

# Worshipping God by Fleeing all Lying

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**Bible Text:** Proverbs 26  
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We turn in scripture to Proverbs 26. Proverbs 26. We read this in connection with Lord's Day 43 of the Catechism where we have the Catechism's treatment of the 9th commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Let's begin reading at Proverbs 26:18. Proverbs 26 and let's jump down to verse 18.

18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, 19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? [I am joking. Am I not joking?] 20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. 21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. 22 The words of a talebearer [a gossip] are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. 23 Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. 24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; 25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. [His heart is full of abomination] 26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation. 27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him. 28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

So far we read God's holy and infallible word. It's on the basis of this passage of scripture and on many passages that we have the instruction of Lord's Day 43 of the Catechism found on page 24 in the back of the Psalter. Lord's Day 43.

Q. 112. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. That I bear false witness against no man, nor falsify any man's words; that I be no backbiter, nor slanderer; that I do not judge, nor join in condemning any man rashly or unheard; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me [unless I would want to bring down upon me, that's the idea] unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God; likewise, that in judgment and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly, and

confess it; also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbor.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, listen to these words, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Do you realize how humbling those words are? What kind of language comes out of your mouth? Just think, even already this morning, just think this past week, these last few days, what kind of language has come out of your mouth? Did you speak harshly to a family member? Did you put someone down with your words? Did you speak badly about someone else behind their back, hurting their reputation and good character? There's reason for us to pause and ask ourselves when we spoke that way, what were we revealing about our hearts?

Beloved congregation, listen to these words, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart and they defile a man. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good. And an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil. For, of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaketh." Again, what comes out of your mouth, that which is good? That which builds up? That which gives life? Or that which kills and destroys and wounds?

In the immediately following verse, Jesus says, "Why do you call me Lord, but you don't do the things that I tell you to do?" Beloved congregation, listen to just one more passage, "The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked." Is your mouth a well of life? Is your mouth a fountain of life that gives refreshment and strength to those around you? Or is your mouth characterized by violence? What effect does your word have on those around you? Do your words tear down and destroy, or do they build up and give life?

Young people and young adults, I want to speak this to you. Right now, as a young person and young adult, you are developing habits of speech. What tone of voice do you use when you are speaking to your mother? What tone of voice do you use when you speak to your sister or your brother or your girlfriend or your boyfriend? Is it condescending? Is it full of cutting sarcasm and yelling? Do you speak in order to belittle others and make them feel stupid? Oh yes, maybe at church or out in public you speak very kind and gentle words, smooth words, but in the privacy of your own home, how do you speak? Do you speak with violence, anger, bitterness, cursing? James writes, "out of the same mouth proceed both blessing and cursing." My brethren, these things ought not so to be. The reality is, you allow yourself to talk that way, which is what we're doing, it's not like this is out of our control. We give ourselves, we allow ourselves to talk this way, and the reality is, we allow ourselves to talk this way, and soon enough our language becomes worse. We start using four-letter words without thinking about it. Then it's not just those words that characterize us, but it becomes those thoughts that begin to entrench themselves in our own hearts and in our own attitudes and that's what begins to shape who we are so that I become a man of violence. Not just speaking violence, I become a man of violence or a woman of violence. I become one who is grumpy all the time or I become a filthy man because my conversation is filthy. I become proud. In a word, I

become evil because all the while there wasn't just something wicked about my speech, there was something going on in my heart. I was giving place to evil in my heart because that's where it comes from. It is from what is in our hearts that explains why we talk the way that we talk. We need to recognize that. Why I use the tone of voice that I use, it's coming from my heart. Why I choose the words that I choose. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good." Yes he does, "And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

I say to you this morning, is that not humbling? Well here we are with the 9th commandment, the Lord has led us this far, and what the 9th commandment teaches us is that when God saves his people, God doesn't just save their souls, he doesn't just save their bodies, he doesn't just reserve for them a place in heaven, but he saves their mouths. He sanctifies their speech. He gives them a new heart and it's out of that new heart, if God gives that new heart, that you have holy and honest conversation proceeding from. And here in the 9th commandment, God addresses our communication and with this commandment, in the third section of the Catechism, God says, your mouth has been renewed. It's like Isaiah, the coals from the altar have touched your lips and purified your heart. Your mouth has been washed clean. Your mouth has been set free from the bondage of sin, and from the filth of murder, and the filth of the lie. Your mouth has been transformed by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit so that your mouth can now be an instrument in God's hand for good, to be a blessing, to speak words that minister grace to the hearers, to speak the truth, to be a faithful witness to the truth. And now he says, use your mouth accordingly.

