

# Tell the Truth

August 6, 2017

**Our Savior's Way**  
**Worshipping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM**  
**Pastor Bill Mann**

“Fake News”—you hear the term every day. The words “fake” and “news” have been around a long time, but according to Google the term “Fake News” blew up on the internet after the election last November. What is “Fake News”? Fake News is a hoax, usually published by a shady news agency. The fake news is picked up and forwarded and repeated until people start to believe it's true. Here are some examples of actual news stories. See if you can separate the “Fake News” from the “Truth.”

- Waste Management Company Offers Dead Body Pickup Service in Response to Proposed Changes in the Affordable Care Act
- Steelers Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger Loses Multiple Fingers in 4th of July fireworks Accident
- Former-President Barack Obama says, “My country owes me a debt of gratitude.”
- President Donald Trump Tweets—“Being an Atheist Gives Me a Business Edge.”
- Giant Python Discovered in Creek in Brown and Monroe County Indiana.
- Federal Judge Orders Chris Tomlin to Stop Adding Praise Choruses to Perfectly Good Hymns.
- Dallas Cowboy WR Lucky Whitehead Arrested for Shoplifting—A Wanted Man

Today, we are continuing our sermon series on the Ten Commandments. We've come to commandment number 8—"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." This is serious stuff, because lies can hurt. But the word "false testimony" is a legal term. So, the meaning of the commandment is simple—If you are called on to testify in court you need to tell the truth. Most civilizations have law codes that contain a similar injunction. It's there to protect truth and justice and the integrity of the legal system. That's the way it is in Virginia. Under Virginia law perjury is considered a class 5 felony and carries with it a serious penalty. This is from the Legal Code of Virginia: "Upon the conviction of any person for perjury, such person thereby shall be adjudged forever incapable of holding any office of honor, profit or trust under the Constitution of Virginia, or of serving as a juror." Federal law states that anyone found guilty of perjury will be fined and/or imprisoned for up to five years.

Martin Luther took this commandment and expanded on the legal definition of perjury. Here's Martin Luther's definition of the 8th Commandment: "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." So, what does it mean to keep the 8th Commandment? Take a look at this video clip. It's about a father who uses a teachable moment to explain to his daughter the difference between a lie, a fib, and a white lie.

The last three Commandments—Do not Murder--Do not Commit Adultery--Do not Steal—they are all pretty straightforward. But this 8th Commandment—Do not give false testimony against your neighbor—this one's a little harder to get your head around, don't you think?

Here's a story that illustrates one way to tell the truth. The story is about two brothers—Joe and John. Both of the brothers had made a lot of money in business. They had become very wealthy. But both of the brothers were well known for their corrupt business practices. Then, one day, Joe, the younger brother, became critically ill with cancer. His older brother John went to the local pastor with this proposal—"Pastor," John said, "I will pay to put a new roof on your church if, at the funeral, you

will say my brother Joe was a saint.” The day of the funeral came. And the pastor, having accepted the challenge, looked for a way to say those unlikely words. Finally the pastor said, “Before we close this memorial service, I just want to say that, compared to his living brother John, Joe was a saint!”

We like to play with the truth, don't we? But God hates lies. He hates half-truths. He hates gossip. He hates rumors. He hates our silence when we know the truth and stay silent. He hates it when we trash talk and when we tear people down and when we just talk negatively about someone or something. And this stuff is so serious it is included twice in the seven things God hates in Proverbs 6:16-19—“There are six things the Lord hates—no seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness that pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family.” The bottom line is that lying reveals the heart of sin inside of us.

So, what do you do about it if this sin has become a part of your life? Let me suggest four steps. (1) Stop it! Just stop it. Stop bearing false witness, stop the lying, stop the gossip, stop spreading rumors. This is a sin before a holy and righteous God—so name the sin and confess it. (2) Recognize that your words (or your silence) may have hurt someone. Make a note of that. You may have a part to play in the healing process. (3) Go to that person. Ask their forgiveness. Tell them you are sorry and you will do whatever it takes to make things right again. (4) Open your heart up to God's Holy Spirit. He will bring healing and He will help you to conquer this propensity to bear false witness.

Finally, I want to speak a word to those of you who have been victims of false testimony. Allow me, as a pastor, to suggest five steps toward healing. (1) Pray about it. You are not the only one to feel hurt. I can remember, as a parent, the first day one of my kids told me a lie. “Did you hit your brother?”—“No!” If you are going to say, “I won't tolerate lies.” or, “I can't have a relationship with someone who lies”, well, good luck with your children. The good news is that if you, as a parent, model truth-telling, your children will learn to speak truthfully. People lie for all kinds of reasons—because they are afraid to tell the truth, out of self-

interest, and because it is a way to manipulate others. So, when someone lies to you or lies about you, pray about it and bring it to Jesus. Jesus understands. Remember Jesus was the victim of lies and false testimony when he was on trial before the High Priest Caiaphas. (2) Stay calm. Watch the Lord work. He promises that all things work together for good. He promises justice and He will bring it. (3) Stay alert. The devil is like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Watch out so that someone isn't you. I mean, guard your reaction to the lie. Don't let your hurt and anger lead you into sin. (4) Trust God's grace. He has not abandoned you despite everything that's been said about you. Remember God's promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you!" (Hebrews 13:5) God is faithful and he will do it.

I love the story about the minister who, at the end of the service one Sunday, announced to his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach a sermon against lying. In preparation I'd like you all to read Mark chapter 17." The next week the pastor began his sermon by asking the congregation, "Now, who has read Mark 17?" Almost every hand went up. "That's very good," the pastor said, "but the truth is Mark only has 16 chapters." He then proceeded with his sermon on lying. Why is it that we are so comfortable with this sin of lying? There's a story about a minister up in Boston who came upon a group of boys standing around a little puppy. "What are you doing, boys?" the minister asked. "Telling lies," one of the boys said. "The one who tells the biggest lie wins the dog." The minister was shocked. "Boys," he said, "When I was your age I would never even think of telling a lie!" The boys looked at one another, pretty crestfallen. Then one of the boys said to the others, "I guess he wins the dog." I wonder—How many dogs have you won? We all need to ask for forgiveness when it comes to the 8th Commandment. Let's do that now.

Prayer: Dear God, we ask your forgiveness for the lies we have told. Lies hurt others and undermine our soul. Teach us to speak the truth always and to give honest answers at all times. In Jesus' name. Amen.