

Think of how Jesus was mocked and derided, lightly esteemed, scoffed at, and vehemently accused falsely and repeatedly. What a torrent of false witness was heaped against Him and we are told that for the most part Jesus never responded with even a word. He bore quietly and majestically the rejection of men, on sinners' behalf, bearing the brunt of sin against the ninth commandment as no one ever has before or since. We read in Psalm 22 which speaks prophetically of Jesus suffering, "all they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head....they gaped, [that is opened their mouths] against Me, as a ravening and a roaring lion." How Jesus suffered in the sinner's place, and that He should be willing to do so for such sinful people as you and me and then even be crucified on the cursed cross and there bear God's eternal wrath against sin and suffer the full punishment for sin as the just for the unjust that sinners like us might be cleansed from all sin is something endlessly amazing and infinitely undeserving.

Again what a blessing and privilege to preach and hear a message on the ninth commandment too in the light of the cross of Jesus and His perfect saving work on sinners' behalf. What countless sins there are against the ninth commandment on the part of us, but with Jesus, where sin abounds also in regards to this commandment, there grace does much more abound!

Thank God for the escape from condemnation also by this holy law of God in and through Christ Jesus the Saviour, by grace through faith in Him! Is this your testimony too, dear friend? Praising God in the way of the ninth commandment means thanking and praising Him not only for the existence of this law, the extensiveness of it, and the escape for it, but also lastly, for the end purpose of it all. What is the end purpose of this holy law of God? That truly and increasingly we not only trust and entrust ourselves to the God of love as revealed in the Saviour, Jesus Christ, but also that more and more we show His love one to another. The end purpose of His law is that we in all things be so filled with His love and show forth the fruits of His love in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. Considering all these matters, having heard this message now, will you live through God's grace, also by this ninth holy commandment of God, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour?" A Christian cares to do so, a non Christian doesn't care....what about you? Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." This is the ninth of God's holy commandments for all mankind. If you are a Christian you will take also this law most seriously. In this message we want to consider what that means, and our theme is, 'Praising God in the way of the ninth commandment'. Truly living by the ninth commandment in praise to God surely will involve the following.

It will involve thanking God for the existence of this holy law, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour". How much good this law speaks of our God. God tells us in the ninth commandment not to bear any false witness to anyone at any time, and thereby He expresses His absolute love and devotion for the truth and His total abhorrence and hatred of all lies and deceit. We may thank God for it is another proof and indication what a good and completely truthful God the Lord is! The ninth commandment fits with the Bible's description and proclamation of God Himself, and so by itself it can and may be a faith promoter in Him. You can fully rely on God and all His promises for He is the God of the ninth commandment among other things. Do you see this with me?

But there is still another great reason to praise God just for the existence of this ninth commandment. Not only does it by itself reflect God's truthful character and ways, but also this commandment makes so clear God's compassion and good will towards us as human beings, indeed, as fallen, sinful human beings by nature. Yes, for think of it, all the sin and trouble in this world began with lying, with false witness. The devil, who is "a liar and the father of lies" says Jesus in John 8:44, came to Eve in the Garden of Eden with a lie and look at all the ruin and curse and trouble that has come into this world on account of his lie and our first parents sinfully listening to Satan and his lies rather than to God and His Word. God hates all lying and false witness for not only is it contrary to His perfect truthful character, but He knows what troubles and miseries all lying brings. God is a compassionate God toward sinners, and He says, 'Don't live in the way of lying and deceit because not only is it devilish, it is devastating and destructive in more ways than you can imagine even! There is reason to praise God just for the existence of the ninth commandment for also with this law, the Lord would lead us, keep and spare us from evil ways, and guide and guard us in His good ways. When have you last thanked God for the good way in which He will lead us and for His seeking to keep us from

the bad way that we go by nature? God is great and greatly to be praised and His ninth commandment tells us so. Are you praising Him for the existence of the ninth commandment? As a song based on Psalm 19 expresses, truly,

The Lord's commands are pure, they light and joy restore;
Jehovah's fear is clean, enduring forevermore;
His statutes let the world confess,
Are wholly truth and righteousness.

