

# **“THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, II”**

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**First Christian Reformed Church**

**July 2, 2023, 6:00PM**

**Heidelberg Catechism: Lord’s Day 43**

**Scripture Texts: Exodus 20:16; Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:15-16**

**Prayer:** “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord my God and my Redeemer.”

## **Introduction.**

The Third Commandment, “you shall not take the name of the Lord in vain,” protects God’s name. God desires to have a good name among His creatures and to protect His name from dishonor.

The Ninth Commandment protects our neighbor’s good name. What God wants for Himself, He also wants for us. God desires every person to have a good name and to be held in honor.

And the truth be told, what He wants for us we also want. We want the truth. We want it in our presidents, in our politicians, in our judges, in our businessmen, in our mechanic, in our newspapers, in our neighbors and in our pastor.

I have heard people who have had their home broken into and robbed describe it as a feeling of being violated. It’s a serious infringement on our rights and our security.

We feel the same way with someone steals our honor or our reputation or our good name. We are afraid of the same thing happening through identity theft. We want to know the truth and be told the truth and have the truth told about us.

So that is what we want to focus on this evening, what you and I can do to uphold and further the truth in our little corner of the world.

Let me circle back to something I said at the end of my last sermon about gender pronouns and what a conversation could look like with such a person.

“I care about you as a person made in the image of God and I truly want to respect you, but I also need to honor my God. I believe God created people as either male or female, and that gender-specificity is part of the His good, created order. I will be as respectful of you as I can and am glad to call you by any name you want, but I’m asking you to also respect my religious beliefs and freedoms. I don’t believe I can refer to you with gender-neutral pronouns and be faithful to God. I would love to get to know you better and hear your story and share with you mine.”

## **Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this commandment.**

The first Adam fell for Satan's lie, Adam lied and in Adam we all lie. The second Adam fulfilled perfect obedience and righteousness and in Christ we can all speak the truth.

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. Jesus is the truth and Jesus has the truth. He reveals the truth about God and about us in His Gospel. He is the light shining in darkness.

Where darkness and lies are depended on, where they are necessary for one's purposes, there you will eventually find opposition to Jesus and the Gospel.

This is why every dictatorship and every tyrant and every terrorist will attack and oppose the Gospel and the church and Christ Himself. Communism opposes Christianity because Communism is based on a lie and traffics in lies and can not let the light shine on its darkness.

Ultimately darkness and lies will not prevail. In the end the truth will be revealed, every heart and every conscience will be exposed. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus Christ is the perfect fulfillment of this commandment and He is the reason we can obey His commands by His Holy Spirit.

This commandment challenges us to live in the light with our neighbors. And who is our neighbor? Our neighbor is every person named in every conversation we have.

**Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Notice the reason given for putting away falsehood. We are members one of another. You are my neighbor.

By the grace of God in Jesus Christ we have the gift of God enabling us to put off the old nature and self and put on the new nature.

## **The Law of Love.**

You know the law of love. Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself.

Do you love God? Do you really love God? How can you tell? How would anyone else know? Six proofs are given in the second table of the Ten Commandments.

Honor your father and mother and all those in any authority over you.

Do not murder with your hands or with your words or in your heart with your anger.

Do not commit adultery physically, mentally or emotionally, including all lust.  
Do not steal but defend and protect your neighbor's property.  
Do not lie but defend and protect your neighbor's name and reputation.  
Do not covet what your neighbor has.

Do you love God? Anyone can claim they do. But the reality of their claim is seen in how they love those around them. Do we love God? Let's look at how we can love with our tongues.

### **God has put our neighbor's name and reputation and honor in our hands.**

This means simplicity in speech. Let your yes be yes and your no be no.  
This would be opposed to duplicity, two faced, guile, exaggeration, etc.

This means I am consistent in my speech, not changing my story, but holding fast to the truth.

This means I stand up for you and defend you and your name against accusations, gossip, slander, etc. This means I won't be silent when others are speaking against you.

This means if someone throws mud on you, I will do what I can to wipe it off. I will counter it with some clean soap and water, with some truth.

Jonathan stood up for and vindicated David to his own father, the King.

