Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at cdanielwilson@gmail.com. **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the service: #352

We gather as God’s redeemed Affirming that: ***OUR Help is in ...***

*As we do so,* ***We Receive God’s Greeting… Grace and Peace to you from God/Father/Son/HS.* Amen**

*Let us now Worship our God as we sing a* **Song of Praise** **#167 “We Praise Thee, O God”**

**Please remain standing to profess faith… *from Heidelberg Catechism HC LD1 Q/A #26 + 28 (Please be seated)***

**Scripture Reading – Lord’s Day #43**

Sing a Song of continued worship: **#130 “From out the Depths I cry – O Lord to Thee”**

*Let us come before the Lord now in our time of* **Congregational Prayer**

**We now have the opportunity to return to the Lord a portion of our FIRST AND BEST – as we bring to God, *His tithes & our additional free will offerings (Deacons)***

*Let us continue to worship as we sing*: **#58 “You Rulers, Do you Know” vs. 1-3,6 (Newish)**

Scripture Reading/Text: Deut. 5:20 Eph.4:17-32 **Sermon Title: “Can you Handle the Truth?!”**

**\* Song of Response: Psalm #441 “Not what My hands have done”**

***Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and abide with you all forever more. Amen***

***Doxology*: #530**

# **Evening Sermon: “"Can You Handle the Truth?"” Heidelberg #52**

**Text**: Deut. 5:20: *“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor”* **Reading**: LD 43, Ephesians 4:17-32

**Introduction:** Children, Have you ever lied to your parents? Yes, most (if not all) of you have. Your parents saw a window broken, or they heard you fighting in your room – and when they ask, “Who broke the window?” or “Who started the fight?” you are tempted to lie – He did, or She did… **BUT WHY?!** Because you are afraid of what will happen if you tell the truth. But lying NEVER helps you– it ALWAYS gets you in more trouble in the long run (More trouble with your parents, your brother/sister and especially with God!). ***LYING NEVER HELPS you in such situations!!***

As we turn to the 9th commandment tonight, it is important to remember that important fact: Because God hates Lying! In this Heidelberg Series, ***We are most of the way through the second table of the Law***. In each of the commandments God is protecting His creation: He protects the family/society in the 5th commandment, He Protects life in the 6th, Marriage in the 7th, Property in the 8th, and here, God legislates to protect truth!

***The requirement of this commandment can be summarized as follows:***

***Thesis: Speak the Truth in Love for the good of your Neighbor and the Glory of God.***

***We will divide our time into 3 headings:***

1. **Lies & Truth**
2. **Motives**
3. **Conscience**

*Let’s begin with our first point:*

# **Lies & Truth**

First of all: **What is Lying? *It is any form of communication where the intent is to deceive.*** (repeat)

*Let me explain several implications of that statement:*

**(1)Not all fiction is forbidden – there must be intent to deceive.**

There are many things we say on a daily basis, which are not technically ***true*** but aren’t lies. *For example:* **Jesus told parables = They were not necessarily true stories, but they were useful examples for teaching.** There was no intent to deceive – merely to teach – so it was NOT lying! ***So, telling a story, joke or illustration which is fictional is not necessarily lying.***

**(2) Telling the Truth but not all the truth can be a lie! If you intend to deceive someone with your half-truth – then that is a breaking of this commandment.**

 Children, let’s say you throw a ball outside and it breaks a window in the lounge, your Mom and Dad call you, and ask, “Were you playing ball in the house?!” and you answer “No! I promise I didn’t break the window playing ball in the house!” If that is all you say – while it is technically true – you are in fact, lying! For you know what your parents are asking, and your half truth is intended to deceive.

**(3) Even Non-Verbal communication with an intent to deceive falls under the category of lying.**  So, you ask, Where do John go? He went left, but I point right to mislead you – that is a functional lie, because I am communicating a falsehood to deceive you!

