

The 10 Commandments

Commandment 9

Well, please turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 5:20. As our children are released for children's worship, continuing on here almost to the end of the Ten Commandments -- Commandment 9. Arguably, this may be the first, maybe the second that deals with our words. Specifically how we think about what we say. You could say using the Lord's name in vain is about words. But as we argued before, that's really about a lot more than words. It's about how we treat the presence of the Lord in our midst. So here we are with the ninth commandment about bearing false witness, Deuteronomy 5:20;

"... and you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

This is the word of the Lord.

I want to start this sermon at the end of this sermon. And as you know, the way my sermons usually go, there's kind of a general progression, and we end with the gospel. That's how the Bible is written. That's how redemptive history unfolds, as a matter of fact, how all history will unfold one day we will finally just sit at his feet and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. So there's a normal progression where we end with the person of Jesus. But I want to begin with the person of Jesus. This morning, I want to start with a story that takes place near the end of the Gospels that we find in John chapter eighteen where Jesus meets for the first and only time, a Roman governor who's in charge of the region of Judea named Pontius Pilate. Now, as a regional leader, Pontius Pilate would have been trained in the best of what Rome had to offer. He would have been educated in politics, but also in philosophy and in literature and in international relations. He would have been probably by his own lights, one of the most sophisticated people in this podunk outskirts colony of Judea. And here he finds himself face to face with Jesus, and we find him having a conversation that doesn't really feel like any of the other conversations that Jesus has. There's a back and forth that begins early on where Pontius Pilate seems almost entertained by Jesus, who is this interesting figure who's emerged out of Judea and everyone's accusing him of being a, you know, a zealot who's going to try to overthrow Roman Empire or Roman rule. They have a back and forth. And finally Pontius Pilate just comes to it and he says, so you are a king. You're saying you're a king? And Jesus answered, you say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born, and for this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. And Pilate said to him, what is truth? Now I feel when I imagine the tenor of this conversation, I imagine Pontius Pilate kind of feeling like this is a clever rejoinder. You know, he's he's he's asking a deeply philosophical question. We can imagine Socrates or Heraclitus or, or one of the other Stoics saying, what is truth? And he's kind of pushing Jesus on this point. I imagine he considers himself quite sophisticated. And yet it's interesting, isn't it, that history records this kind of as proof of his ignorance, that he has no idea that he's standing face to face with a person who will have more effect on human history than the Roman Empire, much less Pontius Pilate could possibly imagine. It's the question that probably gets asked more and more in our discourse than it did back in Jesus day. We only find Pontius Pilate talking this way.

The Pharisees don't ask, what is truth? Okay. But I suspect nowadays our lives reflect more the Roman Empire culture than it reflects Judean religious culture. Nowadays, you don't have to be educated in the best schools of Rome, nor do you need to be a person of wealth and power to have a cynical view of truth. I think that's the question we probably hear more often than not out there in the world. What is truth? Your truth. My truth, as far as we can tell. This is the first time Jesus has asked this question, and yet it's the question that we live with daily. How do we evaluate truth in a world of competing narratives of short form videos about spiritual topics, meme messiahs, social media influencers, and a parade of competing worldviews that come and pile up so fast that they go out of fashion before you have time to refute them. It doesn't take a governor of Rome to ask, in the modern age, what is truth? So this morning I want to talk about truth. With each one of these commandments, we have acknowledged that it's a negative statement that is affirming a positive statement. The command not to bear false witness is affirming this creational value that we see all the way back in creation, which is the value that indeed divine honoring of truth. So I want to talk about the reality of truth. And yes, that is a double entendre because both truths are real, and yet we also live in a reality that is true. So I want to start with the **reality of truth**, then the **denial of truth**, and then finally the **incarnate truth**.

