

069 - Speak the Truth - Part 2 - Ephesians 4:25 - 2015-11-29

Call to Worship: Psalm 119:103-105

Scripture Reading: Joshua 2:1-11

Sermon: "Speak the Truth - Part 2"

Benediction: 2 John 1:3

INTRODUCTION

Text: Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, putting away lying, "LET EACH ONE OF YOU SPEAK TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR," for we are members of one another.

Think for a moment with me about what we covered last week, to make it fresh in your mind:

1. appreciate the simple beauty of how this commandment is stated
 - a. reason, referring to how you have put off the old man and put on the new
 - b. negative: putting away lying
 - c. affirmative: speak truth
 - d. reason: referring to how we are all members together of the one body of Christ
 - e. OT scripture quotation from Zechariah
2. ponder the grace of God in giving you this command
 - a. it is God's work in you to remove lies from your mouth, to purify your character
 - b. it is given in the context of God having determined to do you good
 - c. so appreciate this command as a loving gift rather than a burden
3. understand the virtue of speaking the truth, as being of God and from God
4. understand the sin of lying, as being of the devil and from the devil
5. consider the body of Christ
 - a. that it is harmful to the body for the members to tell lies
 - b. that it is good for the body for the members to speak the truth to one another

Today I take up with you a difficult ethical question that arises when Christians deal with this commandment. For the past seventy years, the question has been put like this:

You are a Dutch Christian in the early 1940s, during the dark days of World War II, when Germany, under the Nazi regime of Adolph Hitler, was arresting Jews by the millions to murder them in concentration camps. You, in Godly compassion, act mercifully toward the poor Jews. You take them in and hide them in your home. One night, agents of the Gestapo pound on your door. When you open it, they ask, "Where are the Jews? Are you hiding Jews here?" The Lord Jesus has told that you are to speak truth with your neighbor. But you want to shield the innocent from those who would harm them. Is it right or wrong to tell the Gestapo a falsehood, to tell them something that is not true?

I bring up this ethical question, but solving it is not my main concern in this sermon. My main concern is

NOT to get us ready to handle such a dilemma

BUT to have a good look at this question, so as to be able to put it in its place off to the side, so we can focus on the Lord Jesus and His command for us to speak truth

It seems to me that the “what if” questions that arise with the Lord’s commands severely distract us from the main issue of obedience.

e.g. Children, obey your parents---what if they command you to do wrong?

e.g. Thou shalt not steal---what if your children are starving?

illus. Like fog to the vision or static to the hearing

Let us, therefore, take up this question, have a good look at it, understand it as best we can, then set it off to the side on the shelf, so we can focus our attention of the Lord Jesus we serve, and his commandment that we speak the truth.

That is my main purpose.

I have a secondary purpose for taking up this question in this sermon: to make sure we can speak the truth about this ethical question. Ironically, there is a strong temptation, when studying this issue, not to tell the truth in the course of the discussions.

1. many times Christians actually slander other Christians who disagree with them on this question as they discuss it
2. other times Christians, attempting to discuss this issue, unintentionally say things that are patently false because they don’t make sense at all

So, my secondary purpose is to help all of us to be able to speak the truth when discussing this difficult ethical question.

There are two camps on this issue, and they are not sectarian.

1. not ancient versus modern
2. not western versus eastern
3. not Calvinist versus Arminian
4. not Protestant versus Roman Catholic

	Absolutist	Permissive
What will he say?	-Nothing -I will not betray any man. -I will not tell you anything -You need not concern yourself with this house; we are law-abiding Christians, and doing no one any harm.	-There are no Jews here! -I don't know where they are. -I saw them running east across the field.
What is his main criterion by which to judge what is right?	Speech must be truthful to be right, even if justice does not immediately result	Speech must give justice to be right, even if that requires the speech to be false
What is his main biblical support?	God cannot lie, and we are to be holy as God is holy. The bible says, let every man speak truthfully to his neighbor.	Certain biblical characters told falsehood, but were favored and blessed by God regarding their actions.
Who has taught these positions?	see below	see below
5th Century (all lived late 300s to early 400s)	Augustine - two books	John Chrysostom John Cassian
16th Century	John Calvin	Martin Luther
17th Century	Puritans on the 10 Commandments Irish - Ezekiel Hopkins Scottish - James Durham English - Thomas Watson	Hugo Grotius (1583-1645)
20th Century	John Murray, taught at Westminster 1930-1966 Arthur Pink 1886-1952	R.J. Rushdoony Greg Bahnsen Kenneth Gentry

Keep the Lord Jesus Christ and His great commission foremost.