 ***However, not all deceptive actions are lies.*** For instance, when an army attacks on the left to draw the attention of the enemy and then attacks more strongly on the right. There is a certain amount of deception, but it is not the communication of an untruth. Rather it is a feint/ruse – not a lie. God clearly commands the Israelites to use such physical deception in warfare. At AI, they attacked and then withdrew as if being defeated, and then when they had drawn the enemy out, they ambushed the city. **That was not a lie.** The same is true in sports today: In Rugby, if a player steps one way and then goes the other, that is deceptive/misleading, but it does not fit the Biblical definition of a lie! **A Lie is the communication of an untruth with intent to deceive.**

Obviously, the primary focus of this commandment forbids perjury or lying as a witness. The plain wording of the commandment relates to the law-court and is intended to keep witnesses honest. In OT Israel, there were numerous offenses that resulted in the death penalty – it was CRUCIAL that witnesses be honest because lives were at stake!

***God takes this aspect of the law so seriously,*** that if a person lied in a court case, he was to receive the punishment that the accused would have received, if convicted. So, if I lied in court and said Brother Bill stole my sheep – the penalty would have been for him to give me two sheep – and so if my lie was discovered, I would have to give George two sheep. If I lied and accused Brother Herman of murder, then since murder was punished by death, then my lie would earn me the death penalty! THERE IS NO BIBLICAL ALLOWANCE FOR LYING IN COURT EVER! Lying as a witness is ALWAYS wrong – unequivocally… ***You can be silent and refuse to speak – but you can’t lie.***

Now, The broader teaching of the Bible makes it abundantly clear that this commandment refers to more than just lying in a court-room! As our catechism summarizes – ***God’s will is that I NEVER*** *give false testimony against anyone,* ***twist No one’s words, Not gossip or slander, NOR join in condemning anyone without a hearing or without a just cause! Rather, in court and everywhere else, I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind!***These things are breaking the 9th commandment, because they are failures to uphold/promote the truth!

The Best place to see this truth illustrated is in Proverbs 6. There Solomon tells us that there are 6 things that the Lord hates, yes, 7 that are detestable to Him: And 3 of them fall under this commandment!

 Haughty eyes, **Lying tongue,** Murder of innocent, Wicked scheming heart, Feet quick to run to evil, **False Witness who pours out lies (Exact SAME words AS 9th Commandment), a Man who stirs up dissension among brothers.** (Gossip/Slander)

In these words, it is very clear that God hates sinful speech! He explicitly says that He hates the lying tongue as well as perjury! Which means, God hates lying in everyday life. **And finally**: God hates those who stir up dissension among brothers – And what stirs up dissension? It is always the result of slander, gossip, twisting words and rash condemnations! ***In a list of seven things that God hates,* 3 out of 7 *are sins against the 9th commandment*!**

 WHY?! Because God is Truth! In Him is no false-hood. Satan is the father of lies, but God sets us free and gives us the new birth through the Word of Truth! Lies and deceit go against the basic character and holiness of God! Which is why He speaks so strongly in so many places against deceit and lying of all kinds!

*So, if God hates lying so much… WHY IS IT SO EASY TO LIE?!* ***To answer that, let’s look at our***

# **Motivations:** *motivations for telling the Truth/Lies*

***What Motivates someone to lie?*** In a word = self-preservation.

When a parent asks one of you children, “Who made this mess on the floor?” You are tempted to lie, because you don’t want to get into trouble! **Or, a person lies at work when they forgot to do something, because they are hoping that the lie might stop them from getting fired (***so long as they aren’t found out!***)**. Self-protection/Self-preservation is the standard motive we think about – **But is that all there is to it?**

 *What about the spiritual motivation of lying?*

***WHAT IS GOING ON IN Your HEART WHEN You LIE?*** When faced with a negative situation, where you might get in big trouble or lose your job – *Who do you really need to trust?* **God, of course!** And yet, when you lie to your parents or your boss, you are essentially saying, “I don’t trust You God! I don’t trust that obeying Your Law is best; and I don’t trust YOU to work this out for my good!” ***With that thought in your heart, you then take matters in your own hands, by lying – thereby trusting yourself, more than God!***

you aren’t reflecting the image of God, instead, you are reflecting/copying Satan, the father of all lies!