So let's start with the reality of truth. Well, this is the reality about what truth is. Truth is our honoring of divine providence. Okay. It's carefully said. It is the way that we honor divine providence in the world. God has made a world, and he ordains whatsoever comes to pass. And we follow him by honestly representing the world in what we believe and how we speak and how we live. Okay. We are honoring divine providence because divine providence is how we interact with the world that God has made. Okay. Now we have to acknowledge that given that definition of the reality of truth, the honoring of divine providence, we have to acknowledge that there's different kinds of truth that we engage with in the world. And it's helpful to think about this. Okay. There's different kinds of truth. So there's absolute truth, which is probably what many people would think, oh, that's what he's going to talk about today. Absolute truth. And we will talk a bit about that. But that's just one kind of truth, right? These are the grand cosmic truths, the meaning of life. Is there a God? If there is, what's he like? How do we be reconciled to him? Do we need to be reconciled to him? These are the grand absolute truths of the world. Okay? And we can only receive these from the Lord. Ultimately, we only receive all of these from the Lord. But we depend on the Lord for our ability to evaluate absolute truth. Now this can be evaluated. We can put criteria to absolute truth. It is what God says because he is creator. Okay? But that's where do we find that? We see that in creation, right? It's divine. Fingerprints are all over creation. The invisible attributes of the Godhead are out there for all to see. I think we often forget how important that is. Isn't it amazing how all humans basically have basic notions of honor, glory, meaning, truth, wisdom, uh, morality. Okay, now, because of sin, it's perverted and it's twisted. But we all have the same notions. Why is that? It's because, in part, we see it in the world around us. Not only that, we see it within ourselves, right? The reality of being made in the image of God. We. We all have deep down within us this image bearing this. We have this sense of the divine right. The sense of the reality of God. There's not one culture that has ever existed where they did not have a notion of God. Do we twist it? Absolutely. But we all have it. Okay. Atheism is a derived

belief. No one starts off atheistic. You move to atheism, okay? Because we all have this sense of the divine. But of course, most perfectly, we see the absolute truths of the world explained to us in Scripture. I still hold to this. There's times where in my life I've really struggled with my faith. I've struggled with belief, and I've held on to this. There really is no better explanation of the world and of my own state than what I find in the Holy Scripture. I'm convinced that a deep reading of scripture beats it all. I forget this until you start doing missions and you engage other religions, it's actually really interesting. You'll get to know another religion. You'll say, yeah, that's really that's a really poor substitute for what I have in the scripture. I sometimes think Christians don't realize actually how incredible our biblical witness is. Okay. So absolute truth is a truth that is proven in our hearts whether we recognize it or not. It's proven in the world around us. It's proven in everything that we see. As Paul says in Romans 1: 21-23 people, For although they knew God, they did not honor him or give thanks to him. And they're so. And as a result, they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened, claiming to be wise like Pontius Pilate. They became fools, asking questions like what is truth? And exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. See what Paul is saying there? We all know the absolute truth at some level. Matter of fact, the gospel spreading the gospel. In many ways. It's like being a sculptor and you're going to your friend and you're trying to show them what they already know to be true in their heart. They may resist it, but they know in their heart that it's true. Okay, so that's absolute truth. All right. But then then there's also historical truth. Okay. These are truth. These are facts about things that have taken place. It's important for us to recognize the difference because while absolute truth is proven in a particular way, historical truth can be proven in a different way, right? What are the facts? What actually happened this morning? You know what happened when I got out of bed? I got in my car. I drove to church okay, made breakfast. The kids were going crazy. All, all the things right that you could talk about what happened this morning. Those are facts that you could verify and you'd verify it through other witnesses, right? Other people who were there. And that would include a video camera or something like that. You could check your ring cam and say exactly what time you left the house. Okay. Those are historical facts. They can be verified, they can be proven and disproven. And that's a kind of truth too. Okay. I need to be right about those facts. I need to be mindful of the value of facts, particularly when you're considering a difficult case.