1. we are obeying Him, teaching His disciples to obey all his commandments
2. we are preaching something that must be believed
 - a. what that is
 - b. it is important that our speech is known to be true
 - c. it is important that our actions bear witness to the truth of what we say
3. we are not looking to our own performance to get us to heaven
 - a. We will do what we understand to be the Lord's will
 - b. If we get something wrong, we trust the Lord Jesus' blood and righteousness

Fear God rather than men; in your mind set apart Jesus Christ as Lord, not anyone else

1. in deciding in your own conscience what is right
2. in acting upon the Lord's commands when pressure comes and you are tempted

Recognize that this is a legitimate question, with which God's church has wrestled for many centuries, and over which the best Christian scholars, as well as just regular Christians like us, have disagreed and will continue to disagree.

Be charitable toward your fellow believer in Christ.

Be truthful regarding the other side's position

1. Do not accuse the permissive camp of thinking that it is right with God to sin that good may result from it. That is not their position. Their position is that it is not sin to tell a falsehood in that situation.
2. Do not accuse the absolutist camp of
 - a. Telling the wicked what they want to know.
 - b. Telling the wicked what they know will result in harm to the innocent
 - c. Being culpable in the harm of the innocent.
 - d. Being naive: It is a long list of accomplished people you are calling naive
3. Consider how wicked to tell lies about other Christians

Do not go Pharisee regarding who your neighbor is! That is not the answer to the dilemma.

Do not resort to absurdity; do not try to adopt some middle ground.

1. examples
 - a. beloved pastor: lie, then ask forgiveness
 - b. Matthew Henry: it was right for Rahab, but would be wrong for any of us
 - c. anyone: They are both right.
2. why there can't be a middle ground
 - a. in that situation it cannot be wrong to tell a falsehood and not wrong to tell a falsehood; it is one or the other

b. one camp has judged rightly, the other wrongly

Act always in good conscience, doing what you understand the Word of God teaches you to be right, and never doing what you understand to be wrong.

CONCLUSION

Now, brothers and sisters, rather than letting this or any other difficult ethical question distract you, get focused on obeying the Lord Jesus' command for you.

Putting off lying, let every man speak truthfully to his neighbor.

For the good of the lost, who must believe the gospel, speak the truth.

For the good of your own soul, for your own sanctification, speak the truth.

For the good of the other disciples of Christ, speak the truth.

For the good of the whole church local, and the whole church universal, speak the truth.

For the glory of our dear Savior Jesus Christ, speak the truth.

BODY

Three kinds of lies:

1. pernicious or malicious: most easily seen to be evil
2. jocular: less easily seen as evil
3. officious: very difficult to discern as evil

Love the truth

Hate falsehood.

Fear the Lord.

Fear of God rather than of men---what can man do to me?

“sanctify God in your hearts”

“hallowed be Thy name”

Psalm 19:9

Trust the Lord.

Speak the Truth with Your Neighbor

The emphasis here is on speaking truth with your fellow Christian

But if you take another step in that direction, you go wrong

The Pharisees said that since the bible said, “Love your neighbor,” we could reason that a full statement of that doctrine would be “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But the Lord Jesus said that “neighbor” is meant to extend the commandment of love to every one of your fellow human beings, and so the commandment, “Love your neighbor” includes within it the commandment, “Love your enemies.”

Consider the gospel.

JRY:

Arguments I do not accept

1. if you do not lie for the innocent, it is sure they will be harmed
2. if you do not lie for the innocent, you are culpable in their being harmed

Zechariah 8:16 These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor [H7453, G4139]; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;

Leviticus 19:18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor [H7453, G4139] as yourself: I am the LORD.

