



Sunday, March 9, 2014

The Ninth Commandment: Speaking the Truth in Love

Speaker: David Robinson

Scripture: Exodus 20:16; Acts 4:32-5:11

Sermon Notes:

1. The Ten Commandments are not only negative prohibitions, but they have positive implications and broad application.
2. We are to speak the truth in love, and to defend and promote the good name of our brothers and sisters.
3. But all of us are liars. We live in a culture full of lying, deceit and falsehood, which has all but given up on truth.
4. Even in academia, we have abandoned what was historically the pursuit of God's light and truth.
5. The ninth commandment specifically forbids perjury in law courts. Many crimes had serious penalties, and so eye-witnesses were required to be reliable.
6. God speaks to us and has given us the ability to speak to one another as a sacred means of communion.
7. When we lie, it has the opposite effect, causing discord.
8. We will all give an account for our words (Matt. 12:36-37; Rev. 21:8; James 2; John 8; Lev.19:11-12, 16; Ex. 23:1).
9. The bond of unity in the church is based on mutual giving and self-sacrifice. Ananias and Sapphira lied to promote their own reputation. Lies destroy unity and community.
10. Lying is any speech or act which deceives your neighbour, or any speech, true or false, which harms your neighbour.
11. The command does not forbid everyday hyperbole, polite flattery, deception in games, or clean/harmless joking.
12. We are not always responsible to give the truth to everyone (cf. Exodus 1; Joshua 2, 8; 1 Sam. 16).
13. An evil person who intends to use the truth for evil purposes has no right to the truth (cf. lawful war).
14. The Westminster Larger Catechism lists what is forbidden by the ninth commandment: do not speak the truth unseasonably or maliciously; do not misconstrue other people and their actions; do not entertain evil suspicions; do not speak too highly or too lowly of yourself or others; do not be a busybody; do not rejoice in the disgrace or downfall of others; do not neglect giving a good report; do not misrepresent God and His Word.
15. Slander and gossip in particular are forbidden strongly in God's Word (Psalm 15; Micah 6:12; Prov. 12:18).
16. Slander is making a false accusation (to be a devil); the one who willingly hears slander is also guilty (1 Tim. 5:14).
17. Gossip is usually a true account but it is neither positive nor necessary. Do not delight in the failings of others.
18. Love does not broadcast, but covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8). Go in private to address sins of others (Gal. 6:1).
19. Be careful of gossip on websites or blogs. Do not expose sins or failings that should be handled in private.
20. The ninth commandment is a call to blessing, to serve and promote the honour of our neighbour (Eph. 4:29).
21. The sins of lying and breaking the Sabbath are connected.
22. Honouring the Sabbath reminds us that God is sovereign and that His Word governs the future. This will relieve us of the temptation to lie to change the future (cf. Is. 58, 59).

Application Questions

1. When does God require us to give and withhold the truth?
2. What sins are forbidden in the ninth commandment?
3. What are the effects of lies on unity and community?
4. How are we guilty of exaggerating and spinning our own righteousness like Ananias and Sapphira?
5. How can we avoid willingly hearing slander or gossip?
6. How are Sabbath resting and truth-telling connected?