

The Sin of Lying

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THERE is a sin that has brought our nation to the brink of judgment and damnation: *The Sin of Lying*. I am deeply impressed to lay before our hearts the words of the 9th commandment: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” I know that the sins condemned in this commandment do not seem as gross or as carnal as the ones forbidden in the 6th commandment: “Thou shalt not kill,” nor the ones forbidden in the 7th commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” nor those forbidden by the 8th commandment: “Thou shalt not steal;” but dear friend, a man can go to hell for *lying* just as sure as he can go to hell for murdering, stealing or committing adultery! In fact, the Word of God tells us in Rev. 21:8 that the one who violates this 9th commandment shall have his place in the lake of fire—which is the second death—along with the murderer and the whoremonger. Listen to Rev. 21:8! “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all liars* shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

All we have to do is see with whom this sin is associated to know something of how vile and abominable it is in the sight of God. You see, it is a sin that makes a person *more like the devil* seemingly than any other sin. For the devil is a spirit, and therefore gross, carnal sins do not so much correspond to his nature. His sins are more refined and intellectual, such as pride and malice, deception and falsehood. Therefore we read in John 8:44: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it.” The more malice that enters into the composition of any lie, the more nearly it resembles the devil: so lying then is associated as never before with the devil.

Lying is a sin most contrary to the nature and character of God, for He is the Lord God of truth according to Psalm 31:5; therefore we are told that lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord. As Satan is a liar and the father of lies, and as God is the Lord God of truth; so God’s children resemble Him therein: “Surely they are my people, children that will not lie” as He tells us in Isa. 63:8.

But according to Isa. 59:14, “Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.” The breaking of this 9th commandment is a sin that is committed 10,000 times a day from the seat of government to the hovel along the road. It is a sin that God hates!

I understand that preaching on the commandments is not popular; it never has been and never will be. But this is God’s Word, and my Bible tells me that it is by the knowledge of the law that a man comes to acknowledge he is a sinner before God; and unless the law is preached, and the law in the hands of the Holy Spirit is used as a schoolmaster to bring you to Christ, you will never know Him! Each one of us has sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) and by the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20). We need to know this!

There is no sin today that is committed so much and thought so little of as this sin of the tongue, this sin of the heart, this *sin of lying*, this sin of bearing false witness against our neighbor. Surely Prov. 18:21 describes fully this little member of our body, the tongue, that brings so much sin, grief

and sorrow into the world. It says: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” What a word! Death and life are in the power of the tongue! It can kill and make alive! Then our Lord says in Matt. 12:37: “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Listen to how it is described in James 3:5-8: “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

By this little member of our body—the tongue—this commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,” is broken, as this sin proceeds from an *evil heart*. By it more lives have been wrecked, more souls damned, more families set at variance against each other, more friendships have been broken, more churches torn asunder and more discord sown than by any other sin! This sin of lying is committed by this little member of our body, the tongue, because that tongue is like a fire which spreads and burns away everything before it. You and I know this to be true.

Let us bring this matter down to a practical understanding of all its ramifications—its depths, its cruelty, its damning effect, its hellishness—by laying out before you the sins of the tongue which cause a man to break this commandment. May the Lord take this home to our hearts!

First, there is the SLANDEROUS TONGUE, and what a tongue this is! A slanderer wounds another’s name, character and reputation in such a way that no physician can heal them. These wounds lie deep, and sometimes are never healed in a lifetime. God’s Word says in Prov. 10:18: “He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool!” Listen: “Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off!” (Psalm 101:5). O Lord, how we all stand guilty before Thy face and before Thy throne today of breaking this commandment by slandering friend and foe! There’s not one of us under the sound of my voice, including your speaker, who is not guilty of breaking this 9th commandment, especially that aspect of slandering with our tongues.

Also under this heading comes *backbiting*—speaking evil of another behind his back, defaming one’s good name by absolute or implied censure. Secret whisperings and all other ways by which the tongue wounds and injures the name and reputation of another are included. As surely as the devil is the father of lies, everyone who gives his tongue to slander and belies his neighbor or utters words of falsehood comes under the group of false accusers, and stands guilty before God of breaking this 9th commandment. And if we have broken this one, surely we know that according to James 2, we have broken them all!