Absolutist Position

Augustine (354-430) - Calvin - Immanuel Kant (1725-1804) - Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

Permissive Position

Chrysostom (349-407) - John Cassian (360-435) - Luther - Hugo Grotius (1583-1645)

Greg Bahnsen (1948-1995)

Matthew Henry takes the untenable position that it was right for her to do it, but would be wrong for anyone to do it now.

A very dear former pastor of mine held forth an even worse position, that a Christian in such a situation should lie to the Nazis, then ask the Lord to forgive him.

	Absolutist	Permissive
	Speech must be truthful to be right, even if justice does not immediately result	Speech must give justice to be right, even if that requires the speech to be false
5th Century (all lived late 300s to early 400s)	Augustine	John Chrysostom John Cassian
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What will he say?	-Nothing -I will not betray any man. -I will not tell you anything -You need not concern yourself with this house; we are law-abiding Christians, and doing no one any harm.	-There are no Jews here! -I don't know where they are. -I saw them running east across the field.
What might he accuse the other camp of?	Thinking that it is right with God to sin that good may	-Telling the wicked what they want to know.

	result from it. (This is an example of the logical fallacy "begging the question.")	-Telling the wicked what they know will result in harm to the innocent -Being culpable in the harm of the innocent. -Being naive
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JRY:

Our ability to predict what will happen in the future if we do certain things is very limited.

Fear of God rather than of men---what can man do to me?

"sanctify God in your hearts"

"hallowed be Thy name"

The law unsealed: or, A practical exposition of the Ten commandments; ... Durham, James

The scope [purpose] of it [9th commandment] is the preservation of verity and ingenuity amongst men, Colossians 3:9, Ephesians 4:25, 15

1. There is *mendacium perniciosum*, a malicious or pernicious lie, when it is hurtful to another, and so designed.
2. There is *officiosum mendacium*, or an officious lie, when it is for a good end, such was the midwives lie, Exodus 1:9. Thus the denying of a thing to be, even when the granting of it would infer hurt and damage to another, is contrary to truth, and we ought not to do evil that good may come of it; and it overturneth the end for which speaking was appointed, when we declare a thing otherwise than we know or think it to be; and as no man can lie for himself for his own safety, so can he not for another's.
3. There is *jocosum mendacium*, when it is for sport, to make others laugh and be merry, which, being sinful in itself, can be no matter of lawful sport to make others laugh.

Hopkins:

In the first place, the command prohibits LYING; and this is a sin which comprehends under it all other violations of this precept

A lie, according to Augustin's definition of it, is a voluntary speaking of an untruth with an intent to deceive.

1. there must be speaking of an untruth
2. it must be known to us to be an untruth
3. it must be with a will and intent to deceive him to whom we speak it

It is no lie to conceal part of the truth when it is not expedient nor necessary to be known, as 1 Samuel 16:2

A lie is a falsehood spoken purposely to deceive.

Three kinds of lies: jocular, officious, and pernicious

1. jocular: Though it may seem very harmless to deceive men into mirth and recreation, yet truth is such an awful and severe thing that it ought not to be contradicted; no, not in jest. Hos 7:3
2. officious: The officious lie is a lie which is told for another's benefit and advantage, and seems to make an abundant compensation for its falsehood by its use and profit. But yet neither can this excuse it from being a sin; for since a lie is intrinsically evil in itself, let the advantage that accrues by it be never so great, we ought not to shelter either ourselves or others under that rotten refuge. That stated maxim holds universally true in all cases: we ought not to do evil that good may come thereof. Therefore, although thine own life or thy neighbor's depends upon it, yet thou oughtest not to tell the least lie to promote even great and blessed ends. This the apostle takes for granted, Romans 3:7
3. pernicious, malicious: devised on purpose for the hurt and damage of my neighbor

A lie showeth a most degenerate and cowardly fear of men, and a most daring contempt of the great God. Whoever lies, does it out of a base and sordid fear lest some evil and inconvenience should come to him by declaring the truth.