This is important… To understand the wickedness of our hearts when it comes to lying – we have to understand God’s perspective on this! Prior to Satan and Adam and Eve’s fall into sin, there were no lies, no death, no sin… *In John 8:44, when the Pharisees were attacking Jesus*, Jesus explained that they were copying their Father the devil, for from him come all lies and murders. ***We all naturally born as children of Sin and Satan*** (which is why lying seems so natural to us!). But as we read in Ephesians 4: As Christians, we are no longer corrupted by deceit and lust – we have become children of light and imitators of God our Father! So, the reason why we tell the truth (even when in trouble) is because we have been saved from the darkness of sin… ***Salvation doesn’t save you to sin, but FROM sin!*  Paul explains in that passage,** that we are to put off the old man of sin (which followed Satan) and put on the NEW man, which Paul says: ***is created to be like God in the Righteousness and Holiness of the Truth!*** In the very next verse he continues saying: THEREFORE: Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor. A few verses later, Paul goes on to prohibit all the other sins related to the 9th commandment: slander and malice (unjust judgments) – and instead commands us to be kind and compassionate to one another… We do all of this, we obey in these ways in order to live a life of love as we follow Christ.

***AND THAT IS WHY WE TELL THE TRUTH!*** Because we are loving others and loving God by imitating and Following Christ...

Now, the plain teaching of scripture on this topic is 100% clear. God no where positively commands you to lie, but in all places, He does command you to speak the truth in love and forsake all lies.

***But you know and I know that there are some HUGE debates when it comes to lies and matters of conscience…***

Which brings us to our 3rd point…

#  **Conscience – *How do we apply this teaching to the Really HARD situations?***

 ***I won’t be able to address every question and situation this evening… But I do want to make a start…***

You see, the hard thing is, there are occasionally situations where telling the truth is also a part of taking up our Cross and following Christ – situations where life and death is on the line. There was one high school shooting in the States where two teenagers shot dozens and killed 13. Those two boys shot a Christian girl who had previously tried to challenge them on their hatred, and then one asked, do you still believe in God – she said, You know I do – and He killed her. With another, they asked, while holding a gun to their head, “Are you a Christian” and she replied, Yes! And was immediately killed. Now in those two situations – a lie just might have saved their lives.

***But is that what the Bible teaches?*** Profess Christ when it suits you? **Absolutely NOT!** WE all know that telling a lie in that situation would be denying Christ before men! *But it wouldn’t be easy to tell the truth!* You tell the truth for the Honor and Glory of Christ, but you do so, counting the cost! **That is the final motivation to tell the truth – to Show the Power of God!** Who are you to know whether God will take you home to be with Him (which is an upgrade) or whether He will deliver you in some other way?!

The story is told of a Christian in North Korea who was a political prisoner in some sort of camp. Christians had been killed, and a N.Korean Guard came up to him and angrily asked, “Are you a Christian?!” And the man went through all the options of how to respond in his head, but decided, Yes, I must stand for Christ – and he answered, “Yes, I am.” ***The guard said, “Good, so am I! I will help you escape!***”

You have no idea what God can or might do! *You just know God says His way is perfect!* ***So, Trust Him!***

**But some of us will find that easier than others.** Some of us are all too ready to risk our own lives for Christ – it is confusing when someone else’s life is on the line! ***Are you allowed to lie to save another person’s life?***

That is one of the great debates of the 9th commandment! So, how do we determine whether it is okay to lie in such situations? Or during war or police works and desperate situations of life and death?

There are 2 major approaches to such questions, and **both** are legitimate possibilities from Scripture. One option is popular today, but was the minority position in church history. The other is the majority position in Church history, but is pretty rare in our day.