And here in Lord's Day 43, the Catechism sets forth how we are to use our mouths. Ultimately, we can put it this way, and you know what's coming: are you thankful? You know, child of God, you know who you are as his child. You know who God is as your God, who saved you from death and hell, from everlasting destruction. If you are a believer, he saved you from the kingdom of darkness, in which there was no hope, no peace, no life, but only violence, and murder, and hatred, and jealousy, and a whole sphere, a whole orb of lies and he's delivered you from that, and he's washed away all your sins and it's all of his grace. You deserve nothing. You deserve the opposite. But he's given you a full and free salvation. Am I thankful? The true Christian is thankful. Yes, the true Christian says, "I struggle but I am thankful. And that thankfulness, God wants me to show that this way, I turn from sin, I forsake my sin, and I use my mouth, and I use my being to speak the truth, to defend the neighbor, and to do good, and not evil."

We'll take as our theme this morning "Worshiping God by Fleeing All Lying." Worshiping God by fleeing all lying and we'll look at three things under that theme. First, we look at the sin of lying. We walk through the first part of Lord's Day 43 especially. Second, we look at the hatred that characterizes it. And then third, we look briefly at the speech that is required.

The 9th commandment says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Now if you simply look at that language the way that it is, you'll notice that this 9th commandment is put specifically in the context of a courtroom. The 9th commandment speaks about bearing false witness. That's talking about a courtroom, a court of law. One of the Catechism students asked me a few weeks ago why God uses this language to bear false witness. That's a good question. To answer that question, we can put it this way: what you see throughout the 10 Commandments is that each commandment often gives us the worst example of sinning in some way. The 10 Commandments don't speak specifically about anger or about lusting, although those things are certainly included, rather, the 10 Commandments speak about murder, and they speak about adultery, they speak about the worst form of the sin. And here too in the 9th commandment, God picks out what is perhaps the worst way of lying, the worst way of using evil communication, bearing false witness in a court of law.

Now think about the context in the Old Testament. Exodus 20. In the Old Testament, witnesses were everything. Today, witnesses are still important, but today we have audio recordings, we have DNA testing, we have video, we have fingerprinting. In the ancient world, they didn't have any of that. What did they have? They had eyewitnesses. It's pretty much all that they had. And if someone stood up to accuse a person of wrongdoing, and then a second person stood up with the same accusation, the very life of that accused person could be in jeopardy. Think of what happened to Naboth. Queen Jezebel hired out witnesses to say that Naboth blasphemed the name of God and the king. And what happened? He was stoned to death so that publicly, with the stoning, it was as if God's curse was upon him. That's what Queen Jezebel did with false witnesses. Think of what happened to Joseph when he spent years in prison because Potiphar's wife bore false witness against him. Think of what happened to Jesus when false witnesses were sought out to try to find an accusation against Jesus, exactly so that they might put him to death.

Congregation, can you imagine doing that? Can you imagine standing up in a court of law and telling a lie about someone, knowing full well that that person might be put to death because of your lies? That's wickedness. That's an evil heart right there. Congregation, can you imagine standing in front of the elders of church and telling them a lie, multiple lies, and insisting to them that it is the truth even though you know full well it's a lie, and you are adamant that what you are saying is the truth? And eventually the elders find out that it's the lie, and there you are. That's wickedness. That's an evil heart. And now imagine this, imagine being the person who's being accused. You have nothing to defend yourself except your own insistence on the truth and you're going to lose perhaps everything, your property, your family, your life because someone is bearing false witness against you. What a horrible experience. And sadly these things happen. And it's evil. That's why the Bible is full of these warnings against false witnessing. Bearing false witness. What happens when people bear false witness is that the very foundations of society are destroyed. A society can't even function. A society falls into anarchy because there's no truth, there's no justice, and as a result there's no peace. Yet how thankful we can be, beloved, that whatever false witnesses rise up against us here on earth, we have one in heaven who judges righteously. He is a faithful witness. He knows the truth and he will judge according to truth. That's the comfort God's people have.