Watson:

Here are three sins that are condemned: 1) Speaking that which is false. Lying lips are abomination to the Lord.' Pro_12:22. To lie is to speak that which one knows to be an untruth. There is nothing more contrary to God than a lie. The Holy Ghost is called the 'Spirit of Truth.' 1Jo_4:6. Lying is a sin that does not go alone; it ushers in other sins. Absalom told his father a lie, when he said that he was going to pay his vow at Hebron, and this was a preface to his treason. 2Sa_15:7. Where there is a lie in the tongue, the devil is in the heart. 'Why has Satan filled thine heart to lie?' Act_5:3. Lying is a sin that unfits men for civil society. How can you converse or bargain with a man when you cannot trust a word he says? This sin highly provokes God. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie. Act_5:5. The furnace of hell is heated for liars. 'Without are sorcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' Rev_22:15. O abhor this sin! Quicquid dixeris jura tum putes [Consider your every word an oath]. Jerome. When thou speakest, let thy word be as authentic as thy oath. Imitate God, who is the pattern of truth. Pythagoras being asked what made men like God, answered, cum vera loquuntur, 'when they speak the truth.' The character of a man that shall go to heaven, is that 'He speaketh the truth in his heart.' Psa_15:2.

Use one. For reproof. (1) The church of Rome is reprov'd, which dispenses with a lie, or a false oath, if it promotes the Catholic cause. It approves of an officious lie; and holds some sins to be lawful. It may as well hold some lies to be lawful. God has no need of

our lie. It is not lawful to tell a lie, propter Dei gloriam [for the glory of God], if we were sure to bring glory to God by it, as Augustine speaks.

To avoid these sins get the fear of God. Why does David say, 'The fear of the Lord is clean'? Psa_19:9. Because it cleanses the heart from malice, and the tongue from slander. '

Calvin:

It were absurd to suppose that God hates the disease of evil-speaking in the tongue, and yet disapproves not of its malignity in the mind.

Aquinas:

Summa Theologiae, "Therefore it is not lawful to tell a lie in order to deliver another from any danger whatever. Nevertheless it is lawful to hide the truth prudently, by keeping it back, as Augustine says" (II:110:3).

Spurgeon:

They who lie in jest will find out that God puts it down as sinning in earnest. Let us never attempt to deceive

Having looked at where the sin of lying comes from, let us consider how we may overcome it

A. If you are essentially a liar, a child of the devil, understand the seriousness of your lying

1. Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
2. think yourself a Christian, but know yourself to be essentially a liar?
3. repent and trust yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ

B. If you are a believer in Christ (this mostly from Bayne):

1. find out the cause, and take that away
 - a. pride

- b. fear of men
 - c. presumption---thinking you know so much
 - d. covetousness
 - e. malice
 - f. vanity
2. use fewer words! Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.
 3. consider the dear saints around you (Ephesians 4:25)
 - a. members of one body!
 - b. does the eye lie to the hand, telling it the stove is not red hot?
 4. look to Christ, in whom there is no lie

- I. Think of the nature of the Lord Jesus' commands for us
 - A. there are good reasons
 - B. they are complete
 - C. they are enduring: Paul is quoting to the church what was prophesied by Zechariah and what was spoken at Mount Sinai

Ferguson (as others):

to press on them the exercise of some particular virtues

which do belong to all Christians of whatsoever rank or station equally

all of which are enjoined in the second table of the commands

Therefore

Bayne:

Colossians 3:9-10 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, (10) and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

putting away lying

JFB:

Greek "having put away" once for all

Gill:

a lie is a voluntary disagreement of the mind and speech, with a design to deceive, spoken knowingly and willingly

1. officious lie: which is told for the service of others, but this is not lawful
 - a. for evil is not to be done, that good may come of it
 - b. it is not lawful to lie for god, and therefore not for a creature
2. jocose lie: this ought not to be encouraged
3. a lie which is in itself directly hurtful and injurious
4. religious lie:
 - a. practical, as those whose practice is not according to their confession
 - b. doctrinal, as antichrist and his followers

springs and causes of lying

1. covetousness
2. malice
3. fear of men
4. tempting of the devil, the father of lies
 - it is a sin exceeding sinful
 1. a breach of God's law
 2. an aping of the devil
 3. against the light of nature
 4. destructive of civil society
 5. very abominable in the sight of God

