



FROM THE PASTOR

Weekly Devotional

Is It of Good Repute?

Pastor Heiple



Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. –Philippians 4:8

Today we conclude our study of Question 145 of the *Larger Catechism*, which asks, “What are the sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?” The final part of the answer states, “The sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment are... breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.” Last time we saw how the sin of envy can lead to many different evil actions. This morning we consider the importance of promoting the good name of ourselves and others.

“Is it of good repute?” That was the question a preacher asked in a sermon many years ago as Robin and I sat in the audience. For some reason neither one of us ever forgot that admonition, as we will occasionally remind one another of it. To ask if something is of good repute is to apply this portion of today’s *Catechism* question to your current life situation. Repute is short for reputation, but it also carries with it the idea of that which is reported. Similarly, the same Greek word that can refer to one’s “reputation” also can simply mean “name,” depending upon the context. So, when the report went out about Jesus’ miracles, the Scriptures state: “And King Herod heard of it; for Jesus’ name had become well known,” (Mark 6:14). In other words, Christ’s name, with regard to His reputed ability to do miracles, was reported far and wide. In the same way we recognize a close relationship between name and reputation in English, though these two concepts are not included under word as they are in Biblical Greek.

So how do we keep our names and the names of others in good repute? First, we do not breach (break) lawful promises. If I have promised something, and if it is not a sin, then I should endeavor to keep my word, even at great sacrifice to myself. Otherwise, my name, my reputation, begins to be associated with one who does not keep his word, which means I am not bearing proper witness to God, whose image I bear—because God always keeps His Word. However, if I promise something that in and of itself is sinful, or that turns out to be sinful due to unforeseen circumstances which arise after my promise, I must not keep that word. We need only to think of Saul’s evil promise to kill whomever ate or drank anything before the battle ended (1 Sam. 14), or Jephthah’s evil oath to sacrifice whatever first came out of his house to the Lord (Jdg. 11:31-35), to realize that evil or sinful promises must be repented of and not fulfilled! For what is more important for us to honor, our own, sometimes rash words, or the perfect Word of God? If and when you ever find yourself pressured to do some sinful thing because you gave your word; humble yourself, confess your foolishness to God, repent of your evil words and do not keep them but keep His!

In order to promote what is of good repute in ourselves we must not engage in evil activities. Instead, we should develop reputations of those who avoid evil. By so doing, we hinder ill reports whereby our names would become known for evil and not for good. The *Catechism* also enjoins upon us our duty to promote the good names of our neighbors by “hindering what we can” that would procure for them an ill name. Lot plead with the men of Sodom “Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!” (Gen. 19:7). They had begun to develop a reputation for gross sexual perversion, from which Lot lovingly sought to turn them. We should do likewise.

Finally, we should endeavor to not be “neglecting such things as are of good report.” There is so much evil, so much bad news in the world of which we should be seeking to avoid, that sometimes we fail to notice that which is good. Yet here is truly a duty in which we can rejoice: God requires us to promote and spread good reports! Whatever we see that is good, honorable, right, lovely, pure, just, or true let us bear witness to such things. And most especially let us bear witness to the God who has so graciously given them!



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GOD’S WORD AMONG LIONS

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The Celebration of Worship



Prelude & Welcome

Reflection & Preparation

Call to Worship

Psalm 40

Leader I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.

All **He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.**

Leader He has put a new song in my mouth-- Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD.

All **Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.**

Invocation

Hymn

Exalt the Lord, His Praise Proclaim · Trinity 12

Scripture Reading

Mark 11:27-12:12

Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?" But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: "The baptism of John-- was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me." And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, `From heaven,' He will say, `Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, `From men'"—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, `They will respect my son.' But those vinedressers said among themselves, `This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took him and killed him and

cast him out of the vineyard. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not even read this Scripture: `The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.This was the LORD'S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes '?"

And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.

Hymn

Gloria Patri · Trinity 735

Song

Awesome Power

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Awe-some pow - er, bound - less grace; None can fath - om all Your
Wait in si - lence, O my soul, for my hope is from the
ways. Truth and love are found in Your heart a - lone; Righ - teous - ness
Lord. He a - lone my rock and sal - va - tion. My re -
sur - rounds Your throne. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord most
fuge is in God.
high. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord most high.

Worship in Giving

Offertory

Gavotte · Lily and Jonathan Moser

by J. S. Bach

Hymn

Have You Not Known, Have You Not Heard · Trinity 31

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon

The Humiliation of Joseph · Dr. Ray E. Heiple, Jr.

Genesis 37:12-36

- ¹² Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.
¹⁵ And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."
¹⁴ Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

¹⁵ Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

¹⁶ So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

¹⁷ And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, `Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

¹⁸ Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

¹⁹ Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!

²⁰ Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, `Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

²¹ But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."

²² And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"-- that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

²⁵ So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.

²⁴ Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵ And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

²⁶ So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?

²⁷ Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.

²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹ Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes.

³⁰ And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"

³¹ So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.

³² Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"

³⁵ And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."

³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.

³⁵ And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

³⁶ Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Hymn

With Grateful Heart My Thanks I Bring · Trinity 88

Benediction & Postlude

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