Well, bearing false witness in a court of law is perhaps the most egregious form of this sin, but the 9th commandment does not just have to do with courtroom infractions, it deals also with all manner of falsehoods. The Catechism mentions a few of these things. "That I bear false witness against no man nor falsify any man's words." That language "nor falsify any man's words" means that we never twist any man's words. And how easily that is done. We put our spin on what another person says, really we manipulate their words. We take out a few words here, we add a few more words here, or we ignore the main message that is given. We give the words an entirely different meaning than what was originally meant, and we do it simply to attack and we twist their words to fit our agenda and our cause. And we say, "But you said this." And the other person says, "No, that's not what I said and that's not what I meant either. You're twisting my words." And I think we all understand how evil this behavior is. Manipulating words comes from a heart that is evil and it is not characterized by honesty or love.

The Catechism goes on, "that I be no backbiter or slanderer." A slanderer is one who lies in order to destroy someone else's name or reputation. He's lying. A backbiter, in contrast, is one who's speaking the truth but he speaks the truth in order, again, to attack and to destroy. He spreads gossip. He spreads secrets that should be kept secret. In an argument he brings up sins from many years ago that should have been long put away and dealt with. And why does he do it? He does it in order to destroy the other person's name and reputation and make himself look better. He wants to hurt the person. And yet he approves of how he behaves because according to him he's just speaking the truth. It's true. He thinks, "What I'm saying is true," but there's no love for the other person. No love at all.

The Catechism goes on, "that I do not judge nor join in condemning any man rashly or unheard." That usually goes hand-in-hand with backbiting and with slander because in the nature of the case there's not only the one who's speaking, there's also the one who's listening, and the one who's listening must always be careful not to believe immediately everything he hears. That's the temptation. That's exactly what the backbiter and the slanderer wants you to do, to make those rash judgments where you hear only one side of the story. I've got a few examples here but I don't even think it's profitable to mention them. You can think about it yourself. I know I can think about examples. I had to do that this past week, examples in my own life, and how quick we are to make rash judgments. We don't even know what we're talking about and it's like we have a right to a judgment. And we don't even know what we're talking about. That's me. Maybe someone hasn't talked to us for a long time and suddenly we make up all kinds of critical judgments. We have a whole list for why the person is acting the way that they're acting. But we ourselves haven't even reached out to the person and initiated a conversation. We simply judge the person rashly and unheard.

Maybe Sunday coffee comes around and the family is gathered around the table so that everyone can pool their resources together and they can get caught up on all the gossip from the past week. This Facebook post, that Facebook page. And it's all a sounding board for us to be encouraged in all the rash judgments that we want to make and that

we've already made. And there's all kinds of talk. But then you know what? It comes time for mealtime devotions and not one prayer is made concerning all these people that we've just been talking about or all these issues we've just been discussing because you know what? That wasn't really the point of Sunday coffee discussion. The intent of the conversation wasn't so much to care for these people that we're talking about. You know, Such-and-such is in the hospital. Such-and-such has a difficult way right now. Those are good conversations and those are conversations to be commended and I know we're having those conversations too, that's an important part of the communion of the saints, but sometimes the intent of the gathering is simply to encourage each other as friends and family in the rash judgments that we are making, to be that echo chamber, right? So that we're confirmed in all these rash judgments that we want to make and we make ourselves spiritually sick. We have an opportunity here for self-examination. My family too. We have to be careful. We have to be humble. We have to hold ourselves accountable. Does this come up? Are we gossiping right now? Let's honestly ask ourselves. Am I gossiping right now? Let's hold ourselves accountable publicly in our family conversations.

I think this is also worth saying. The fact is sometimes we don't know the whole story and sometimes it's not our place to know the whole story. Sometimes we just have to be content with what we do know and act accordingly and then we have to abstain from making judgments about things we know nothing about. That's exactly what a rash judgment is. I know one side of the story. That's a rash judgment if you make a judgment. Oh, we have to be wise. Yes, we do. We want to be careful but we need to remember we must judge others in the way that we ourselves would want to be judged and sometimes, oftentimes, more often than we think, there are things that are simply not mine to judge. And I forget sometimes that the Bible also calls me to avoid being a busybody in other men's matters. Do not judge or join in condemning another man rashly or unheard.