Second, there is the CENSORIOUS TONGUE. This is a cruel tongue which, as a fire, destroys everyone and everything that comes under its lashings. It is a sin of which we are all guilty. How *my heart* has been smitten as I have studied and prepared for this message! I have been made to cry: “O Lord, I stand guilty; I am guilty, O Lord, of breaking this commandment. Will you have mercy upon my soul?” I don’t know about you, but I have had to cry out over this sin more than any other—the censuring or judging of other people before I have all the facts in the case. Listen to what Rom. 14:4 says: “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.” And dear friend, I ask the question: “Do *we* keep ourselves from the things for which we judge others?”

Listen to Rom. 2:1-3: “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things...And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt *escape the judgment of God?*” *No! We shall not*, unless there is repentance and a broken heart! Then listen! “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?” (v. 21,22). Here in Rom. 2 God is speaking to every witness, every teacher and every preacher, asking us: “Do *we* do the same things that we preach against or condemn in others?” “Guilty Lord,” we must cry, “have mercy upon us!” And my friend, this censorious tongue which breaks this 9th commandment is an abomination in the sight of God!

Third, there is the LYING TONGUE. We are told in Prov. 6:16: “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.” Because God hates lying, He will show it by punishing every liar in hell unless this sin is repented of and washed in the blood of Christ. Dear friend, there is nothing that is more contrary to God than a lie, for you see, God is truth; all lying is of the devil and flows from a wicked heart.

To me, there is no sin as prominent today as lying. A man’s word is no longer his bond. Honesty is a blessed virtue that has been trampled in the streets. There is lying among nations; treaties mean nothing! There is lying among our elected officials: the truth seems to be something hard to come by because the natural heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. All my life I’ve said that a man would rather climb a pine tree and tell a lie than to stand on the ground and tell the truth. And you and I know how hard it is to climb a pine tree!

Men are *liars by nature*; they lie everyday and think it a light thing, but *God hates it!* Listen to what Psa. 58:3 says: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” You and I both know that we don’t have to teach a child to lie. It is in his nature to lie. But God hates this sin because it is against His law and His holy nature; unless it is repented of and washed by faith in the blood of Christ, it will be punished in hell as Rev. 21:8 declares: “All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Fourth, there is the SWEARING TONGUE that breaks this 9th commandment. Some think it the way of life to swear and curse, seemingly with every breath, but God thinks differently. If they only knew that every idle word shall be brought into judgment (Matt.12:36), and how much more punishment awaits them for the sin of sinful oaths! Oh, the judgment that awaits the swearing, cursing tongue! “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (v.37).

Fifth, there is the CRUEL TONGUE. This tongue speaks to the wounding of the hearts of others. Healing words are the best for a broken heart, but the cruel tongue unmercifully speaks such words to the afflicted as to cut them to the heart. The Bible says that a soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger (Prov. 15:1). You see, dear friend, one with a cruel tongue must give forth all his venom and hatred; he must get it off his chest; he must pour it all out unto friend and foe. He must tell it all, no matter who it hurts. He knows nothing about II Timothy 2:25 which says, “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them

repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” A vicious-tongued individual doesn’t possess the Balm of Gilead to pour into wounded hearts and spirits. All he knows is cruelty, beating down his helpless victim a little further. This cruel tongue breaks the 9th commandment and comes under the judgment of God unless it is repented of, confessed and turned from. May God give you a new heart to love instead of hate!

Sixth, there is the MURMURING TONGUE. This is a tongue that breaks the 9th commandment, for when we murmur and complain about our lot in life, we are definitely bearing false witness *against God!* We are in effect saying that God is not treating us right by allowing these things to come into our lives.

