

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour

We read in the bible that we have an enemy who seeks our downfall, I hope you realise that we fight a battle. Not of flesh and blood but principalities and powers (**Eph 6:12**). We have an enemy who hates God and hates us. The bible tells us that the world is under the influence of the devil (**Eph 2:2**). We need to be aware that what the world says is right and good does not mean that it is, we can be sure that the word of God is true.

The bible tells us that the devil is a:

- Deceiver (**Rev 12:9**)
- Father of lies (**John 8:44**)
- The Greek word for devil (Diabolos) means:
 - prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely, a calumniator, false accuser, slanderer
 - This word is used 36 times in the new testament

The devil deals in lies; he is the father of lies. When we consider this commandment we need to know where lies come from, they don't come from God. God cannot lie (**Titus 1:2**).

We need to be aware of how the devil works. We need to stand against him by submitting to God and resisting him and all his schemes, but believing God, trusting in his Son Jesus Christ and the power of the blood that was shed on the cross.

But you know the challenge today with this commandment, **are you doing the work of the devil**, are you enabling him to prosper and to work in your life and the life of your neighbour?

What is lying?

Let's look at what this means. We first read that we are not to bear false witness against our neighbour, **because lies affect people**.

We lie to gain things – whether its friends, jobs or material wealth. We also lie so that we don't lose things.

We lie to ourselves – by persuading ourselves of untruths. Whether they are excuses to do things that are wrong, despite the word of God saying otherwise. If it feels good then it must be right, if I don't feel guilty or I feel at peace then it must be right – even if the bible says otherwise.

We lie by saying we will do something and not do it. Maybe you are someone who says, "yes" but when it comes to it you don't. Jesus teaches that we should make oaths by swearing falsely. But the importance was to do what we were asked to do: **Matthew 5:33-37**.

How many times has someone said to you, "You coming to such and such" and you say, "Yes" and then never turn up? – consider whether you are living in the truth.

We lie to avoid the consequences of our actions – kids are skilful at lying it comes naturally for them. No one need teach a child to lie. It comes naturally because its an outworking of our sinful nature.

Gossip is also involving yourself in lies. Especially because gossip rarely holds the whole truth. I heard something recently about someone and went straight to that person to ask from them whether something was true. It wasn't.

Prov 16:28 - A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends

Prov 26:20 - Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.

Gossip can destroy a person and can bring in division and is not from God it's from the devil and if you gossip you do the work of the devil and need to repent before God or he will discipline you.

We need to especially be aware of the attempts of the devil to circumvent what God is doing in our church, he will seek to destroy it through disunity and slander and lies.

Slander is much the same as gossip but where **gossip is through ignorance, slander is through hate**. Talking about someone with incorrect knowledge in order to bring them down a peg or two.

Prov 10:18 - Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

Slander does nothing positive it's just hidden hatred.

Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

Paul writes in **Timothy 3** that we should avoid such people. So if you feel that someone is slandering another then get away from them and don't associate them. Unless you correct them in the gentleness of the Spirit as we are also taught.

One of the greatest ways we lie is by **self deception**. We don't want the truth because the truth means we need to change. So we lie to ourselves in order to not deal with the truth.

What is the end of liars?

Rev 21: 6-8

And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Eph 4:25-32 – read this

Put away lying, it's not for the people of God – when you lie you do the work of the devil.

Why do people lie?

Most of the time we lie because we fear:

- **Being rejected, loneliness, and losing acceptance** – we don't want to be the true us because we fear what people will think of us. We create a fantasy and live in it because it means that we are free to be who we want to be, but we are not free – we **are encaged in a fantasy where as the bible says that the "Truth shall set you free"**. – We should be free to be ourselves, loved for who we are.
- **Of losing something or gaining something** – maybe it's something that you do need. We fear losing our jobs or car or friendships so we lie in order to keep them. This has much to do with laying aside trust in God for our needs and using our own means to gain things.

Do you trust in God or in material things or man? – If you are not trusting God with your life the bible calls you a coveter and an idolater.

- **Fear the truth** – we know that we need to change and we fear changing or growing. Its hard it will hurt it will take time and we can't bear the thought of going through that. So we lie to ourselves.

God wants to grow us; you cannot escape Gods call on your life to change! – Time to take responsibility for your lives before God.

- **Fear of Conflict** – we can say the things that people want to hear, though they are untrue in order to keep the status quo. But you see this is untruth therefore it's a lie. We need to develop relationships where we can speak the truth in love.
- **Consequences of our actions** – We need to take responsibility for the things we have done, if we have offended someone else we need to ask their forgiveness, if we have offended God we need to ask his forgiveness.

You see often people lie because they fear the truth. And the knowledge of the truth is that they need to change, and its that change that they fear, maybe it's the unknown. Maybe the truth for you this morning is to come to God and give you life to him in repentance asking for forgiveness. Maybe you have known that for some time and you fight against it, you lie to your self so you don't have to deal with what you know is true.

Maybe you need to change!

Maybe you have lied to yourself in order to maintain your lifestyle, you have convinced yourself that it's ok to do and be who you are. But God says differently.

This commandment is about the heart, the condition of our heart.

We need to understand that if we are living in fear we are not living in faith in God.

1 John 4:9 – God loves us and sent his son to die on the cross

1 John 4:10 – Propitiation – He took upon himself the sin of the world and therefore the judgement that was directed at us, he took the pain and the agony so we can be forgiven and no longer charged with judgement.

1 John 4:16 – Do you believe that Jesus loves you? God is love, when Jesus died on the cross he also rose from the dead so that we who believe may rise to new life too. Even now we can live in new life, us living in God and he in us. .

1 John 4:17,18 – There is no fear in love, because the punishment of our sins has been taken away from us. We are free from sin, we no longer have to sin because we have the power not to sin because Jesus defeated sin on the cross.

We need no longer fear, what can man do to me?

Hebrews 13:6, “So we can confidently say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

Perfect love casts out all fear.

Fear shows that you are not living in the fullness of the love and trust and care of God. How was this place of rest come about – by the cross of Jesus?

By living in fear is to live ultimately saying that the cross of Jesus was not powerful enough to bring you into a place of love. It was not enough for God to show you how much he loves you.

But you see the cross was powerful enough to set us free from death, sin and the devil. We can be free this morning. No longer living in fear, knowing that our fear can be turned into confidence to approach God. This is what Grace is all about.

Let us live in the truth

When we live in truth we live like Jesus, we live as truth bearers.

The truth sets us free (**John 8:32**), and the truth will set those in our community free. The most wonderful act of truth was the act of the cross and that's what people need to know – Jesus Christ died for our sins, to set us free from fear of death, rejection, loneliness.

If you are a liar – you need to come to God in repentance and ask God to forgive you and to clean your heart.