Bayne:

such as are the true members of Christ must avoid all lying

What it is to lie

to speak that which agreeth not with our mind, or which agreeth not with the truth of the matter, or which disagreeeth from both

if I say and think so, that it is 9:00, which it is but 8, it is a lie . . . grounded on a sinful heedlessness

True Christians must avoid all lying, for Zeph 3:13

this is to be conceived of all lies, not only hurtful ones, but delightful, officious lies, for all lies are alike in this text forbidden

1. 1 John 2:21b no lie is of the truth.
2. That which is in the nature evil, cannot be bettered by the end; now, a lie is in the nature evil, against truth
3. The Scripture indefinitely reproveth and condemneth lying, excepting no kind
4. Job doth shew plainly that one may not speak deceitfully for God's advantage Job 13:7
Will you speak wickedly for God, And talk deceitfully for Him?
5. If the Scripture maketh every idle word confemnable, much more every lying word, Matthew 12:36
How may we overcome this?
 1. find out the cause, and take that away. labour against the cause, and the disease will soon cease when the ground is removed
 - a. pride, as the boaster's lie
 - b. covetousness, as the lie in bargaining
 - c. fear, as that of denying
 - d. vanity
 2. accustom ourselves to few words Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.
 3. think of the judgment which God hath threatened against lying, and them that love lies Revelation 21:27

Concealments are not lies: such was Abraham's that Sarah was his sister; samuel's in saying that he went to sacrifice, 1 Samuel 15

Ferguson:

the sin of lying, forbidden in the ninth command

whereby a man doth speak what he knoweth or conceiveth to be untruth, with an intention and purpose to deceive

There is no sin more unseemly in a Christian, and more inconsistent with grace, than the sin of lying, there being no sin that maketh a man

1. more like the devil John 8:44
2. more abominable to God Proverbs 6:16-17
3. more shameful in the eyes of men
4. more hurtful to the sinner, as making him trusted by none
all kind of lying is intrinsically sin, and to be avoided, whether the pernicious, officious, or sporting lie

Let each one of you speak truth

Ferguson:

so that our speech may be conformed both to the thing itself, and to our conceptions of the thing

we are not bound to speak all the truth, and at all times, and to every person, but in some cases may and ought to conceal somewhat of it

Luke 9:21 And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one,
1 Samuel 16:2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me."
But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'

when we speak, we are to speak nothing but truth

This is a general rule to be observed for the right understanding of divine precepts, that where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is also commanded, and where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is also forbidden

Bayne (as Ferguson):

we must be careful that the thing be truth which we speak
what is is to speak the truth

1. to speak as I think
2. to think of this or that as it is

Zechariah 8:16 These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;

Psalm 15:1-2 A Psalm of David. LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? (2) He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;

When am I bound to speak the truth?

1. when authority, temporal or ecclesiastical, doth lawfully require
2. when God's glory or m neighbour's good is procured, or God's dishonour and my neighbour's hurt avoided by it
3. when circumstances of time, person, and place make it fit to be uttered

it doth warn us of our duty, that we do take heed that we get knowledge of that we speak . . . for many speak untruths by heedlessness and rash affirmations of that they thoroughly know not. This care to speak the truth will approve us to be the children of the God of truth, and be an evidence to us that we shall dwell in the heavens for ever.

Pattison:

The Christian is, by his new disposition, truthful.

The duty extends to every individual

Poole:

not only speak as things are, but act sincerely and candidly

JRY:

take care what political speech you pass on

with his neighbor

JRY:

take care not to treat this concept as the Pharisees did

for we are members of one another

Bayne:

for we are by the bond of love more straitly tied one to another

Love does not teach to lie

Do the members of the body, as the hand, doth it mock the mouth and deceive it?

Ferguson:

Though it be sinful to lie and speak untruth unto any, even to an infidel, Ezekiel 17:16, yet it is more sinful and most odious for believers and professors of the same faith, because of their nearer bonds

It is not sufficient to speak truth with his neighbor from a motive of self interest, but he ought to be acted from a principle of love towards those with whom he speaketh

Hodge:

there is a violation of the very law of their union for one Christian to deceive another
this is not intended to exclude other grounds

The obligation of veracity rests on

1. the intrinsic excellence of truth
2. the command of God
3. the rights of our fellow men . . . that we should not deceive them

JFB:

One member could not injure or deceive another, without injuring himself, as all have a mutual and common interest.