And then fourth, the Catechism goes on and says, "but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit as the proper works of the devil." I avoid all this behavior as the proper works of the devil. These sins and more are sins against the 9th commandment, and they are murderers. Proverbs 26:22 says, "The words of a talebearer," the words of a gossip, "are as wounds and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." How sad when God's people are even wounding each other through these words that kill like poison.

Well, that brings us to a question that needs to be faced and the question is: why? Why should we avoid all sorts of lies and deceit? And ultimately the question is, what's at the heart of the issue here? What is so sinful about lying? What's so sinful about gossip and whispering and backbiting? It's not a big deal, is it? Why does lying take place? What explains this behavior? What I want to emphasize this morning is this: when you lie, when you deceive and trick and gossip and put others down, the reality is, it is hatred. It is an attack of hatred, and it's the proper work of the devil. And it goes back to our relationship to God and our relationship to truth. We've seen this as we've gone through the 10 Commandments and what we need to understand is that we all have a relationship to truth. We all have a relationship to truth. What is truth? Well, truth is that which lines up with reality and what ultimately is truth, well, God is truth. God is the great reality. And God is truth, and he is love, and he is holy, and he is gracious, and all these things

characterize what truth is. Truth is that which is holy. Truth is that which is gracious and loving. Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus and who he is and what he has done, that's the great reality in this world in which we live. And the truth then is also that the Bible is the word of God. The truth is I am a sinner. And the truth is there is a full and free salvation in Jesus Christ for all who call upon his name. These are the great realities in this universe and as moral, rational creatures, we all have a relationship to these realities. In a sense, we have interaction with these realities. We all have a relationship with Jesus. We all have a relationship with God. We all have a relationship with truth.

And what is lying? Lying involves this: I make up my own truth. I make up my own reality in opposition to the reality that God has established and put me in. And instead of honoring God, instead of submitting to God's truth, embracing God's truth, bowing down to the reality of who God is as God alone, I turn from the worship of God and I worship the idol of self. And I worship the idol of self in this way, I make up my own truth for my own purposes, my own comfort, my own glory. That's what the lie is, putting away God's truth, which is a holy truth, a beautiful truth, a loving truth, a perfect truth, and with my gossip and with my slander and my backbitings, I strive to make my own reality. That's at the heart of lying. I commit idolatry. I worship an idol and the idol so often is myself. I love myself and I hate my neighbor and I use the lie and I use gossip and I use talebearing and I use everything else in the service of my own self-worship.

What we should see, beloved, is that this is exactly what characterizes our society. You see it in so many different ways. You see it in the big pictures of things. You see it when the whole topic of evolution comes up and the world tries to silence the truth of a literal six day creation. They change the truth because the truth does not fit with how they want this world and their life to be. That truth does not fit with their idols. You see it with politics. You see it with what the media does. You see it in what's called social constructionism, people who simply say that there is no truth, that they want to rewrite history because then we get to determine truth for ourselves. And that's when we become God, you see, when we are able to determine for ourselves what truth is. And then there are those who simply say that there is no truth. As Pilate said many years ago, "What is truth?" We live in a post-truth society. "You have your truth and I have my truth and I'm going to live my truth and you can live your truth. Live your authentic, truthful self." That's atheism. Denying God, they worship themselves.

And that's what the lie is all about. And just think, isn't that what Satan was busy with very early on after creation? The father of lies lied to Eve because, why? He wanted to be God. He wanted to attack God and attack God's world and make up his own world with himself as God. That's why the devil still lies today. He wants to determine for himself what is true and so he lies. We even discussed this at Bible study Wednesday night. Why does the devil still operate the way that he operates? Why doesn't he give up? Does he know he's defeated? Does he know that he can't take one of God's elect? Well, he's a liar. He knows the truth but he keeps lying even to himself because what is the truth? The truth is Satan is not God and he rejects that, and he's a wicked, miserable devil. That's his reality and he's under God's sovereign control and power and he hates that truth.

And when we lie, it's the same thing. It's that devilish nature. Why do we lie? Because right here, right now, I want to be in control. I won't trust God and God's care, I will trust myself and I will trust what I can do with the lie that I have at my disposal, and with my smooth words and whatever else, my deception, I can push God away. It's a matter of idolatry and it's a matter of hatred, hatred against God and against the neighbor. Hatred against the truth of who God is and the fact that I am not God and I resent God for his place as God, so I lie. Instead of finding my safety in God who is truth, I find my safety in the lie. Instead of worshiping God who is truth, instead of worshiping truth, we might say, I worship the lie and what the lie can do for me. Why does a person use all kind of corrupt and filthy communication and cut other people down, and mock and ridicule, and make others feel horrible? Because right in that moment, he wants to be God and he, as God, allows himself the license to speak this way. To do what he wants. To do all kinds of damaging things. Make all kinds of judgments because he's God so he can make whatever judgment he wants because that's what God does, God judges so I can judge whatever I want. And I'm full of hatred against God and my neighbor.