Okay. The author of Proverbs points out to us over and over again, it's important as you're considering facts, to think about how you're thinking about facts. Maybe you weren't there. You're relying on a witness. Okay, well, get as many witnesses as you can because guess what? Not everyone can see every thing Proverbs eighteen seventeen he says this. The one who states his case first seems right until the other comes and examines him. We live in a world where people want you to make a judgment on the first statement of the case. I'm sure in the last six years, you have felt this pressure before someone will come and say, this is what happened. Aren't you outraged? And if you pause for a moment and say, well, who else was there? Or something like that? Where's your morality? Right. You need to respond immediately to the first report. But notice, because of human finitude and fallenness, we're both limited and were sinful. We need to gather as many witnesses as possible. Proverbs eighteen also has another good verse on this point. This is verse thirteen. If one gives an answer before he hears,

it is his folly and shame when it comes to historical truth. You want to gather as much information as you can. You want to get as well-rounded of a picture as possible so that you don't fall prey to dishonoring truth, whether through error or through sin, through lying or misrepresentation of the events. Honoring the ninth commandment means waiting to hear the other accounts. So we have absolute truth. We have historic truth, and we have personal truth. Okay. Personal truth. How have you experienced an event or an idea? Truth is in your remembering and representing your experience, your emotions, your feelings, your thoughts, what came to mind? What did you think was happening? That is also a statement of truth. It's a kind of history, but it can't be really proven or disproven because it all happens within you. Okay. Ninth commandment is telling us be honoring of personal truth. You might say, okay, well that's fine. That doesn't really have any relevant, uh, application to me in my life. Okay. Have you ever been in an argument and someone says, why are you so mad? And you say, I'm not mad and you're mad? You're dishonoring the ninth commandment. Okay. Have you ever said to someone, don't be so sensitive? But they have good reason to be sensitive because you are saying something that kind of cuts underneath them, right? Okay. That's dishonoring the ninth commandment. I didn't mean that. That's not what I meant. Well, it's exactly what you meant. You're dishonoring the ninth commandment. Okay, let's flip it around. Telling someone you always get so angry at me when they're not angry, they're sad. Okay? That's dishonest. And you know what you're doing, but you're doing it to manipulate them because anger is a bad motive, emotion. But sadness is a good emotion, right? You know how all of these things happen with friends and with spouses and in church conversations, right? You deliberately misrepresent their feelings. There's no way they can prove it to you. Okay. Personal truth is a matter of the heart. It's difficult to prove or disprove, but there are other issues that come up with all of these elements of truth, absolute, historical and personal truth. We have to realize this. We're not always talking with the same level of precision, right? You ever heard somebody be accused of lying? But it's because they were speaking generally. And now a person is applying a very precise measurement of truth to them. Okay. This is often comes out in critiques of Scripture when someone says, oh, clearly the scripture is being contradictory here because it says one thing here and it says another thing here. And I'm like, because this is a general statement and this is a precise statement. the psalmist tells us that the Lord owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Okay, well, we know there's more than a thousand hills in the world. So does he only own a few of the cattle in the world? Right. Only those who are on those thousand. Which thousand hills? Right. Starts to sound ridiculous, doesn't it? But so often Scripture will sometimes be speaking generally, even the same author. Paul will sometimes say things generally, and then sometimes he'll say things very precisely. We have to recognize there are different levels of accuracy. We also have to recognize that there's a different sense to different statements. You should always be able to ask the question, what is the person trying to say? What's the question that they're trying to answer? It may not be the question you're trying to answer. And so we transgress the ninth commandment when we apply to someone's statement a standard of measurement or understanding that was alien to whatever they were trying to say. As a matter of fact, here's how you apply this into your modern day debates or arguments or conflicts. Okay. Exercise this. Okay, here's news you can use. Okay. Take this away from the sermon exercise this practice. Can you state the opponent, whoever