**I Samuel 19:4-6** Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. **5** For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the Lord worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" **6** And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. Saul swore, "As the Lord lives, he shall not be put to death."

Peter and the disciples were accused falsely of being drunk on Pentecost. Peter's response was to speak a good word and come to the defense of his brothers.

The early church father, Tertullian, wrote a famous 50 chapter apology or defense of Christians around 200AD in Rome. Christians were being falsely accused of incest and of killing their children.

How quick are you to defend another person, even if you are not a friend?

We must not only tell the truth to our neighbor but we must tell the truth about our neighbor.

We must not be overly curious or suspicious or unduly interested in things that do not concern us. We will not indulge in ill-will.

We rejoice in all good that comes to our neighbor.

**I Corinthians 13:4** Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant **5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love thinks no evil and records no wrongs. Love covers a multitude of sins.

What is more often on our lips? Do we more often speak well of others or do we more often speak poorly about others? Notice sometime how Paul begins his letters with praise and thanks. He gives specifics, things he rejoices over in them. How often do we speak words of praise or thanks about others?

## **Matthew 18**

Under the law of love Jesus gives us a wonderful way for us to protect the truth and to protect against gossip and slander in Matthew 18. It's the well-known passage about how we should deal with conflict and sin. If we know of anything between us and another person, we will remain silent or only speak of it to that other person. What a difference this would make in our world. What a difference for showing our love for God by showing our love for our neighbor.

## **Tongue.**

We all know from Scripture how powerful a force the tongue can be for good and for evil.

**Proverbs 18:21** Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

**Proverbs 12:18** The tongue of the wise brings healing.

The tongue can heal, it can forgive, it can build up, it can encourage, it can hold people together. It can give life and hope and peace and joy. It can set grace free in our world.

**Ephesians 4:15** Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

Speaking the truth in love is one way we grow up, mature, become wise.

“When our tongues are married to love, the Spirit is free to do His work, and the result is wonderful” (Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace*, p. 164).

God gave us teeth and lips as guards, and this command as well.

**Psalm 141:3** Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

**Proverbs 17:9** Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

**Proverbs 26:20** For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.

Bonhoeffer calls this “the ministry of holding one’s tongue.” That is love.

**If you are slandered or libeled or falsely accused, what should you do?**

I want to add one final word about what to do when we are sinned against in this regard.

There are two things we can do.

We can do what David did in II Samuel 16 when a scoundrel by the name of Shimei was cursing David. One of David’s men offered to separate the man’s head from his body, but David said no.

**II Samuel 16:11** ...Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. **12** It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.”

David decided to make a sanctified use of it, to let God turn it to for good. Rather than become bitter or angry, take the high road and turn it to an opportunity to grow and be sanctified.

Examine your own heart for unrepented sin.

Examine your own eye for a log or a speck.

Examine your own lips and see if similar words have ever come out.

If you know you are innocent then don’t concern yourself with it. If your conscience is clear between you and God, then it doesn’t matter what others think or say.

Leave vengeance to God and let Him vindicate you or clear your name.

You will come forth as gold. Jesus was silent before His accusers.

The other thing you can do is live a life that proves them wrong.

**I Peter 2:12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

**I Peter 3:13-16** Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? **14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, **15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, **16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

### **Conclusion.**

Pray and ask God to show you where you fall short. The only way to get rid of sin is to admit it, confess it, repent of it. Amend what you have said wrong.

Pray and ask God to show you how to love your neighbor with your tongue.

Pray because you can't change without God's grace and power. Pray because apart from Him you can do nothing. Pray because He wants to hear and answer.

**Psalm 34:11-14** Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

**12** What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?

**13** Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

**14** Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

**Prayer:** Holy Father, thank you that you are the God of all truth and that from the beginning you have spoken the truth to us. In you there is no darkness or falsehood. Thank you for your Son who is the way, the truth and the life. Thank you that in Him we have the perfect embodiment of the truth. Everything about you is truth and you love the truth. Give us a greater hunger and thirst for the truth and a greater desire to live and speak the truth.

With Paul we pray that you would fill us with the knowledge of your will through all spiritual wisdom and understand so that we might walk in a manner worthy of the you, fully pleasing you, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of you (Colossians 1:9-10).