

Hello. /Today, we will begin our ninth lecture on Christian ethics. /The topic for today is “white lies.” /Throughout our daily lives, we tell a lot of light lies.

/For example, we say, “I’m okay. I’m not sick.” /Or we say, “I ate before coming” when we did not eat. /Children often tell these lies to free their mothers from worrying.

/When a child is sick, a mother, in order to feed her child, tells the kid that the medicine is tasty.

/In some cases, people say they forgot their wallets or do not have any money for transportation as a form of begging. /Whether they realize it or not, people are telling these types of lies.

/How many of us feel guilty or morally burdened when telling white lies? /Such lies have become routine in our lives.

/People do feel guilt when telling a lie for a personal gain. However, lies in consideration of others rarely makes someone feel guilty or uncomfortable.

/According to a survey conducted by the New York Times of the U.S., the majority of American adults believe it is acceptable or even necessary for people to tell lies to protect their neighbors.

/How should we Christians think of white lies for helping others? /First, we will observe the relationship white lies have with the ninth commandment, which says, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

/Because a white lie is not truth, some Christians believe it goes against the will of God. /The ninth commandment says in Exodus 20:16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

/Ephesians 4:25 says the same thing. /Psalm 5:6 also says the same thing. /Based on these messages in the Bible, some people argue that Christians should not tell white lies.

/However, this is a simple understanding of the ninth commandment. /Of course, we as Christians should attempt to tell the truth at all times. /A truthful God wants his children to be truthful as well.

/God is very displeased with Christians telling lies; he is enraged.

/Acts 5 tells us the story of Ananias and Sapphira, a married couple that sold their field and said they would give all the money to the church. They only gave a fraction, but when they lied about giving everything, they were killed by the wrath of God.

/Also, Elisha’s servant Gehazi, receiving bribes by lying, was struck with leprosy. /Revelation 21:8 and 22:15 emphasize that liars will fall into the fires of hell.

/We as believers must do our best to tell the truth in every circumstance. /However, we must reconsider white lies and their violation of the ninth commandment as well as the moral issues with telling white lies.

/If truth puts another's life in danger, are we to tell the truth? Whenever this issue is debated, there is always an example that is mentioned. /This is a true story from the Second World War.

/During the time of the war, German forces occupying the Netherlands were searching for Jews to kill. /One day, a German soldier comes across a house that aroused suspicion and knocks on the door. /He asked, "Is this house hiding any Jews?"

/Should the homeowner tell the truth? /If the homeowner says, "Yes," the Jewish family will be killed. /The owner of the house says, "No."

/Would this, "No" that protected that Jewish family be a violation of the ninth commandment? /In theological and ethical terms, we cannot say that this is a violation.

/The ninth commandment does command us to tell the truth. /However, we cannot say that the commandment forbids lying in every circumstance.

/The ninth commandment tells us not to lie with the intent to harm our neighbors. /When the man replied to the German soldier and saved lives, we cannot say that it was a violation of the ninth commandment, even though if it was a lie.

/In this case, lying to the soldier is in agreement with the sixth commandment, which says, "You shall not murder." /Therefore, we cannot say that the lie in our example goes against the core message of the ninth commandment.

/This is similar to disobeying parents for the sake of following Jesus. /In the Bible, we have the Egyptian midwife and the prostitute Rahab as examples.

/The Bible does not punish lies that are intended to save lives. /When an Egyptian king orders all baby boys to be killed, a midwife disobeys orders to save the child.

/Also, to save Israel's spies from the soldiers of Canaan, the prostitute Rahab tells a lie. /The Bible does not condemn Rahab, but compliments her.

/Exodus 1:20, 21 says the midwife's actions are proof of her fear of God, and the result of her actions was blessing. /Hebrews 11:31 compliments Rahab's reception of the spies as an act of faith.

/James 2:25 refers to Rahab who leads the spies down an alternative path, and calls her actions righteous.