Caldwell:

note this is the first thing Paul mentions
there is nothing more characteristic of the new life than "truth"
see how much of the NT material is about the Christian's association with the truth
there is nothing more characteristic of the old man than lies
there is nothing more characteristic of our old master than lies
there is nothing more characteristic of our new master than the truth
there is nothing that reveals our sinfulness than lies
there is nothing more destructive to the church than lies

Worrell:

love the truth
speak the truth
preserve our own good name and the good name of others (JRY: and of the gospel)

Gordon Dane:

our neighbor is anyone to whom we should do good, so someone bent on doing murder we do not have to do good to him

neither to bear false witness nor to hear false witness

McDearmon citing Murray:

Principles of Conduct chapter "The Sanctity of Truth"

1. There is no moral justification for a falsehood.
2. In some circumstances it is right to withhold all or part of the truth for the purpose of concealment--that is, when the inquirer does not have a moral claim, either on any of the truth or on all of the truth. Concealment and deception are two different things.
3. The truth of a statement spoken is determined by the facts in the purview of the speaker, not by the limited knowledge of the inquirer or hearer
 - a. e.g. if inquirer does not know you homeschool, no obligation to volunteer that
4. In some circumstances wherein we act, truth is determined by the facts we see and interpret, not by the erroneous interpretations of others.
 - a. e.g. house lights on a timer

McDearmon:

Why be truthful? be truthful as God is truthful

Pink [on Joshua 2]:

no "circumstances" can ever obliterate the fundamental distinction between good and evil. Let the reader settle it in his mind and conscience that it is never right to do wrong and since it be sinful to lie, no circumstances can ever warrant the telling of one

One preacher who occupied a prominent pulpit in London asked the question, "Was Rahab justified in those falsehoods?" and answered in the affirmative, arguing "She must either utter them or else betray the spies, and their lives would have been lost". But that the reasoning of unbelief, for it leaves out God. Had Rahab remained silent before the king's officers declining to give any information, or had she acknowledged that the spies were on her premises, was the Lord unable to protect them?

she failed to fully trust the Lord, and the fear of man brought a snare.

Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 in support. But there is nothing whatever in either of those verses which intimates that the Lord sanctioned her falsehoods. Hebrews 11:31 says nothing more about this incident than that "she had received the spies with peace". James points out that the faith of Rahab was "justified by works"-not by her "words"-and

then specified which "works", namely, her receiving of the messengers and her sending them out another way.

As Manton tersely summed up the case "Her lie was an infirmity, pardoned by God, and not to be exaggerated by men"

SOURCES

Murray, John "The Sanctity of Truth"

Calvin, John commentary on Joshua

Augustine *On Lying [De Mendacio] and Against Lying [Contra Mendacio]*

Murray:

What does the Scripture mean by 'lying' as the prohibited thing and by 'speaking truth' as that required? May we under any circumstances utter what we know to be untrue, what we believe to be false? Are we always under obligation to declare what we know or believe to be true?⁷ May we affirm part of the truth and conceal the rest? These are the questions that inescapably arise, not only in the exigencies of life but in the interpretation of Scripture. We are compelled to come to terms with such questions because the biblical record supplies us with instances in which untruth was blatantly spoken and in which truth was concealed. Does the Scripture approve such conduct under certain circumstances?

are we to say that strong faith cannot coexist with the infirmities of unbelief? There is no ground upon which we may seek to justify the deception and untruth of Rebekah and Jacob.⁸ Jacob spoke and acted a lie, and this fact only enhances our astonishment at the sovereignty of God's grace and the faithfulness of his promise. In this instance we find no justification of the falsehood perpetrated.

We see, therefore, that neither Scripture itself nor the theological inferences derived from Scripture provide us with any warrant for the vindication of Rahab's untruth⁹ and this instance, consequently, does not support the position that under certain circumstances we may justifiably utter an untruth.

Augustine *On Lying*:

whoever utters that which he holds in his mind either as belief or as opinion, even though it be false, he lies not.