Dear friend, God does not look lightly upon this sin; He leaves us many examples of His dealings with men in judgment who brought railing accusations against Him. We read in 1 Cor. 10:10 these words: “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.” You see, the children of Israel had murmured and complained over and over again about their lot in the wilderness, and finally God brought judgment down upon them. Therefore the apostle used this to warn us in I Cor. 10:11—“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” We had better look well to our souls before we accuse God of dealing unjustly with us!

Murmuring is discontent: the breaking out at the lips that which comes from a rebellious heart against God. Why should anyone murmur or be discontented with his condition? Does God owe us anything? Do we deserve *anything* at the hands of God? *No!* A thousand times *No* *We deserve only justice in hell!* Dear friend, do you not know that all we receive from God is out of free and pure grace? Therefore, let us give thanks in all things, and having food and clothing, let us be content (I Tim. 6:8).

Oh how sinful it is to murmur and complain at God’s providence! This indeed is a breaking of this 9th commandment, which brings those guilty of it under God’s wrath and judgment. Are you listening? I cannot speak too hard against this sin of murmuring which is breaking out everywhere you turn today! Seemingly it is in every heart, and therefore is a sin that we need to fight against, cry out against and turn from with all of our might because it is such a vile sin against God’s goodness, God’s mercy and God’s grace.

My dear friend, don’t you know that God has been good to us as a nation? He has been good to us as individuals. His mercies are new every morning, *great* is His faithfulness! (Lam. 3:23). How we need to repent of this sin that charges God with cruelty, harshness, unkindness, and a lack of love and understanding! This sin that’s laid at God’s door should be laid at *our* door! This is a *grave* sin. It is *our* prayerlessness, *our* unbelief, *our* laziness, *our* selfishness, *our* lack of compassion, *our* discontent that is to blame for *our* state of things today! For you see, we have taken God’s money and used it on ourselves; we have taken God’s day and spent it as we pleased; we have taken God’s Word and used only its promises, having nothing to do with its precepts and commandments. We have turned the truth of God into a lie and have worshipped the creature more than the Creator. We have worshipped the gods of pleasure, of sports, of science, of education; we have worshipped the gods of gold and silver, yea, the god of *self* more than the true and living God as He is revealed unto us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a nation we have bowed down to the gods of meat and drink, and have made our bellies our gods. And on top of that, we have made *our government* our god by appealing to Washington to take care of all our needs; instead of depending upon the true and living God, and pouring out our

hearts before Him. We get mad at our little god in Washington, don't we? We whip him, we curse him, we get mad at him, we write articles against him in the newspapers and magazines, we call him all kinds of names. But then we want him to bail us out of all our difficulties—after every disaster, after every crop failure—don't we?

Isn't this nation guilty of this today? Of course we are! But God tells us that these things have been brought on us *because of our sins*. And yet we go on in our blind unbelief, murmuring against the living God and saying, "A loving God would not treat us like this!" And all the time the blame lies at *our* door because we have turned from the River of Living Water, God Himself, and have put our faith in broken cisterns, in the little god in Washington!

It is amazing to me that God has not already dumped us all into hell. And dear friend, it is only because of His great grace and longsuffering that He still bears with us today. "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed because his compassions fail not" (Lam. 3:22). And because He is still holding out the sceptre of grace and mercy, I call upon each one of us to fall at His feet saying: "Lord, I have sinned against Thee and against Thy throne; I have broken this 9th commandment. I come in repentance, I come in confession, and I cry unto Thee for mercy on the basis of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"HE FRANKLY FORGAVE THEM BOTH"

Mercy is welcome news indeed
To those that guilty stand;
Wretches that feel what help they need
Will bless the helping hand.

Who rightly would his alms dispose
Must give them to the poor.
None but the wounded patient knows
The comforts of his cure.

We all have sinned against our God;
Exception none can boast;
But he that feels the heaviest load
Will prize forgiveness most.

No reckoning can we rightly keep,
For who the sum can know?
Some souls are fifty pieces deep,
And some five hundred owe.

But let our debts be what they may,
However great or small,
As soon as we have nought to pay,
Our Lord forgives us all.

'Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large;
While we can call one mite our own
We have no full discharge. —Hart