



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



Today we examine the 8th Commandment. Exodus 20:16 reads: **"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."** In his Small Catechism Martin Luther gives the following explanation of the 8th Commandment: **"We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way."**

God uses the 8th Commandment to show us all

the ways we sin against the Lord by hurting others with our words. The most obvious example of false testimony is when we lie in order to condemn or cheat an innocent person in a court of law (see Exodus 23:6-8, Amos 5:12 and Matthew 26:59-60). *However, there are other ways we also break the 8th Commandment!*

For example, God is angry with us when we speak gossip or even listen to gossip (see Proverbs 20:19 and 26:22; also Romans 1:29). Very often gossip is not even true, and so we end up hurting an innocent person. But even if the gossip IS true, we do not help people if we simply speak badly about them behind their backs.

If you know a person who has a sin problem, you should go to him or her yourself with the goal of speaking God's truth in love and helping that person (see Galatians 6:1-2).

If you do eventually have to make the person's sin a matter of public knowledge, it should

always be with the goal of leading that person to repentance and faith in the Lord (see Matthew 18:15-17). *But so often we use our mouths to lie about people or to speak hateful words that hurt people!*

James 3:8-9 reads, **"...no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, who have been made in God's likeness."** These words should convict us ALL of being guilty of breaking the 8th Commandment. We should also fear God's wrath because in Matthew 12:36 Jesus says, **"But I tell you that people will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken."**

Our own mouths condemn us as being worthy of God's judgment! What hope is there for us? Our hope is that the God who ought to damn us

sent His Son to save us from the judgment we deserve. Jesus has kept the 8th Commandment for us! Jesus never lied about others, and when He spoke the truth about the sin of people it was always to help them by bringing them to repentance so they would seek God's mercy in Jesus who died on the cross for all our sins – *including our many sins against the 8th Commandment!*

The same Jesus who suffered God's wrath in our place also conquered death for us. Jesus now lives as the one and only mediator between sinners and God. 1st Timothy 2:3-6 reads, **"...God our Savior...wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men ..."** Scripture also teaches that Jesus speaks to God on our behalf. 1st John 2:1b-2 reads, **"...we**

have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

Therefore, those who repent of their sinful words and trust in Jesus do not have to fear the day of judgment because Jesus has washed away the guilt of our sin (see Ephesians 5:25-27 and 1st John 1:7). Jesus has also clothed us believers with His own perfect obedience (see 2nd Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:26). Jude 24-25 reads, **"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forever! Amen."**

God speaks words of

forgiveness and love to those who are burdened by the guilt of their sin and long for salvation from eternal judgment. When Jesus' love and mercy fills your heart He also helps you to resist the desires of your sinful nature that move you to use your mouth for evil. Even more, Jesus' love and mercy will move you to use your mouth to help others as you speak God's truth in love.



Please read the next "His Word Is Truth" on Monday, October 16th! Pastor Eckstein will continue his series on The 10 Commandments with the 9th and 10th Commandments: "You Shall Not Covet!"

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page: www.concordiajt.org

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