That man lies, who has one thing in his mind and utters another in words, or by signs of whatever kind. Whence also the heart of him who lies is said to be double; that is, there is a double thought: the one, of that thing which he either [knows](#) or thinks to be [true](#) and does not produce; the other, of that thing which he produces instead thereof, [knowing](#) or thinking it to be false.

the fault of him who lies, is, the desire of deceiving in the uttering of his mind

none doubts that it is a [lie](#) when a person willingly utters a [falsehood](#) for the purpose of deceiving: wherefore a false utterance put forth with will to deceive is manifestly a [lie](#).

let us inquire, whether it be sometimes useful to utter a [falsehood](#) with will to deceive.

They who think it is,

advance testimonies to their opinion, by alleging the case of Sarah, who, when she had laughed, denied to the Angels that she laughed: of Jacob questioned by his father, and answering that he was the elder son [Esau](#): likewise that of the [Egyptian](#) midwives, who to save the Hebrew infants from being slain at their birth, told a [lie](#), and that with God's approbation and reward: and many such like instances they pick out, of lies told by [persons](#) whom you would not dare to blame, and so must own that it may sometimes be not only not blameworthy, but even praiseworthy to tell a [lie](#).

They add also a case with which to urge not only those who are devoted to the Divine Books, but all [men](#) and common sense, saying, Suppose a man should take refuge with you, who by your lie might be saved from death, would you not tell it? If a sick man should ask a question which it is not expedient that he should [know](#), and might be more grievously afflicted even by your returning him no answer, will you venture either to tell the [truth](#) to the destruction of the man's life, or rather to hold your peace, than by a [virtuous](#) and merciful lie to be serviceable to his weak health? By these and such like arguments they think they most plentifully prove, that if occasion of doing good require, we may sometimes tell a [lie](#).

those who say that we must never lie, plead much more strongly, using first the Divine authority, because in the very Decalogue it is written You shall not bear false [witness](#); under which general term it comprises all lying: for whoso utters any thing bears [witness](#) to his own mind. But lest any should contend that not every lie is to be called false [witness](#), what will he say to that which is written, The mouth that lies slays the [soul](#): and lest any should suppose that this may be understood with the exception of some liars, let him read in another place, You will destroy all that speak leasing. Whence with His own lips the Lord says, Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these comes of [evil](#). Hence the Apostle also in giving precept for the putting off of the old man, under which name all [sins](#) are understood, says

The reason why the [Divine Scriptures](#) contain not only God's commands, but the life and character of the just, is this: that, if haply it be hidden in what way we are to take that which is enjoined, by the actions of the just it may be understood.

Augustine, *Against Lying*

Chapter 26

From no apostolic acts or speeches, therefore, do these men allege things meet for imitation as examples of lying. From prophetic [deeds](#) or words, then, the reason why they seem to themselves to have what they may allege, is only for that they take figures preunciative to be lies, because they are sometimes like lies. But when they are referred to those things for the signifying of which they were so done or said, they are found to be significations full of [truth](#), and therefore in no wise to be lies. A lie, namely, is a false signification withwill of deceiving. But that is no false signification, where, although one thing is signified by another, yet the thing signified is a [true](#) thing, if it be rightly understood.

Chapter 29

it was meet that we should not only be nourished by that which is plain, but exercised by that which is obscure

Chapter 33

But as for us, when we ask whether it be the part of a [good](#) man sometimes to lie, we ask not concerning a person pertaining to [Egypt](#), or to [Jericho](#), or to [Babylon](#), or still to Jerusalem itself, the earthly, which is in bondage with her children; but concerning a citizen of that city which is

above and free, our mother, [eternal](#) in the heavens. And to our asking it is answered, No lie is of the [truth](#). The sons of that city, are sons of the Truth. That city's sons are they of whom it is written, In their mouth was found no lie: son of that city is he of whom is also written, A son receiving the word shall be far from destruction: but receiving, he has received that for himself, and nothing false proceeds out of his mouth. These sons of Jerusalem on high, and of the [holy](#) city [eternal](#), if ever, as they be men, a [lie](#) of what kind soever does worm itself into them, they ask humbly for pardon, not therefrom seek moreover [glory](#).

Just War and the Ethics of Espionage

By Darrell Cole

Chapter 3 "Lying and Deception"