




FROM THE PASTOR

Weekly Devotional

The Fault of Fault Finders

Pastor Heiple 

And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? - Matthew 7:5

We continue our study of Question 145 of the *Larger Catechism*, which asks, "What are the sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?" The eighth part of the answer states, "The sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment are... aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumours, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence." Last time we looked at the many ways we use words to overly exalt ourselves. Today we consider the evil of being too critical of others.

It is never right to hide, excuse, or extenuate our sins. If I sin and then try to cite extenuating circumstances, I'm not taking responsibility for my actions. Adam was correct in saying that the woman gave him the fruit, but that was not the question! Adam was at fault for directly disobeying God. The circumstances that led to his disobedience were entirely irrelevant. Likewise, when I hide or excuse my sins I'm lying not only to others but to myself. For my sins are still there, and thus, so is the destruction and evil that sin always causes. Could you imagine being diagnosed with a cancerous growth on your hand and your solution is to wear a glove to hide it? or to excuse it as an ordinary abrasion? or to chalk it up to extenuating circumstances: "The doctor is only saying that because he doesn't like me"? Only an insane person would act this way when it comes to our bodies, yet we do it all the time with respect to the cancer of our souls, which is sin.

Like all other transgressions, the sin of bearing false witness begins in the heart. Though many different motives can fuel the breaking of this commandment, this morning's portion of the *Catechism* focuses on the motivation of sinful pride. Because of pride I am tempted to aggravate the small faults I see in others even as I fail to notice my own sins. In the above quoted Scripture, Jesus asks the question why people do this. Why do we look at the speck in our brother's eye but do not notice the log in our own eye? Jesus was not looking for an answer from His audience. He was using a rhetorical question to bring home to each one of us our natural, fallen tendency to self-righteous pride.

Every human being is guilty of the sin of pride, which is seen by the fact that we do not like to admit our faults. We do not want other people to see our evils. And so in order to turn attention away from my own sins, I aggravate, that is I make large or magnify, even the slightest failings in someone else. This is a hateful way to hide my own sins, for I unfairly and selfishly spare myself painful scrutiny by willingly subjecting others to it. I go free by making someone else suffer the very thing I am seeking to escape. It is a despicable act. Rather than heroically taking a bullet for others, I pull them in front of me to take the bullet for me.

So also is "raising false rumors" or "receiving and countenancing evil reports." In our sinful natures we love talking about the evils of others, because by doing so we can proudly think better of ourselves. It is easy to be a fault-finder; to always be on the lookout for the slightest failings in others. Love does not act this way. When I am loving my brothers I am ready to "cover a multitude of sins," (1 Pet. 4:8). Now this is not to say that I should never point out to someone their failings. Sometimes it is necessary, for the good of others, to tell someone about their faults. I appreciate our former Pastor, Bailey Cadman, for helping me to overcome some of my habitual malapropisms in speaking. But the way in which he did it: privately, and out of real concern for my being a better preacher, went a long way towards my accepting that help.

Thus, when we think someone is in the wrong, we should always allow them to defend themselves. "Stopping our ears against just defense" is showing sinful bias against the truth. Why would we not want to hear someone's explanation? Do we really want to get at the truth or do we just want to puff ourselves up by condemning others? We could be wrong, we may not know the circumstances behind a person's actions, or it may be that it's none of our business and we should just leave it alone! But whatever the situation, no one should be condemned by us when we have not fully heard their side of the story. May our merciful God deliver each one of us from the temptation of being a fault finder.



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ELECTION AND REPROBATION

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The Celebration of Worship



Prelude & Welcome

Reflection & Preparation

Call to Worship

Psalm 108

Leader God has spoken in His holiness: "I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem And measure out the Valley of Succoth. Gilead is Mine; Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet for My head; Judah is My lawgiver. Moab is My washpot; Over Edom I will cast My shoe; Over Philistia I will triumph."

Aff **Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom? Is it not You, O God, who cast us off? And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies?**

Leader Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless.

Aff **Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.**

Invocation & Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be Thy Name.
 Thy kingdom come,
 Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread,
 And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Confession of Faith

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
 Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 and born of the virgin Mary.
 He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried.
 The third day He rose again from the dead.
 He ascended into heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
 From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven · Trinity 76

Scripture Reading

But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

Romans 9:6-16

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears

Hebrews 12:14-17

Hymn

Gloria Patri · Trinity 734

Worship in Giving

Offertory *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* · by Joachim Neander
 Karissa Eurich, saxophonist, accompanied by David Eurich

Hymn

I Sought the Lord, and Afterward I Knew · Trinity 466

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon

Esau’s History & Biblical Inerrancy · Dr. Ray E. Heiple, Jr.

Genesis 36:1-12, 24, 31-33, 40-43

¹ Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom.
² Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

³ and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.
⁴ Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel.
⁵ And Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.
⁶ Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob.
⁷ For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock.
⁸ So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.
⁹ And this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir.
¹⁰ These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau.
¹¹ And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.
¹² Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife...
²⁴ These were the sons of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This was the Anah who found the water in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon...
³¹ Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel:
³² Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah.
³³ And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place...
⁴⁰ And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth,
⁴¹ Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon,
⁴² Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar,
⁴³ Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau was the father of the Edomites.

Song

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go · Insert

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

Words of Institution I Corinthians 11:23-34

Invitation

Prayer of Consecration

The Bread

The Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Hymn

How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place · Trinity 469

Benediction & Postlude

Following the service, the elders will be available to pray with you at the front of the sanctuary.