

Text: 8th Commandment and Meaning

Outline:

1. We do bear false witness: gossip, slander, talk ill of others.
2. Because of Christ, we can put the best construction on things.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Grace, mercy, and peace, to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation today is the Eighth Commandment and it's meaning. The **Eighth Commandment You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.** What does this mean? 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. Explanation of The Eighth Commandment

Boys and Girls, I pray that you are doing well today. Have you ever said something that was not true. Maybe mom or dad asked you if you washed your hands and you said yes but really you did not. Maybe you said you were someone's friend but you were not. Maybe you said bad things about them. That is a breaking of this commandment, which our Lord gives to us to protect the reputation of others. How can we do this? Ponder that question as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

1.

Here in the Eighth commandment we are given a clear prohibition of lying about our neighbor in thought, word, or deed. Does it still apply today? If so, what does that look like today?

This commandment is still in full effect today. The commands of God do not pass away or fade with time. We might think that it does not apply to us, that we do not violate this commandment. Yet, we do. We do so every time we place ourselves in the place of God and pass judgment upon people. We do this every time bear false witness, when we say things that we know about someone but may not necessarily be able to prove. When we spread lies or gossip about someone. “Did you hear about John? Did you hear what he did?” “Did you hear what Sue did?” “No, tell me. They did this or that grievous sin, I heard it from so and so.” What are you doing? You have no proof, other than the hearsay of another. If you were dragged before the authorities and asked to answer to it, you would hold your tongue. “But if you know it, know it for yourself and not for another. For if you tell it to others, although it be true, you will appear as a liar, because you cannot prove it, and you are, besides, acting like a knave. For we ought never to deprive any one of his honor or good name unless it be first taken away from him publicly.”

That is the job of judges and magistrates. They are those who hold the right to judge and condemn a person based upon the evidence gathered. They investigate, testify, and bear witness based on the evidence, to a person’s good name and honor.

2.

But not all of us are judges and magistrates, so what should we do? First, realize that all of our sins are forgiven by the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. While He was upon the earth, He bore everything in the kindest possible way. He did not disparage another, no matter how grievous their sins, but spoke well of tax collectors and sinners, in the kindest possible light. He bore every one of our sins of lying, gossiping, and slandering our neighbor, took them to the cross, died, and rose from the dead, that we have the forgiveness of every single one of our sins, and are given His Holy Spirit to do good for our neighbor.

Secondly, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we hold each other accountable to this commandment. When we hear gossip and slander of

others, we cut off the offending party. We say, “No, I do not want to listen to it. That is demeaning to the other person, put it in the best possible light.” When we hear of what others have done, we put it in the best possible construction. For example, let’s say someone has a brand new expensive car. What could we think? We could think, “Cool, they must have gotten a pay raise.” Or, “Hey maybe they stole it from the dealership.” Which one puts the best construction on it? That they got a pay raise or a good trade in deal. So we think the best of them, and put what they do in the best possible light, whichever best supports and uplifts our neighbor and his reputation. Thus also among ourselves should we adorn whatever blemishes and infirmities we find in our neighbor, and serve and help him to promote his honor to the best of our ability, and, on the other hand, prevent whatever may be discreditable to him. And it is especially an excellent and noble virtue for one always to explain advantageously and put the best construction upon all he may hear of his neighbor (if it be not notoriously evil), or at any rate to condone it over and against the poisonous tongues that are busy wherever they can pry out and discover something to blame in a neighbor, and that explain and pervert it in the worst way; as is done now especially with the precious Word of God and its preachers.

There are comprehended therefore in this commandment quite a multitude of good works which please God most highly, and bring abundant good and blessing, if only the blind world and the false saints would recognize them. For there is nothing on or in entire man which can do both greater and more extensive good or harm in spiritual and in temporal matters than the tongue, though it is the least and feeblest member.

May God help us so to do in our daily thoughts, words, and deeds, that we may uphold our neighbor in body, mind, spirit, and reputation, until the day when we see Him face to face.

Alleluia Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.