that is? Can you can you state their argument in such a way that they'll say, that's exactly what I believe. Okay. If you can't, then you don't understand what they're saying. And you have no right to be arguing against them because you're arguing against a straw man. You should be able to sit down with a Muslim. If you're going to get into Muslim apologetics and explain exactly what Muslims believe about how to be saved and who God is and all that, you should be able to explain that if you can't, if you're just going to rattle off to them straw men arguments that you see in the news, then you are not doing good apologetics. And I would argue you are coming close to breaking the ninth commandment. Okay. As a matter of fact, I usually, with my seminary students would say, you should be able to state the argument better than they can. You should be able to give them the best argument against your position so that you can know when you're talking to them, you are not falsely representing them. So there is a reality of truth. It's founded in Scripture. And yet we know because we know the story of the fall, that that reality of truth was not always honored. The fall itself. We talked before about how the fall is founded on, uh, Adam and Eve's desiring to place themselves above God. Remember that? We talked about that. Let's rewind a little bit. Earlier, the fall itself. If we start with the serpent, begins with the dishonoring of truth.

So let's talk about the denial of truth in human history and in the human experience. The fall is founded on a lie. Isn't that what the serpent says? You won't die. By the way, think. Think about God's incredible grace that he could kill them because he told them that they would die. But he doesn't, even though in sin they might think, oh, the serpent was telling the truth. The serpent wasn't telling the truth. God was being gracious, and he risks affirming what the serpent had said because of his grace and because of his love for the people, for his creation. When the serpent says, you won't die, he's not saying, trust in God's grace. He's saying, God lied. You're not going to die. This isn't bad. This will make you like him. And he's afraid of you. That's a lie. You see, the fall is founded on a false witness. So when we bear false witness, we are attempting to recreate or represent reality apart from God's revelation and providence. Can you see that? When we bear false witness, when we lie, when we flip the truth on its head, we attempt to recreate or represent reality apart from God's revelation and providence at the heart of false witness. Is this okay? You know what? Do you ever wonder why it says, do not? It doesn't say do not lie. It says, do not bear false witness. Notice what's actually going on here. This is imagining a legal or commercial transaction in which there are witnesses or some other standard that's being used as a standard of truth in order to monitor or have this, this transaction go forward. Okay. It's not always a person speaking, by the way. It can also be weights and scales, as we'll actually see the prophets talk more about okay ways, ways that things are weighed or measured in commercial Transactions. Okay. What's the standard? What's the currency that something is held up to? Okay. And he's saying here, if you flip that, if you make it deceitful, deceitful, then why are you doing it? You're doing it because you're exploiting others. You're trying to control reality to benefit yourself against someone else. That's what bearing false witness technically is. It's this idea of lying or denying truth, misrepresenting facts, using personal experience as a way to manipulate or exploit or otherwise oppress and abuse others. You are thinking that the truth. This is what the serpent is thinking. The truth can be molded for your own benefit. Providence is not for your personal benefit, rather, it is for the disadvantaging of others. You are there to try to disadvantage them

