we walk with the devil.

A. Jesus called Satan a liar and the father of all lies (John 8:44).

1. A person who lies is not following God, the Father, but Satan, the father of lies.
2. **If you live with a lie long enough, you become deceived.**
 - a. Let me illustrate this with help from the great theologian, Adam Sandler and the movie Waterboy.
 - b. All of his life, the Waterboy was told that football (foosball) was of the devil.
 - c. Then one day, he confronts his mom and declares, "Foosball not's the devil, you the devil ma."
 - d. All his life, he believed something was wrong when it really wasn't.
3. Satan operates in the realm of deceit and falsehood.

B. This was evident in the Garden of Eden.

1. “False testimony” (לֵדוֹת שָׁקֶר) lay at the heart of deceitfulness through the serpent in Eden (cf. Gen 3:1–4; Rev 12:9; 20:2). The serpent told a lie, a lie that misrepresented the Creator, his creation, and his words—in fact, God’s reality. This false witness, once believed, brought forth death for Eve and for Adam and crumbled creation. God bore the truth in the garden of Eden. Eve accepted Satan’s ploy and delivered a false testimony of reality to Adam, who also believed it. Death was indeed the result, as God had warned them.¹

2. When we participate in untruth, the result is death.

4. The ultimate “untruth” is what is called the “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 12:24–37 (CSB)

²⁴ When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.”

²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he told them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is headed for destruction, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? For this reason they will be your judges. ²⁸ If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ How can someone enter a strong man’s house and steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. ³⁰ Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ Therefore, I tell you, people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the one to come.

³³ “Either make the tree good and its fruit will be good, or make the tree bad and its fruit will be bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ Brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. ³⁵ A good person produces good things from his storeroom of good, and an evil person produces evil things from his

¹ Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus*, ed. H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick, vol. 2, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 50.

storeroom of evil. ³⁶I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak. ³⁷For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

A. Growing up, I was always scared that I had committed the Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

1. I was scared because I knew this was the sin that there was no forgiveness for.

a. What I misunderstood was that this sort of blasphemy is not a one-and-done sin.

b. Instead, it is a consistent and willful rejection of God’s work.

2. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is bearing a false-witness against the work of God.

a. When we blaspheme God, we are lying about Him to the world.

b. To blaspheme the Holy Spirit, we give Satan credit for what God has done.

3. Notice that Jesus’ context stresses two points:

a. First, the Pharisees were attributing the work of Jesus to the spirit of Satan and not to the Spirit of God.

b. Second, they refused to repent, confess, and to recognize Jesus’ divinity.

c. They saw and heard the truth, and rejected it for a lie.

d. At this point, they began to live a life that blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

B. Blasphemy has its roots in willful sin and rejection of God’s Word.

Numbers 15:30–31 (CSB)

³⁰“But the person who acts defiantly, whether native or resident alien, blasphemes the LORD. That person is to be cut off from his

people. ³¹He will certainly be cut off, because he has despised the LORD's word and broken his command; his guilt remains on him."

1. **If you choose to reject God's truth, and willfully reject the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, there is no longer any salvation available for you.**

2. This points us to the supreme truth: The only way to God is through Jesus.

5. Is my testimony leading people to Jesus?

A. People bear false-witness from two positions.

1. Some bear false-witness out of a sinful heart.

A. Matthew 15:19 (CSB)

¹⁹For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, slander.

B. Without question, many people lie, cheat, steal, and deceive because they are sinful people set out to do evil things.

1. Jesus said these sorts of things come from the heart.

2. We have tried for too long to change people's environments without changing people's hearts.

2. Some bear-false-witness out of ignorance.

A. This is a great concern for me and the church.

1. Because of internet, social-media, and technology, we are able to spread information instantly.

2. Unfortunately, we are all prone to share information that is not true.

B. I'm afraid that people who are looking for an effective witness of Jesus today are, instead, finding conspiracy theories and half-truths.

1. My witness for Jesus cannot afford to be wrong.
2. My witness for Jesus cannot afford to be tainted.
3. My witness for Jesus cannot afford to be known by lesser things.

3. My life's motto in this day and time is being driven by Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 2:1-3 (CSB):

2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. ²**I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.** ³I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

A. This is why my opinions of certain issues are kept out of the pulpit.

B. This is why I'm guarded in some of what I share and say.

C. **Witnesses are known by their testimony, and I want my testimony to be all about Jesus.**

Application: How do we apply this?

A. Be truthful, in everything.

1. Don't lie to your spouse.
2. Don't lie on your taxes.
3. Don't lie to your preacher.
4. Don't lie to your kids.
5. Tell the truth, regardless of the consequences.

B. Second, Don't spread false-information.

1. If you don't know, don't share it.
2. If you think it's gossip (a form of falsehood) then keep your mouth shut.
3. If you publicly say something, and discover it was wrong, then publicly confess and repent.

C. Use email, social-media, platforms, and opportunities as bridges not fences.

1. I want to build bridges for people to get to Jesus.
2. The bridges I'm building are for all people and all backgrounds.
3. If the bridge is too full of me, and my opinions, and my biases, and my hang-ups, then eventually people no longer see the bridge they only see the obstacles.
 - a. I don't want people to look like me, sound like me, or dress like me.
 - b. I want people to look like, sound like, and act like Jesus.
 - c. The Apostle Paul declared to his audience, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ."
4. This is why I steward my platform and opportunities: so that I can build bridges to Jesus, not fences.

D. Eliminate hypocrisy.

1. You cannot be a truthful witness for Jesus if you are a false-witness everywhere else.
2. The world has no tolerance for hypocrisy.
 - a. This is a good thing.
 - b. If this is the standard that they hold their own people to, how much more should this be our standard?
 - c. If your Sunday morning witness doesn't align with your Monday morning witness, you are bearing false-testimony.

Before we close, I want to read a passage of Scripture over you that testifies and summarizes our Word today:

Then I want to pray that the truth will be in us and we will be in the truth.

If you are living deceitfully in any area of your life, today is time to repent and change.

If the Lord brings to mind a lie you had told, then go to that person or call them so that you may receive forgiveness.

1 John 5:5–13 (CSB)

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S TESTIMONY

⁵Who is the one who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶Jesus Christ—he is the one who came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and by blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and these three are in agreement. ⁹If we accept human testimony, God's testimony is greater, because it is God's testimony that he has given about his Son. ¹⁰The one who believes in the Son of God has this testimony within himself. The one who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.