**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Walking Worthy: Speaking the Truth to One Another**

**Ephesians 4:25**

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BI: Sinful lying harms the body of Christ while speaking truthfully strengthens unity and builds it up.

 We are continuing our series in Ephesians, Brought to Life; Brought Together. As I have said, Ephesians can be divided into two sections, chapters one through three describes what *God has done in us* through Christ while chapters four through six call us to *live out what God has done in us*, what Paul calls walking worthy. Last week we saw that this means putting of the old self and putting on the new self, created in the likeness of God. Now he applies this command to specific sins.

1. **Put off Falsehood**

 Therefore, is a clue that Paul is drawing a conclusion to his exhortation, put off the old self and put on the new self (17-24). He is applying this to specific examples of sin (25-30). He starts off with lying, put off falsehood. We all still struggle with sin. In the new birth, God gives us a new nature. The power of sin as the principle driving force is broken but it is still present in us so we will always have an ongoing battle with sin. All of us still struggle with some form of lying – whether to ourselves or to others. We lie to get what we want, to avoid conflict, to hide our weaknesses, to impress others, to profit from others. But if you know your bibles you may be thinking about examples of people lying that seem to good and the right thing to do?

1. **Is all lying sinful?**

 Is it ever right to lie? Are there some extreme situations where it seems that the only appropriate thing to do is lie? This issue is complex and there are many good and godly people who disagree. I want to briefly look at two biblical examples[[1]](#footnote-1), then give you my thoughts and then finish looking at our text. The first example is the Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1). Pharaoh feared Israel’s population growth so he told the midwives to kill every baby boy born to Jewish women. But the bible says that midwives feared God so they disobeyed him and lied. When Pharaoh found out and questioned them, the midwives explained that the Hebrew women were strong and gave birth before they arrived. They disregarded his orders and essentially said that although they did their best to obey him, they could not get to the women giving birth in time. The result is that God did not rebuke them but blessed them. God dealt well with the midwives, giving them their own families (Ex 1:15-21).

 The other example is Rahab (Joshua 2). Joshua sent spies to Jericho who lodged at Rahab’s place. When the King of Jericho found out about it, he sent messengers to question Rahab. But Rahab had hidden them and when the messengers came, she said that the spies had come but left already and sent the messengers on a wild good chase after the spies (2:4-7). Then the New Testament book of Hebrews interprets her actions as an act of faith and commends her for them (11:31). So, the midwives lied because they feared God; Rahab lied because of faith in God. So, their lie was in service of a greater truth, to protect human life and oppose evil. But let me qualify these examples. They are the exception and the overwhelming evidence of Scripture condemns lying (Prov 6:16-17; 12:23; 12:19; 20:17; 21:6; Rev 21:7-8). Satan is called the Father of lies (Jn 8:44). Lying is characteristic of the old self, life before Christ, whose desires are deceived so the old self wants the wrong things. That is why people can act so sinfully and wonder how it is wrong because it feels so good and right. Our old self lies to us and others because it’s desires are deceived about what is truly good and desirable. The only way to overcome those deceived desires is renewing our minds with the truth. God creates the new self by the truth of his word (Rom 12:2) creating new ways of thinking, new attitudes, new desires about truth and falsehood, which free us to walk in righteousness and holiness.

1. **Speaking the Truth**

 So instead of lying we are to speak the truth with our neighbor because we are members of one another. Paul uses the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ over and over in Ephesians because he sees it as important. The reason he gives for telling the truth is because God has united us, made us one new humanity in Christ, the one body of Christ (1:22; 2:16; 3:6; 4:16; 5:28-30). As members of the body, we are members of one another. Just like a human body, we are connected to one another and when we lie to one another we not only harm others, we harm ourselves. Let me illustrate from eating. I ate oatmeal this morning. I scooped up oatmeal with my spoon and put it in my mouth, chewed it up and swallowed it so that I was fed and nourished. But if my brain told me to pick up the oatmeal with my fork and my eye lied to my hand about where my mouth is and I poked myself in the eye, not only am I not nourished but I am also harmed. In the same way, when we lie to each other, we do not help them, we harm them and ourselves as well. When I hurt the body, I hurt myself.

 Now let’s move this toward the Lords Supper. On the night Christ was betrayed, he took the bread and broke it and said, this is my body which was broken for you. He took the wine and said, this is my blood which will be shed for you and establish the new covenant.

* Jesus died for the church, and he presently lives for the church. When we view the body of Christ as insignificant to the Christian life, we belittle his death. The church as the body of Christ was purchased on the cross.
* Jesus died to secure our salvation, we were bought by his blood. We are no longer his enemy, but his children. Your salvation was purchased on the cross.
* Jesus died to secure our sanctification, becoming like him. Our sanctification is secured because he died to secure it. This is our hope in putting the old self and putting on the new self as we renew your minds. You hope for sanctification was purchased on the cross
* Lastly, he died to secure your eternity. His death secured our inheritance and that inheritance is guaranteed to those whom he saves. Your eternity was purchased on the cross.

 This is what we celebrate together.

**Life Group Questions:**

1. What is falsehood and what does Paul mean by putting off falsehood?
2. In what ways do we lie to ourselves and to one another?
3. Why do you lie?
4. How do we put off falsehood and speak the truth to one another?
5. How can desires that seem so right and good be so wrong (they are deceived)?
6. Why are life groups and discipleship groups so important given that we are susceptible to deceiving ourselves?
7. How is God speaking to me in this message?
8. How does this passage relate to my own discipleship?
9. How does this message help me in making disciples?
1. Other examples of lies are David’s feigned insanity, Jesus’ words about being as shrewd as serpents, and God who sends lying spirits and strong delusions, and who shows himself “pure to the pure,” but “devious” to the “shrewd” (Ps 18:26). It is possible to hide your intentions without lying. Consider the actions of Samuel when he went to anoint David (I Sam. 16). He was afraid that Saul would find out, so God told him to take a heifer with him and tell Saul that he was going to make a sacrifice unto the Lord. This allowed Samuel to keep the real purpose of his mission hidden without lying about it.  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)