so that you can get the thing that you want. As soon as you realize that that's what's going on here, you suddenly now understand why it is that the prophets throughout the whole Old Testament keep talking about these scales and weights and measures, right? He talks about the scant scale, the deceptive weight, the finger on the scale, and they're imagining a thing that was happening regularly is that you would go into Jerusalem and you'd go down to the market. And when you went with your, you know, when the farmer came in with his with his sheaves, or when the fishermen came in with his fish and he went to measure them out, you'd have to go to a merchant who had weights and they would measure out, okay, how many, how many pounds or, or whatever the measurement is. How, how much fish do you have? And guess what? If your weights on that scale don't properly measure out, let's say a weight says this is worth one ounce, but it's actually a little less than an ounce. That's why it's always scant, right? Okay. What are they doing? They're actually saying, I'm going to get more of the produce than I'm actually going to pay for. They brought in twenty dollars worth of fish. I'm going to give them eighteen. And that adds up over time. Right? I remember a scandal at one of the major grocery stores when I was in high school that a person figured out a cashier, figured out that she could kind of just slip a penny, a nickel and a dime here and there over the course of her whole career and the amount of money that she's that she got out of the cash registers because it was all just a write off at the end of every day was this kind of incredible amount because it just added up over and over and over again, these small amounts. The prophets are saying, we know what you're doing. You're twisting reality to benefit yourself against the others. We all know Micah six eight. It's one of our favorite verses that we like to cite. You know the song if you've been around long enough, he has shown thee, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you. But what to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly before our God. A lot of people stop there. If you keep going, you realize this is a lawsuit. And what he's saying in Micah six eight is, this is what you were supposed to do. But let me now show you what you did. Okay. Here. Okay. This is the sound wisdom of the Lord, the voice of the Lord crying out in the city. And it is sound wisdom to fear your name. Oh Lord, hear the rod of him that is the Lord who appointed it. Can I forget any longer the treasures of the wicked or the house of the wicked? Notice there's nothing wrong with having treasures. It's the treasures of the wicked. How do we know they're wicked? Should I forget the scant measure that is accursed? In other words, saying something weighs more than it actually does so that you can get more money from it? Shall I acquit the man with the wicked scales, with the bag of deceitful weights? Your rich men are filled with Violence. Your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. That's the opposite of loving God, doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly before the Lord. Okay. The opposite of that is what he just described. Gaming the system to your own advantage untruthfully against your neighbor. This is not about competition, okay? You can compete. The Bible is filled with that. Compete. Do your best, be the best. Get out there and do the best. Okay? But if you start twisting reality in order to beat the competitor, whether that competitor is a debating partner, a friend, a spouse, or a business competitor, if you're twisting reality in order to win, then you are denying the providence of God in the world around you. That's how great a stake. Is present in that sin. It's interesting. Throughout the Bible and into church history, we see how often the twisting of reality is used against the people of God. As he said before, Jesus himself is put on the cross because of a false witness.

Okay. It says in Mark fourteen fifty six, many bore false witness against them, but their testimony did not agree. They lied about him. That's how they got him up there. There's no reason for him to be on that cross apart from false witness. Remember that when you hear attacks on the church. And by the way, I'm more than aware that there's a lot of church out church hurt out there. There's a lot of abuse in the church. There's a lot of things that can happen, I know that. But when you hear accusations about a church, don't run to agree right away. Remember, this is one of the greatest attacks of the enemy against the body of Christ. To be fast and loose with the details, to grab a fact here and a fact there, and weave it together as a weapon to undermine the witness of the gospel. Notice right away our next martyr, Stephen, is because of false accusations. Stephen's opponents secretly instigated men to accuse him of blasphemy and set up a false witness in acts six. That's how you're going to get them. The charges against the early Christians by the Roman Empire. Not only did they say that this gospel, this good news of a Messiah King, undermined Caesar's authority, but they even go on and say, and do you know they meet in secret and they do cannibalistic rituals. They eat of the flesh of their God, and they drink of the blood of their God. You see how they took facts? They took facts, but then they twisted the facts. They said they're cannibals. This is against the common good of Rome. The accusations against Athanasius, one of our great early theologians. A theologian of the atonement when he was tried. He was accused of every manner of violence, political misconduct and even murder. And in one famous and humorous episode, as he's being tried, he himself presents the man who he's accused of having murdered. He goes, here he is. He's not dead.

We see it, of course, in church history as well. Around the time of the Reformation, Protestants who believed in salvation by faith alone were called Antinomians, who were against any civil order, that they were out there to be libertines and to break up society. And before we nod too much in agreement, we have to remember the Protestants did the same thing. It's a famous Popish plot of the seventeenth century in England, when a man, a Protestant clergyman, Titus Oates, falsely claimed that the Jesuits were conspiring to kill King Charles the Second and have his Catholic brother put in his stead. It led to the execution of twenty Catholics later. Titus Oates was shown to be a liar and a perjurer and convicted of it. Just because your cause is good does not give you justification to lie. Paul asks in Romans three, why do good? So that evil. Excuse me. Why do evil that good may come? Brothers and sisters, be careful about that. Even in our hottest debates, you might think the end is just so I can say whatever I want to get to that end. Our God doesn't allow that kind of behavior.

