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Speak The Truth

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Ephesians 4:25



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It's good to see you this morning. If we don't know each other yet, my name's Thomas and I serve as one of the pastors here at Providence, especially glad we get to share this bit of time together this morning. Special welcome to any guests or visitors in the house with us this morning. Glad that you're here. I know we have a few extra college students with us because they heard free pizzas for lunch today, but no shame on you. You still came of a good reason and we're glad that you're here this morning.

Today, we're in the book of Ephesians Chapter Four. If you have a Bible, please open it up and let's all rally up in Ephesians Chapter Four. If you got in here without a Bible for one reason or another, then underneath one of the chairs in front of you, you should be able to find one, and we're in Ephesians Chapter Four. Make a friend around you. Don't be afraid to ask for directions or use the table of contents, and we are meeting up on Ephesians Chapter Four.

If you are a guest or visitor, this is your first time in on this with us this morning, then I'll need to give you a little bit of background so you'll understand what's going on in the next few minutes. We as Christians, we believe that we are created by God and God loves His people. God created this good world, put us in it for us to have a relationship with him and that relationship that we once enjoyed, one of peace, flourishing and harmony has been torn because of sin.

But God because of the love that He has for His people decided to send Jesus to be the savior. That's really the story of this book that we're reading about right here. And when Jesus came to be the savior of the world, Jesus lived a perfect life. He died a sacrificial death on an old Roman cross so that anybody who puts their faith in Him can be forgiven of their sin. You can have a full life now and a full life for all of eternity with God.

But it's not just that. That's it, but there's more to the story than that. We see that Jesus was forming a community. A unique community to be His people, to live in the world His way. To be the people who were going to tell a world that's in desperate need about who God is. They're going to tell them with their words, they're going to show them with their lives who God is and what God is all about.

Second half of the Bible, or the New Testament right here is this story of how God formed a church, His people, His representative in the world who represent God with what they say and with what they do. God loves His people so much that He had certain people, certain leaders in the church to write scripture under the inspiration and authority of God. Certain men in history have written down the words of God for us to have. These are words that remind us of who we are because of Jesus Christ, and they also show us how to live in the world because of Jesus Christ.

One of those letters is right here, and it's the book of Ephesians. This letter written to the ancient city of Ephesus, given to the church to understand who God is and what God is all about. As we read this this morning, we're reading the words of a man named Paul. A man who once had many sins in his life, many lies, many falsehoods. He did a lot of bad stuff, but he just like any of us met Jesus and everything changed.

Paul writes this letter to a church living in the old city of Ephesus for the purpose of forming them into God's people. For the purpose of forming them to be a community of mission in the world. So, as we come to this this morning, that's what we're doing. This is our context. This is the page that's in front of us. And for the next few minutes, I want to lead our attention in focusing on one verse of scripture, Ephesians 4:25, but we'll get a running start in verse 17.

But before I read and we all lean in and think on this together, what we really, really need is for God to be the one leading this entire moment, and we need the Spirit of God to do what only He can do. So, let's ask Him for it in prayer. Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we have no other God but you, and you are perfect. In you, there is no shadow, there is no shifting at all. You are true, you are truth, you're perfectly consistent in everything that you say and everything that you do. You're consistent in your love for us, you're consistent in how you take care of your entire world. And God, we are not. We are inconsistent. We know the deceitfulness of our hearts to some extent. We have done things that are wrong when you've never done anything wrong.

So right now God, I invite your spirit, the spirit of truth to come into this room and to do what only you can do. Would you speak from your word? Would your spirit speak to each of us in our hearts? God, would you tell us who you are? Would you show us who we are? And God, would you help us to live in light of your truth? Spirit, would you move? Would you be in this room? Would you do millions of things in our hearts? Would you speak truth in the place of lies that we've heard? Would you speak truth for the lies that we've spoken? God, would you heal? Would you restore? Would you bring the light? Would you give hope like only you can? We beg you for it in Jesus' name, amen.

Let's get a running start. Let's go back to verse 17. These are the verses that we studied last week. Don't worry, I'm not going to be talking about all of them. We're going to focus on verse 25, but we need a little bit of a lead in to see what God's doing. Ephesians 4:17. Paul says, "Now I say this and I testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the gentiles or the foreigners or the outsiders do in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their misunderstanding. They are alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of hearts."

