

Don't Bear False Witness

Many years ago, Jesus was asked, what is the greatest commandment. To which he replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[a] There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30.

The Greek word for love that Jesus used is well known in the verb form of AGAPE. It is a love that is based upon choice. The child of God is to freely choose to love God and to love others. They are to delight in God's holiness. And that love is to spread outward to others. Christians are to seek the best for others. Which means, we must be able to see the best in them.

We are living in times that can make this incredibly challenging. With the growth of social media and the usage of smart phones. Did you know in a study done in 2021, that 46% of American's reported that they spend 5-6 hours a day on their phones. And for most it's not just playing Candy Crush. Do you realize, for many that's more time than they spend with their significant other. They hold their phone more than they hold their spouse. They talk to their phone more than they do their mate. Can you see where that is a problem?

As more and more Christians spend long hours online, they are easily caught up in today's political wars. It would do Christians good to remember what the 9th Commandment says in Exodus 20:16: "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." When you log online, and say something about others, are you spreading gossip? Can you be sure when you click the "like" button that it's a true statement? When you share it, are you sharing the truth? Or is it partial truth? Is it just a little white lie? Is that okay with you? I urge you to be incredibly careful. Ask yourself honestly, how much of the news do you know to be true. I mean you heard it yourself, you seen it yourself. Were you present when what your posting, re-posting, sharing, commenting on, was said or done? Here's an eye opener for you, (not really) you probably already know this, or should know this, all news agencies/outlets are formed to make money. Here's a fact you should know too, controversial news makes more money. Controversial news posted online gets more clicks. Sells more ads. You get the picture. You're not going to stand before God and say, but Fox news said, ABC news said. Jesus is going to say, I said do not

commit slander. Next time you go to send out that email, to retweet that comment, you might want to listen to the word of God. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

But Lord when did I commit slander. When was I a false witness. When you reposted that article without researching thoroughly the facts. When you posted that nasty tweet about some politician you disagree with. When you sent out that email trail to all your friends making fun of someone's disability. The rest of the story in Deuteronomy 19, is let it be done unto you about what you were hoping was done to the other person. In other words, may others tell stories about you. May they try and tear down your reputation. May they make fun of you. May you be stalked and sought out because of what your tongue so loosely spoke or fingers so easily typed. Ouch!

What do you think God will do to those who are spreading misinformation? Is he going to wink at our failures? Is he going to give us a pass because we were so compassionate about our side of the story? Be careful, the Apostle Paul was full of conviction when he was having Christians killed. His conscience was clean. But he was dead wrong. And if he hadn't met God, and repented of his sins, he would be rotting in hell.

But Jesus, what is the greatest commandment. "Love". You mean it hasn't changed in 2023. Come on Jesus, surely you know our times are different. These are drastic times that call for drastic actions. Yes, my child, you are correct. You should love even more. You should care even deeper. And remember, the greatest of these is love.

If you haven't heard it yet today, may I be the first, I love you as a child of God is to love. I care about you. I want the best for you. Why? Because I love God, and he has told me to love my neighbor. How can I say no to that? Reminds me of Joseph in Genesis 39:9, "My master (meaning her husband) has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" The next time your tempted to spread that loosely typed article or make that ugly comment, ask yourself, is this done out of love? If not, how can you do such a thing and sin against God. And this is Jesse Walker with the Glenwood Church of Christ.