/The examples above are lies told to protect neighbors' lives. /In ethical terms, we call them "lies of service" or "necessary lies," both of which mean "lies for neighbors."

/Ethically speaking, these lies are problematic, but in terms of breaking God's commandment, the lies are not. /The reason is the lie is told to save lives. Therefore, not all types of lies are morally wrong.

/The Bible does not consider military actions of deception during wartime wrong. /This is different from Abraham falsely presenting his wife as his sister in order to protect his own life.

/According to Christian ethics, Rahab and the midwife's lies are justified. /There are lies told to dying patients.

/These are lies that are told with a loving motive and are difficult to morally judge. /For example, is a doctor to tell a dying patient that there is no chance of recovery or not? We must think about this.

/Most doctors tell the patient's family the truth about the patient. /Doctors usually leave the responsibility of telling the patient of his condition to the family.

/Is there a moral obligation for the family members to tell the dying patient the truth, or is it okay to lie? /In reality, many families in this situation do not tell the truth.

/If the truth is told, the patient might go into shock and drastically worsen the health condition.

/If a person dying of cancer is alerted of the number of days he has left, he may fall into deep depression and shorten his life span.

/Telling the truth in these situations is equivalent to using a destructive weapon. /In what way, then, are we to tell the truth? Or is it morally wrong to hide the truth?

/On the other hand, not informing the patient of his condition may be harmful.

/Misinforming the patient strips the patient of the right to know the truth about his condition.

/In this case, the patient does not have the opportunity to prepare for death.

/The patient has the right to buy time to organize the aspects of his life and that of his family. Also, the patient may desire to figure out the remainder of his life, but if he does not have the truth, he will meet death without any preparation.

/These situations treat the patient not as a mature adult, but as an immature child, which in turn causes the patient to passively face impending death.

/How should we understand lying to a dying patient? First, this kind of lie is not an inevitable lie or the midwife's lie that can save lives.

/The lie we see here is not one that is correlated to saving a patient's life. /It is a decision to not tell the patient about his impending death to give him determination to live or to prevent the worsening of his condition.

/Thus it is difficult to count this lie as an inevitable lie told to save a life. /I believe it is better to tell the truth according to the general rule in this situation rather than telling a lie.

/In the exception of knowing that telling the truth would be unhealthy for the patient, the proper behavior is to tell the truth.

/Technically, not telling the patient or hiding the truth cannot be seen as a lie. /However, informing the person about his condition will give him time to organize the rest of his life before the Lord.

/Today, there are ministries in hospices. Dying patients spend their last days in peace and meaning in such ministries. Many report of the positive results of the hospice ministry.

/Those serving in the hospices are blessed through the ministry by having the chance to look back on their lives, entrust their lives to God's grace, and help others spend meaningful moments for the remainder of their time on Earth.

/Lies told to patients with the intention of love have short-term value, but they are ultimately evil.

/Those who are Christians have a hope in heaven, and they should be aware of their situation to prepare before God the end of their lives. This is why we should let them know about their condition.

/In reality, this is not the case. /Many patients suddenly die after being told the lie that they will recover.

/God demands for us to act truthfully in any circumstance and to refrain from telling lies that hurt our neighbor. /People often lie for small rewards.

/In an attempt to quickly fulfill their duties, people often lie. /We must know that the lies we tell come back to hurt us. /Jacob, who lied to his father and brother, later is the victim of other people's lies.

/The Holy Spirit is a spirit of wisdom. /We must pray to tell the truth in every moment of our lives while having the wisdom to say appropriate words for the protection of our neighbors.

/Believers are the children of a truthful God. /John 8:44 says, “He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

/Jesus is truthful, and he is the truth. /Revelation 19:11; John 14:6 /In a world of lies, we believers must be truthful and reveal the glory of God in our lives.

/This concludes our lecture on Christian ethics. /Thank you.