

March 19, 2023

## Abounding Grace: The Grace of the Law Speaking Truth

Exodus 20:16



### For Discussion and Reflection

1. Lying, gossip, slander, etc., are all forbidden in this commandment. How do we explain Rahab's lie to the king's messengers concerning the spies of Israel, Joshua 2:1-7? J.I. Packer says, "There are people to whom it is clearly not right to tell the whole truth...enemies in wartime, to whom one should not give information like...Corrie ten Boom, one may have fugitives to hide." In his biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Eric Metaxas relates a similar dynamic that Pastor Bonhoeffer had in answering the Nazi's. What principles would guide us in situations like this?
2. Jezebel taking Naboth's vineyard is a key story illustrating the violation of this commandment. Read the story of Naboth having his vineyard stolen, 1 Kings 21:1-24. How did Jezebel use the Law of God to kill Naboth? The two false witnesses were not the only ones who conspired. Who else was involved? Do you see this kind of corrupt use of the law today?
3. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus promises "righteousness" for those who hunger and thirst for it, Matthew 5:6. Naboth illustrates corruption that occurred in Israel's legal system, a rich and powerful person was able to use the law to oppress Naboth. Consider these passages: Exodus 23:7-8, Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 10:17,18, Isaiah 1:21-26. Jezebel's practice became a common practice in Israel, where the poor, fatherless, widow, orphan, and foreigner could not win in the legal system. How does Jesus' statement give hope to those legally oppressed? How would it change society to have unquestioned righteousness in the legal system?
4. Achan steals from the spoils for Jericho, concealing the items in his tent. When Israel loses to the small town of Ai, Joshua discovers the theft and confronts Achan. His statement is interesting, saying, "give glory to the LORD God of Israel," Joshua 7:19. He's urging Achan to confess, the tell the truth, but ties truth telling to God's glory. How does confessing, telling the truth connect to God's glory?
5. Thomas Watson quotes Pythagoras responding to a question about what makes men like God, answering, "when they speak the truth." Part of our image-bearing nature is our use of language, specifically, our truth telling. Scripture affirms this gift of language and sets warnings and parameters for its use: Proverbs 15:4, 17:9, 26:20; Matthew 15:11; Ephesians 4:29; James 3:1-12. How do these passages speak to you? How important is our speech for imaging God and loving our neighbor?
6. In another sermon, I quoted an author who said, "Satan is a destroyer, not a creator." (Edmund Clowney) Thomas Watson says, "A perjured person is the devil's excrement." Scripture tells us that Satan is a liar and the father of lies, John 8:44. Read the entire exchange in John 8:39-47. What biblical examples of Satan's lies can you recall? While he isn't a little devil on your shoulder, how is Satan lying and infusing the culture with his lies? What are some lies that our culture has adopted? How do we combat these lies?
7. How would you define "truth"? (stop and discuss) Dr. Steven Lawson says, "It is defined as that which conforms with fact or reality. It is genuineness, veracity, or actuality. In a word, truth is reality. It is how things actually are. Theologically, truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God." Truth should be a united principle of society but in postmodern thinking, truth is relative to personal perspective. What is the danger to this change in understanding for society? For the individual?
8. What have you taken away from this discussion? What can you do to grow in God's truth and grace?