It leads us to the third point. We've talked about the **reality of truth**. We've talked about the **denial of truth**. And now we arrive at **the incarnate truth**. Here's the beauty that we began with at the beginning of the sermon, that as Pontius Pilate is standing there and ironically asking, what is truth? Little does he know, he's looking in the face of truth. Truth is personal. Ultimately, the truth is not founded in an inanimate object. It's not an inanimate or impersonal universe, but a personal God who is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. This helps us understand some of the things that Jesus and His apostles say. For instance, as you all know, John fourteen six, Jesus says, I am. Right. Ago a me. Yea, I am claiming the divine name as he does multiple times throughout the gospel. I am not the way, the truth, and the life. It's a

stumbling block for him to say that I'm the way. But you're a person. How are you the way? I'm the truth. You're a person. How can you be the truth? Well, John gives us more at the beginning of his gospel. He says, in the beginning was the logos, the word that is the Word of God, the revelation of God, The reality of God. I'm convinced that that that's what John is referring to. He may also, as an aside, be referring to Greek philosophy. But John, I think, is referring specifically to the creation story in Genesis one, where the Word of God creates the world and he says, here is the word incarnate logos. Here is the logos that not only creates the world because isn't that what he says next, but it sustains the world? Truth is personal. Ultimately, truth is not found in an inanimate object, but is found in a personal God who's revealed in Jesus Christ. Remember our **three kinds of truth absolute, historical, and personal**. Do you see how Jesus is absolute truth? He is the revelation of those transcendent realities that emerge out of the divine character. He is God incarnate. You can't know God unless you know Jesus. Jesus tells us this himself. He says, if you know the father, then you'd know me. And if you don't know me, then you don't know the father. How would you even argue? Every time we see God in the Bible, we are in this Trinitarian sense, seeing Jesus because Jesus is the one who reveals the father. He is the logos. He reveals God. He is absolute truth. And we talked about historical truth. What about the things that come to pass? Well, who made this world in which things come to pass? Logos did. Word did. Jesus did. Who sustains this world? Who is the one whose hand is at work bringing about all of the events that we even watch on the news today? Who is the one who changes the hearts of kings? Who changes the flows of rivers? Who changed your own heart, right? You've experienced the work in your own life when you used to be one thing and now you're another. Who did it? Jesus did. As we consider God's providence in the world, do not mistake the fact that this is Jesus at work in the world around us. He is the foundation of our historical truth. But what about personal truth? Remember who Jesus is. He's very man, right? He's one hundred percent human. He sympathizes with our weaknesses.

As Hebrews chapter four, verse fifteen tells us, we have a high priest who knows our personal truth. He knows our responses. He's been tempted and tried in every way that you have, and yet without fail. So when he walks alongside you, he's not walking ignorantly. When you're in that place where you feel like, I don't see how God is present here, Jesus has not only been there, he is there with you, and he survived. And you too will survive. If you are in him. The High Priest has experienced our temptations and our trials, and that is the purest form of our existential personal truth. So how do we live in light of the reality of truth? The denial of truth, and then the realization of the incarnate truth.

I just want to leave you with three things. First of all, desire the whole of God's truth, desire the whole of it. You can trust in it. You can test other things, other truth claims against it. That includes pursuing truth in doctrine, in our understanding of the world and in our representation of ourselves. Often we leave lean on one kind of doctrine and not another. We take hard doctrinal stances over here, and we have harshly critical attitudes of other doctrinal distinctions over there. Okay. Do you find yourself critical of a hyper doctrinal church? Okay. Be careful. Okay. What is that covering up within you and your own temptation and your tendency away against the whole counsel of God. Do you find yourself being critical of overly practical churches? Okay. Churches where it's all just advice and counsel and you don't.

