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Teaching Notes

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The Ninth Commandment: You Shall Not Bear False Witness

Exodus 20:16

I. The Power of Words

A. God Speaks

Genesis 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Isaiah 1:2 Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken

B. God Speaks Only Truth

1 Samuel 15:29 He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."

Titus 1:1-2 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, 2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began

1 Peter 2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

1 Corinthians 13:6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

God DELIGHTS IN the truth

C. Humanity Created in the Image of God: Verbal

D. The Power of the Tongue

James 3:1-10 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. 3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire,

a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

II. Human Wickedness: Focused on the Tongue

A. All Men are Liars

Psalm 116:10-11 I believed; therefore I said, "I am greatly afflicted." 11 And in my dismay I said, "All men are liars."

Isaiah 57:4 Whom are you mocking? At whom do you sneer and stick out your tongue? Are you not a brood of rebels, the offspring of liars?

Micah 6:12 Her rich men are violent; her people are liars and their tongues speak deceitfully.

Titus 1:12-13 Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true.

Romans 3:9-20 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." 13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Mark 7:21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

B. Lying Originated with the Devil

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

C. God Hates Lying

Proverbs 6:16-19 *There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.*

Proverbs 12:22 *The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.*

D. God Will Judge Liars

1 Timothy 1:9-11 *We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10 for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers-- and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine 11 that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.*

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-- their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."*

Revelation 21:27 *and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Revelation 22:15 *Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*

E. God Also Saves Liars from their Deceitfulness

III. Immediate Scope: Court Trials

A. "Witness"

Jacob and Laban:

Genesis 31:49-53 *It was also called Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. 50 If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me." 51 Laban also said to Jacob, "Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me. 52 This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to*

harm me. 53 May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac.

Borrowed animal torn to pieces:

Exodus 22:13 If it was torn to pieces by a wild animal, he shall bring in the remains as evidence and he will not be required to pay for the torn animal.

People REQUIRED to bear witness:

Leviticus 5:1 "If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible.

B. Testimony of Two or Three Witnesses

Murder trial:

Numbers 35:30 "Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

Deuteronomy 17:6 On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

Implied: concern over lying!!! Only one person bearing witness insufficient because of prevalence of lying

C. Impossibility of Reading the Heart... Words Must Suffice

D. Severe Penalty for False Witness

Deuteronomy 19:15-21 One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. 16 If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime, 17 the two men involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. 18 The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against his brother, 19 then do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from among you. 20 The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you. 21 Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

IV. Larger Scope #1: Not Lying in Any Way

A. God's Word Covers Everything... Not Just "Bearing False Witness"

NAU Leviticus 19:11 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.

Leviticus 6:1-5 The LORD said to Moses: 2 "If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving his neighbor about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, 3 or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin that people may do-- 4 when he thus sins and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, 5 or whatever it was he swore falsely about. He must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day he presents his guilt offering.

B. God Exhorts Us to Love the Truth as Much as He Does

V. Larger Scope #2: Not Harming Your Neighbor with Your Tongue

A. Slander

Leviticus 19:16 "Do not go about spreading slander among your people. "Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD.

Psalms 15:1-5 A psalm of David. LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? 2 He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart 3 and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, 4 who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, 5 who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

Jeremiah 9:4 "Beware of your friends; do not trust your brothers. For every brother is a deceiver, and every friend a slanderer.

So much of Psalms is David dealing with the slander of his enemies

Psalms 31:11-13 Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends-- those who see me on the street flee from me. 12 I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. 13 For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life.

Psalms 35:11 Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about.

James 4:11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

B. Gossip

Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.

A medieval legend tells of a young man who went to a monk for help. He had made slanderous statements about someone, he was sorry for the lies he'd told, and in tears, asked the monk what he should do. The monk

replied: "Go to the poultryman and get a bag of feathers. Put one feather on each doorstep in town, and count them as you go. Then come back here." The puzzled young man did as he was told. When he returned to the monastery, the monk told him: "Now I want you to go back and pick up all the feathers. Make sure you get every one." "It's impossible!" the young man exclaimed. "By now, the wind will have blown many of them away. They'll be all over town -- on rooftops, in the streets, in trees and even in the countryside beyond the village!" "So have your slanderous words become impossible to retrieve," replied the monk. "Those feathers are like the stories you've told. You may be able to tell a few people that you lied, but the winds of gossip have carried your slanders everywhere." Gossip is the telling of sensational stories or rumors of an intimate nature about someone. Gossip may or may not be true, but its veracity is irrelevant. It may be done to maliciously slander another, or merely to pass along information.

Whatever the case, the Bible labels gossip as "wickedness" and places it in the same context as murder (Romans 1:29-32).

Romans 1:29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

C. False Teaching

2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them-- bringing swift destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. 3 In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. ... 17 These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

VI. Christ Murdered Through False Witness... and Thus Saved a World Full of Liars

A. Christ Always Told the Truth... Even Though It Got Him Killed

John 8:55-59 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." 57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Matthew 26:59-66 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. 60 But they did not find any, though many false witnesses

came forward. Finally two came forward 61 and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" 62 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 63 But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. 66 What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

John 18:33-38

33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "**Are you the king** of the Jews?"

34 "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

37 "**You are a king**, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "**You are** right in saying I am a **king**. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked.

B. Christ Murdered by False Witness [see above]

C. Christ Died to Save a World Full of Liars

VII. Application