That's why we read from Proverbs 26 because Proverbs 26 makes this very explicit. Verse 24, "He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him." And that word dissembleth means to pretend to be something you are not. It means to disguise yourself and hide your true feelings. Why does a person deceive another person? Why does he dissemble? Why does he pretend? Why does he act like a hypocrite? Because in his heart, he's full of hatred. That's what the text says. Verse 25, "When he speaketh fair," smooth, charming words, "believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart." That means his heart is full of abomination. Not just six abominations, seven. And then verse 26, "Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation."

And what is so devilish about the lie is this: unless you know the truth, you don't know any different. Unless you know the truth, the lie gets to have its way with you. You see, that's the power of Satan, beloved. He casts you under his spell, the spell of his lies. That's the power, that's the evil power of the lie. Those who are in bondage to sin are held captive by the lies of Satan. They believe the lie of Satan. And of course, because of our own sinful natures, we want to believe that lie by nature and this is where we need to recognize the grace of God and the preciousness of the truth. God has revealed to us what the truth is. God has shown us what the lie is. He's opened our eyes and we know the truth now. We know what the Bible is. This is the word of God. I know that truth. I understand by faith that Jehovah God is God. Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Savior of the world, the Lamb of God. And we are sinners who have rebelled, revolted against Maker but now we also who believe, we're saved by God's grace alone.

We know this. We recognize this but the point is now this: if God doesn't work that truth in you, how would you ever come to a knowledge of the truth? You see, that's what's so scary about the lie, beloved, apart from God's grace, all we know is the lie and we believe it and we are lost in it. You are utterly lost in the lie and that's misery and that's scary. And the point is all of this should make us so deeply opposed to the lie, all lies and hatred. I was once enslaved to the lie. I once suppressed the truth and held it in



unrighteousness. Maybe you can still sense the horror of being completely held captive to the lie but this is part of God's salvation of us, he's brought us out of the darkness of lies and deceit, he has brought us into the truth, into the light of the truth and honesty and now, now am I going to go back to the lie and cover up what can be enjoyed in the truth and covered up with lies? Am I going to use the lie as an instrument to get what I want? Beloved congregation, the lie is your enemy. The lie is what brings you into bondage. Deception is your enemy. You think lying against your spouse or against your boss or against your parents will do you any good? You think that covering up those sins that need to be exposed, that need to be confessed so that they can be forsaken, you think lying about those things will do you good? No! Those lies that you use to justify and protect your sins are your enemy and those lies will enslave you until you are enslaved in a whole life of lies and you will be disgusted with your own self. Wicked flattery is your enemy. Be aware, the wise preacher says, of the charmer. Be aware of the charmer. And gossip, gossip will poison your heart and make you sick and kill you if you give it the chance.

We must flee from these sins. We must flee. What does Jesus say in John 8? Jesus says, "The truth shall set you free," and there is more truth to those words than we will ever realize. People of God, I ask you as your pastor, prove those words of Jesus. Your Savior and Lord says the truth will set you free. I give you this calling this morning: prove him. Test him. Challenge him to see whether those words are true. Speak the truth. Live in the truth and see what Jesus does with it. See what he will do with it because you will experience, you will experience that freedom that's only found in the truth.

