

From Our Pastor

October 13, 2018

Sabbath Greetings to everyone!

In this politically charged season we have once again seen why living according to God's way protects everyone. The ninth commandment, all but forgotten in society and certainly in politics today, states clearly, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Exodus 20:16) This commandment protects each of us from damage to our reputation and concern about being falsely accused. False accusations fly freely in today's world, often resulting in great damage to the reputation, name, and honor of the one being accused. Often the media report unsubstantiated and unfounded accusations as if they had been proven true.

False accusations and charges fly freely over social media outlets on the Internet. Accusers rarely pay any penalty even when it has become obvious that their charges, often involving sexual misconduct or assault, are investigated and found to be false. They just falsely accuse and then walk away. We could name several recent well known, high profile cases to illustrate this evil and damaging process.

God intended the nation of Israel to be built upon His laws. The statutes, specific laws of application based on the Ten Commandments, included safeguards against false accusation. One of the foundational safeguards against false accusation was the requirement for there to be two witnesses--not just one--to accuse a person of a crime. A witness had to be someone who saw the crime, not someone recruited to be on the side of the accuser.

Deuteronomy 19:15 says, "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established." Why is this so difficult to understand? If only this one instruction were followed today what a better society we would have! Even the evil Pharisees of Jesus' day understood that they were required to find two witnesses to accuse Jesus at his trial (Matthew 26:60).

The directive then continues with instructions to the judges that the facts be investigated. "The judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you." (Deuteronomy 19: 18-19)

False accusation in the eyes of our Creator is a crime worthy of punishment. We cannot prevent those who are politically motivated or simply intending to harm another from bearing false witness, but, we should not "share in other people's sins." (1 Timothy 5:22). That should give us pause the next time we are tempted to pass something on that has not been verified. Remember the words of David, "Behold, You desire truth in

the inward parts " (Psalm 51:6) and the admonishment of the Apostle Paul, "Speak the truth in love." (Ephesians 5:14)

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