

## The Patio Pulpit For September 2, 2020

### The Ninth Commandment

Beverly and I live in a nice little bedroom community that is relatively quiet and peaceful and well-kempt. There are three exceptions to our quiet little neighborhood. One is a young man who drives a late-model Mustang with a really, really loud muffler that he likes to shake the neighborhood with every time he leaves our street and every time he reenters our street. I think he may do it just to aggravate us. I don't know that, so I don't want to bear false witness against him. I think his car sounds pretty cool, but he does get ridiculous with it every day. Back in the day I had a muffler like that on my motorcycle. In fact, I once got a ticket on Wilkinson Blvd. for disturbing the peace with my super loud muffler. The officer told me he could hear me five miles away, so he just sat there and waited to see if I came his way. He pulled me over at the old Park 'n Shop that was on Wilkinson. A buddy of mine gutted my muffler and told me it would sound cool.

The other two exceptions are neighbors who will not cut their grass. One of them is one of our next-door neighbors. The HOA has reported them to the City several times and we have put our name on the complaint. And what our neighbor does when the City gives her a warning, is she sends her son out to cut the grass just enough so that the entire yard isn't over a foot tall. And that isn't bearing false witness against her. It's just an obvious fact.

Tonight, we're examining the ninth commandment, found in Exodus chapter 20 and v.16, **which introduced the Israelis to the idea of "neighbor" as God defines neighbor.** And it introduced them to what turns out to be one of the most important of all the ten commandments. After all, it made it to what I have called "the Top Ten."

We know they're all important, but this particular commandment is significant because obedience to this commandment does more than keep the obedient out of trouble with God. I'll explain that later.

<sup>16</sup> *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exod. 20:16 NAU)*

### **The judicial/legal implications of the commandment**

Where do we find the call for witnesses? In a court of law. And you can see that in this commandment, "*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*" That lets us know that the ninth commandment has to do with a neighbor being charged with some kind of infraction against another or maybe even some organization and the temptation to bear false witness against the neighbor in order to protect oneself or for some sordid gain. And because it made it into the top ten, we can also know that it was one of the transgressions that Israelites and the pagan nations around them had been guilty of in their past. How do we know that? Galatians 3:19, "*Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions.*" The ten commandments were all added because of the myriad of transgressions committed against the holiness of God since the fall of Adam and Eve back in the garden. The ten commandments were added because of "original sin."

Back in my "dark period," I went to court with a friend just to lend my support in a case that involved the death of a man during the trial of his friend and partner-in-crime who was betrayed by the man who had hired him and his late friend to burn down a house in North Charlotte back in 1970. The man who died was trapped inside the house as it went up in flames and now everyone involved in the arson and death were trying to cover their own tracks. The man who hired the arsonists took the stand and lied through his teeth to save his own rear end from prison but so did my friend. I sat there dumbfounded as I listened to my friend lying in order to support the crook she worked for and was paying her to perjure herself in a court of law. The poor man who survived the house fire got prison time for his part all because my friend and another false witness and their boss bore false witness against him.

But second, it addresses the issue of slander and gossip in the community. This is what one of the outstanding theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, A.W. Pink, wrote about the ninth commandment, "Few forms of injury done by one man to another is more despicable than this. But

equally reprehensible is tale-bearing where there has been no careful investigation to verify the evil report.”

Again, A.W. Pink, “False witness may be borne by leaving a false impression upon the minds of people by a mere hint or suggestion. ‘Have you heard about so-n-so? No. It sound like she, blah, blah, blah.’” That is why gossip is one of the sins that Paul so clearly despises. Listen to these verses about gossip:

*<sup>NKJ</sup> **2 Corinthians 12:20** For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, **backbitings**, whisperings, conceits, tumults;*

*<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Corinthians 12:20** For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, **gossip**, arrogance, disturbances;*

*<sup>NKJ</sup> **Romans 1:29** being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are **whisperers**,*

*<sup>NAU</sup> **Romans 1:29** being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are **gossips**,*

***1 Timothy 3:11** Women must likewise be dignified, **not malicious gossips**, but temperate, faithful in all things. (1 Tim. 3:11 NAU)*

***1 Timothy 5:13** At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also **gossips** and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. (1 Tim. 5:13 NAU)*

### **A last-days practice**

And watch this, that's a quote from Dr. Stanley, "now watch this," gossip will be one of the outstanding characteristics of the last days.

<sup>2</sup> *For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,*

<sup>3</sup> *unloving, irreconcilable, **malicious gossips**, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,*

<sup>4</sup> *treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (2 Tim. 3:2-4 NAU)* We can see that this breed of gossip isn't what we would normally call gossip. But, beloved of God, gossip is gossip. And it is so often bearing false witness against a neighborhood.

And let me point out this. The Greek word translated "malicious gossips" in 2 Tim. 3:3 is the word "diabolos," the word translated "devil" in other places. Gossip is not some innocent silly little things we do. It is demonic.

### **The true focus of the ninth commandment**

My closing point is what I alluded to in the beginning of this lesson, "We know they're all important, but this particular commandment is significant because obedience to this commandment does more than keep the obedient out of trouble with God. I'll explain that later." This is that explanation.

### **Obedience of The Ninth Commandment goes far beyond the scope of the immediate. It sums up all the commandments in one.**

As students of the word of God, we know that the question "who is my neighbor" was answered by Jesus and let the whole world know that the Christian's neighbor is, well, everybody.

Did you know that your relationship with your neighbor can do something for you that nothing else can do, something that is on a par with faith in Jesus? <sup>8</sup> *Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; **for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.***

<sup>9</sup> *For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT*

*COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."*

*<sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom. 13:8-10 NAU)*

*<sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."*

*<sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.*

*<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Gal. 5:13-16 NAU)*

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*"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."*

The love that God has poured out into our hearts through the giving of the Holy Spirit is an amazing and powerful force that is an essential part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Romans 5:5** and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Rom. 5:5 NAU)

Loving our neighbor as ourselves will ensure that we never bear false witness against them. And, it does what? It sums up all the law in one. Wouldn't you love to do that?

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Love you all and hope to see you Sunday. Yeaaaaaa.