You're not rooted in Scripture in the absolute truth. Okay. Be careful, be careful. Do you know the whole counsel of God that is both abstract and transcendent, and yet it's also immanent and practical alongside with you. Be careful about taking one kind of truth and lifting it up against all of the other truths. By the way, I would argue that this is the problem. This is the fallacy of the so-called truth teller. Right. Okay. I know I'm going to say I've said this myself too. Okay. So you know what the pastor says when he points his finger at you? He's got three fingers pointing back at himself and his thumbs pointing at the choir. Right. You heard that? Okay. A same thing here. Do you ever find yourself saying, hey, I'm just a truth teller, man? I'm a prophet. I'm prophetic. Well, here's the truth. If you are harsh and critical in your truth telling, then you are not displaying the fruit of the spirit. Okay? If you say, hey, I'm just a truth teller. This is just the way that I am. I would point to the fact, you know, none of the fruits of the spirit are truth telling. What are they? Gentleness. Kindness. Self-Control. Faithfulness. You want to know truth? God is love. That's the truth. Okay, you pick one truth and you hammer everybody over the head with it. You're not being a truth teller. Rather, you are ignoring by telling half truths the whole counsel of God.

Secondly, I want this we please recognize the difference between finitude and fallenness. A person can be mistaken. They cannot have all the facts. You know what? Let me. Here's a blinding flash of the obvious. None of us have all the facts, okay? We're not omniscient. They can be mistaken. They can be limited in their purview. And they're not lying. Okay? Be careful of accusing someone of lying when they're not lying. Mistakes and limited knowledge are not evidence of lying. We must be gracious with one another even when we disagree about fundamental facts. Again, I'd point you to the fruit of the spirit.

Thirdly, apply the same gracious understanding to others that you ought to also apply to yourself. What I mean by this is you need to recognize that you too are limited. Okay. On many topics, you only know one witness account. You two are limited. In your finitude, you don't have all the facts. And so we need to all express. As a matter of fact, I think one of the signs of a deep a deeply founded Christian faith is what we would say theologically. Is this an epistemological humility? What that means is a humility about your confidence in what you know. Okay. You are humble about what you know. Now, I don't think that doesn't mean being uncertain about whether or not there is a God. We're not talking about that. We're talking about your humility, particularly in the areas that are not expressly, clearly laid out in Scripture areas of historical truth. Okay. Asking this, do I really know exactly what happened? Starting statements like this. It seems like I talked, I talked to Bill. I talked to Nancy. Okay. It seems like something like this happened, but you're humble because you realize I've only got one piece of evidence. It seems like. Are you are you upset with me right now? I'm feeling anger from you. But then ask them. I might be wrong. We need to be humble about what we know. Like our neighbors, we are finite. But here's the other reason why we need to be humble. We also all have sin. So it's not just that we may not have all the information. The sin in our hearts may be subtly pushing us to a conclusion that's not true. So we need to be constantly repenting to the Lord as we are considering truth claims. Lord, show me if I'm blind. See if there's a hurtful way in me, right?

Psalm one thirty nine. Look for me. Look for the destructiveness. My heart is deceitful above all things. Show me the right way because I know, because of sin, I tend to lean towards my own self-interest. Do not mistake folly for boldness. Remember Proverbs eighteen. Okay. If you make a statement before hearing, then you're just showing your folly. Do not mistake folly for boldness or presumption for courage.

Where is our hope in the midst of this? We have an anchor. We have an anchor in reality. Christ is our true witness. He will not be deceived and he will not deceive. And brothers and sisters, you can hold on to that with all of your might. And if you feel like you are adrift in a world where there is no anchor, I want to invite you. Lay hold of Christ. He alone can satisfy. He alone can satisfy your deepest need and desire for truth, because he is the truth. Hold closely to him. That's where our hope lies.

Let's pray.