

Written in Stone. Written on the Heart—A Testimony of Truth.

Sermon Notes

August 14, 2022

Read **Exodus 20:1-16**.

We have shared that as Jesus has said that the law can be summed up in two commands:

1. To love God with your whole being. (Commandments 1-4)
2. To love others (neighbor) as intensely as you love yourself. (Commandments 5-10)
 - We love and honor our parents—our closest authoritative relationship.
 - We value the life of our neighbor.
 - We hold to our vows with our spouse and protect the vows of others.
 - We protect the possessions of others and be content with our own.
 - NOW look to protect the reputation of our neighbor.

Vs 16 *“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”*

The 9th Commandment is God’s provision of legal protection for each person’s reputation.

- This Commandment is *“God’s provision to protect every man’s character and good name by false accusations”* affording a protection of their reputation. Calvin
- In testifying concerning another legally we are to protect our neighbor’s reputation by only speaking truth.
- We are not to prejudice someone’s view of another with manipulation or deception.
- Most importantly as John Wesley once stated *“[we are not] in any way endeavoring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin of our neighbor’s.”*

***Illustration:** The moment I thought youth ministry was over with supposed story of a swirly.

- Important details left out intentionally creates a false narrative.
- Felt my reputation was under attack.
- Felt vulnerable and gave me appreciation for living wisely and with accountability.

Working and leading in the public realm creates impending peril due to the tendency for each of us to operate in our best interest and to be seen more favorable at the cost of another.

Further Protections in the OT stemming from this Commandment.

1. Two or three witnesses required and if death becomes the verdict, then the witnesses must participate in the execution. **Deut. 17:6-7**
 - Example of falsely accusing Jesus of saying he will destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. **Mt. 26:59-60**
 - Key words left out of Jesus’ statement from **John 2:19** where Jesus actually said that if you destroyed the temple he would rebuild it in three days.

- Two witnesses sought and intentionally twisted his words to ruin his reputation and change the mood of the crowd.

2. Favoritism is not to be utilized even for the poor for justice to be sound. **Ex. 23:1-3**

Mankind has a sin problem called pride which causes us to compromise truth to make us more significant in the eyes of others.

- *“Half of the misery in the world comes from trying to look, instead of trying to be, what one is not.”*
George MacDonald

Truth compromised and hypocrisy realized happens when we create a false image of ourselves before others. Acts 5:1-11

- They desired the praise and honor that Barnabas received.
 - They sought to receive the same reputation as Barnabas.
- Their heart was not at the same place to be so generous.
- Ananias was deceptive by manipulating the facts which created a false impression. Saphira blatantly lied.
- They were under no obligation from the church or God to give it all or any of it beyond a tithe.
- They lied not only to the church but to God.
- To set an example, God was severe in his judgment.

Godliness and truth are inseparable.

Take aways.

1. We are called to protect the reputation of others.
2. We must be self-aware of our propensity to raise our reputation in the eyes of others at the cost of truth and even at the cost of our neighbor's reputation.
3. Anything less than truth is not coming from God.

Benediction:

*“But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the **truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” **John 16:13***