The first option is that there are particular times/situations where lying is NOT a sin. Most likely, many of you have heard or tend to agree with this view. IT is popular today most likely because of the rise of situational ethics in the 20th century. **Those that hold to this argument have 4 Biblical supports for their view:**

**First,** there are exceptions to other commandments – there are times when work on the Sabbath is not only ***not sinning***, but is required (such as emergency personnel, pastors etc). There are times when killing isn’t murder, such as in war, capital punishment and in self-defense. So, the argument is that since God worded the commandment, don’t bear false witness, then He is allowing some types of lies …

**Second,** this position argues that there is a priority of commandments, in a time of crisis, it is better to preserve life, than to preserve property or truth. Even as you are free to smash someone’s window and destroy their property to help pull them out of a burning home, so you can break the truth to preserve someone’s life.

**Third,** It is rightly said that not everyone deserves the truth (or not everyone has the right to an answer to their question) For example: if you ask me something about my underwear - I don’t have to answer you. You have no right to know! So, the argument goes that if someone asks you about the life or well-being of another person (with intent to harm them) – then it is ok to lie because they don’t deserve the truth.

**And Fourth,** there are biblical figures who are commended for their faith, and in the very exercise of their faith **they lied** – such as the Egyptian Mid-wives, Rahab, and others. The argument is that if God approves of them in their faith, then He must approve of them in their actions as well – because in at least some cases they lied BECAUSE they had faith in God!! (Midwives) Their lie, is really the most obvious expression of their faith.

Many Christian leaders in our day hold this view, although I do not believe it is correct Biblically.

**The SECOND Major View (which has the most historical support) is that Lies are always Sin. But God does reward us when we seek to love Him and others in Good faith.** (repeat)

What do I mean by that? I mean that you might lie to save someone’s life, and God will reward you for your attempt to save that person’s life – even though the lie itself displeased Him.

That might sound confusing at first… but it really isn’t *when* you consider the BIG picture of EVERYTHING you and I do! Do you EVER do anything that is not tainted by sin?! No! *Your worship is tainted with wrong motives, distractions and evil thoughts. Your prayer life is the same! Your work and love for others is tainted by mistakes, hatred, laziness, lust and lies! You and I don’t do anything perfectly!* *And yet, Will God reward you for ANY of the good works you have done?!* ***ABSOLUTELY!***

**You see, I don’t think the Bible’s clear teaching on lying ever allows us to say that a lie is NOT sin.** *But we can make the case that God values our service to Him even when tainted by lies, pride, hatred, unjust anger or other sins!*

So, what does this mean if you were to find yourself in one of those classic situations with the Nazi at the door asking if you have Jews in your home?! Good Question! ***And there are a TON of principles which apply in such a situation.*** God commands you to preserve life. God commands you to tell the Truth. You don’t owe the truth to those Nazi murderers. You must be willing to lay down your life for others and for Christ. ***Seek to Trust God and obey those principles to the best of your ability – and God will be pleased with your service!***

Some of you might be asking, “So can I lie or not?!” Of Course you CAN, but whether you do or how you respond is ultimately between you and the Lord. ***Seek the Lord, Love others and leave the results to Him!*** But let me give you a an example of hope… Last time I preached this sermon, a friend came to me and explained what HIS father did while hiding Jews in Holland. When asked if he had Jews, he said, “Why would you believe me?! Just search the house and get on with it!” And he opened the door! They didn’t search and didn’t find the Jews – and He didn’t lie! ***It is possible!***

**God’s Word is clear – God loves the Truth and Hates Lying.** But at the end of the day, you are not saved because you tell the truth or avoid lying! You can only ever be saved because The Truth of God incarnate, Jesus Christ, came to reveal God’s truth to sinful man!

 Through His life, death and resurrection we are saved from our sin, and we are adopted out of the family of Satan (the father of lies) and we are reborn as children of the Truth – for the Truth has set us free!

Therefore, Love the Truth, Share the Truth and speak the truth in love for the good of your neighbor and the glory of our Great God! ***And on that final day, by God’s grace in Christ, you will hear those words, “Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant! Enter into the joy of your Lord!”***

 **Amen.**