If Christians don't confess and profess this, who will?

Let us notice next that praising God for the ninth commandment will mean that we thank Him for the extensiveness of His ninth commandment. What does it all involve when God says you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour? What does He actually all forbid with this law and what does He really call for with this law? The Catechisms written in the Reformation time of the 16th and 17th century are very helpful here, explaining clearly God's Word also on this commandment.

In and with the ninth commandment, God expressly forbids all sorts of lies and deceit in whatever shape or form we may come up with as sinners and sinful by nature. This refers to all blatant and outward lying but also includes any form of hypocrisy, pretending to be someone you are not, and it includes the sin of insincerity, flattery, forgery, and fraud of any kind, as well as the sin of gossip and slander and hasty and haughty judgment of others, and that of falsifying and twisting another's words and testimony in any way at all, often in pursuit of the disadvantage of others and for the sinful advantage of ourselves. Lying under oath which is perjury is also strictly forbidden by God and such an abomination to Him.

We are called to be people of love and integrity, of transparent uprightness in all our ways and with all our words too. Everything which is dishonest and deceptive comes under the domain of the lie. A lie, says the dictionary, is "any form of designed deception." We must not lie in any way, any day. If you try to make an impression contrary to the plain truth, you lie. Lying is dangerous and devilish for often you need to keep lying to cover up for your first lies, and it just gets worse and worse, till finally all the truth comes out. Who doesn't know something of this in your own life? Thank God for His honest truth about not bearing false witness and His call rather that we be fair to each other, and apply the golden rule to our speech, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Let your rule of thumb be to think and love before you speak. Paul says in Ephesians 4:29, "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying [for upbuilding purposes only], that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*" And let our prayer be like that of the psalmist in Psalm 141:3, "*Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*"

Praising God for the ninth commandment means thanking Him not just for the existence of this law but for its extensiveness too. Yes, and not just as explained now in what is forbidden in this law, but also keeping in mind what God positively calls for in and with this law. Listen again to what the Catechism teaches based on God's Word. Positively living by the ninth commandment means "that in judgment and all other dealings [before God and with people] I love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it; also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbour."

Do you see here what good and loving conversation God would have us speak and spread? "*Let your speech be always with grace*" says Paul in Colossians 4:6, "*seasoned with salt*", that is, filled with that which helps prevent decay and destruction and dismay. Just reflecting on what God forbids in this command and what He calls for, pressing it home to your and my heart, who does not have reason to feel ashamed and to confess countless sins and shortcomings just in regards to this ninth commandment? Are not God's true people those who confess with Isaiah, 'By nature, Lord, "*Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.*"' [Isaiah 6:5] Yes, also the ninth commandment condemns us all, left to ourselves, but this brings me to the next point as to why and how God's people praise Him in the way of the ninth commandment, considering the escape for us with it.

The gospel message is that also for all the sins of the ninth commandment that you and I commit, looking to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, turning to Him in repentance and faith, you and I may find complete salvation. That is, not only do we find complete deliverance from sin through Him and His shed blood on sinners' behalf, but also through Him by His Spirit and Word, we may be made sincerely willing and ready to live unto Him in accordance with His laws, including now the ninth commandment and all that God forbids and requires therein.

What reasons to praise God for the escape from condemnation through His Son and for the enabling renewing power from His Son, Jesus Christ, not just for the fact that God has so graciously provided this remedy for us, but also that Jesus Christ has so completely fulfilled the law on sinners' behalf, and that He was willing so to suffer and endure the curse of sin and God's wrath upon it in the sinner's place. Does it not melt your heart, dear friend, how much slander and abuse and wicked words were spoken against the Lord Jesus? How He was so misrepresented in the things He said and did and how His blessed words and deeds were so twisted and perverted to make Him out to be the worst of criminals when He was only and always the absolutely just and holy one, perfectly blameless before God and man in all that He was about?