This is where we need to understand the gospel as well, beloved. You don't need the lie. You don't need the lie. The lie only minimizes and blocks out the gospel and the power of Jesus Christ. Don't lie about your sin. Don't manipulate. Don't resort to putting your trust in the lie. Don't be fake when it comes to your sin. Humble yourself before the gospel. Recognize what it is that although you are a great sinner, a shameful sinner, and no one knows how great a sinner, like I ought to know it, nevertheless, this is how gracious my God is. He knows all my sins, he knows all my shame and he has chosen to save me, nevertheless. He loves me, nevertheless. Let's be honest with that. That's the gospel. I don't need to be a Pharisee. I don't want to be a Pharisee. I want to exalt my saving Lord. Acknowledge your transgressions. Be honest with the Lord. Be honest with each other. Confess your sins one to another. Humble yourself before the sight of God. Speak the truth of the sins you have committed and in Jesus Christ, the truth that you have in Jesus Christ, the gospel, will set you free from the bondage of the lie because in Jesus Christ, there is a full redemption from the guilt of sin. How can God bless the lie when I'm using it in my marriage? When I'm using it in my family? God is going to work in me so that either, well, depending on who I am, but he's going to work it for me as a child of God so that I find no peace in it. It gives me no hope. It doesn't profit me anything. When I turn in the truth, God says, "That is pleasing to me. That receives my blessing." And then even when we think we're being honest, we even have to pray, "Show me my sin for I'm such a liar by nature that I will even make myself blind to my own sin. Show me my sins that I might turn from it. I don't want to be filled with hatred. I don't. I want to love. I want to show my thankfulness to the Lord. Help me, thy will to do. Thy truth, thy truth I will pursue. Teach me to fear." That's a thought of it, isn't it? Teach me to fear.

Well, let me say it again, beloved, you have Jesus Christ. Put your trust in him, him who is the truth, and don't put your trust in Satan or the lie or violence or gossip or manipulation. And children, if I may speak very pointedly to you for a moment, little children, this is for you too from your earliest years: don't lie. Little children, give me your attention for a moment: don't lie. Even if you think you can get out of trouble with it, don't lie. God is very angry when you lie. God tells us in his word that the lake of fire is filled with liars. Lying will not get you out of trouble. You think it might for a moment, but it won't. The truth will set you free. Speak the truth. That is right and pleasing to the Lord. Your parents, I assure you, your Christian parents would rather have you speak the truth and admit your sins than have you lie. Oh, that the Lord would cause us to be repulsed by the lie from our youngest years. As the apostle says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." And even though we do sin, yet we have to turn back to the truth and that is what gives your parents joy.

So instead of lying then, what is required of us? We've looked at the sin of lying. We've looked at the hatred that characterizes the sin. Now, what is required of us? We need to be brief here. The Catechism puts it so succinctly, so well, "Likewise, that in judgment and in all other dealings, I love the truth, speak it uprightly," speak it uprightly, "and confess it, also that I defend and promote as much as I am able the honor and good character of my neighbor." I love the truth. That's the definition of the Christian. I love the truth because the truth is the gospel. I speak the truth uprightly. I confess it. I defend and I promote as much as I am able the honor and good character of my neighbor. At school, instead of mocking my fellow student, I defend him. I stand up for him with my words as much as I am able. In the home, we promote the honor of our spouse in front of our children as much as we are able. As much as we are able. In the church, we put away gossip. We speak the truth and we speak the truth in love.

Again, beloved, this is what God has given you in Jesus Christ. When God saves a person, God doesn't say, "Now be quiet and don't say anything because nothing good can come out of your mouth." No, God says, "I've made your mouth an instrument of good. I've put my truths in your heart and in your lips to edify, to build up, to speak the truth in love that the listeners might be edified thereby, that it might minister grace to the hearers." Now follow Christ. Follow Christ. Look at Christ in whose mouth was neither deceit nor guile, but who was honest and truthful in all things. He who is the faithful witness and who spoke the truth and it cost him his life, who had to speak that truth that he is the Christ, and it was for that truth that he was crucified. Follow him. Carry your cross. Live in the truth. Speak truth. You don't need the lie. In Christ Jesus you already have all things. The lie can't get you anything that is desirable that you don't already have in Jesus Christ. The lie can only bring you misery. The truth is better than what any lie could give you. And this is your privilege, not only to know the truth, but to speak it and live in the sphere of the truth. Walk in the light as children of light. Trust God, the God of our salvation who is the God of truth, and show him your thanks living that life that gives him pleasure and delight. Amen.

Let us pray.

*Our Father, we do love the truth. It is beautiful. Him who is the way, the truth, and the life and who has brought us to know the truth and to live in it. Lord, give us the grace to live in it more in our homes and families, as a congregation, to prove thy word and to prove the freedom we have in Jesus Christ that we might experience it more fully and enjoy it more richly to thy name's glory and honor. Use then this preaching to shape our hearts and to shape our lives to thy name's glory and honor. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*