“They have become callous. They’ve given themselves up to sensuality, to greedy, to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way that you learned Christ assuming that you have heard about Him and you were taught in Him as the truth is in Jesus to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds and to put on the new self created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Here’s our verse, “Therefore, in light of all of this …” in light of everything I’ve said since chapter one, verse one, “Therefore having put away all falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor for we are members of one another.” Read it one more time. “Therefore, in light of all of this, having put away all false let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor for we are members of one another.

One of the many things we all have in common in this room and there indeed are many things one of the many things, one of the many things we all have in common is that we have all projected some type of falsehood and we have all told a lie. Whether it is about a big thing or a small thing each and every one of us in here we have all projected a falsehood, we’ve given an impression that wasn’t true to reality or we have told a lie.

Now this last week in the midst of preparing this word for you, my beautiful daughter Perry Elizabeth, she came to me in all of her cuteness, I actually got rebuked, I thought this was Nurse Perry but this is Dr. Perry. So don’t get rebuked just go with Dr. Perry and one day Dr. Perry came to me in this last week and she says, “Dad,” and I’m like “Yes Perry.” And she’s like, “I think you need a check up.” So I go, I sit on the foot of her bed and she diagnosed me. We found out I needed surgery. So she laid a towel over my right calf muscle and then she demanded that I close my eyes while she stabbed me with something. And after stabbing me with something she proceeded to get out the Band-Aids which immediately, like the flags go up because baby we’ve been talking, my wife’s over, I’m not talking to some random person.

Elizabeth was like, hey, like the Band-Aids, like the Band-Aids aren’t a thing around here so we need to put the Band-Aids up. So Perry breaks out all of these Band-Aid, she’s sitting on 30 of them and I’m like Where did you get these things. She’s like, “Dad, I’m going to have to patch you up now.” I’m like, thank God because you just stabbed me.

She proceeds to take out the Band-Aids and put the Band-Aids along my hairy legs and she strapped me up with about six of them for a moment. And I’m like, “Okay, are we done here?” She says, “Dad, when mommy gets done rocking Shepherd,” her brother, she’s like, “don’t tell her about the Band-Aids.” I’m like, now, hold on. When she gets to talking to me in a way though that I can’t discern what’s true and what’s false, I’m like, “Yeah, are we doing band-Aids right now?” She’s like, “Yes, it’s okay.” And I’m like, “Really though?” And she says, “No, we shouldn’t.” And I’m like, “Okay.”

Now what's going on in here? This is beautiful childhood sinful innocence. Is it okay for her to lie? Well surely there's some type of childhood innocence right here but she's okay. Something's going on. She knows what's true and she's trying to lead me away from the truth. Why is that? Why in her cute little heart? What is going on in there? Or maybe we can even move to Scripture and we could consider some different things. Let me try to frame up our time together by engaging maybe one of the most notorious questions that comes up in text like this. Is it ever right to lie? Is it ever right? What does the Bible say? When learn about Pharaoh and the Hebrew midwives and we also learn about Rahab. Let's just focus on Pharaoh for a moment.

In the Old Testament in the Book of Exodus, if this is new for you just write down Exodus One and you can go read it later. When Pharaoh was ordering the Hebrew midwives to kill the Jewish babies, Scripture says this, the midwives feared God, so whatever they do it's based right here in this fear of God and they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them but let the male children live. Exodus 1:17, that's in the Bible, not adding anything to it. Now when asked, they told the king and asked what'd you do, how did that go down, they told the king that the Hebrew women were vigorous and gave birth before they could get there which didn't really seem to be true yet in verse 21, scripture says because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

So, we're asking the question is it ever right to lie and here it is it seems like these people lied or at least gave a falsehood and it seems like God responded with blessing. What's going on here? Same dilemma is set up when we go over to Joshua and we consider the story about Rahab and the spies.

Now I'm not going to answer the question, sorry. What I am going to give you is this. It is possible to be a person who fears the Lord, walks by faith, not sinful motives, walks by faith and yet feels constrained in life threatening situations to oppose evil by lying. In Pharaoh's case when these people practiced civil disobedience, I would say whenever the government commands what God forbids or forbids what God commands, God's people then they must disobey.

So think about it, in the fear of God and in the walk of faith, worthy saints have chosen to oppose the effects of evil by concealing the truth from wicked men. So is he saying yes or is he saying no. Think about this. Even though God doesn't respond with immediate punishment or rejection to these events there is no place in scripture where these people are actually commended for these same actions.

So here's where I'm going with this. Whereas we have childhood innocence which is cute and it seems like we're going to let Perry get off the hook with that one and the Band-Aids. And then we have these two incidents from Scripture right here where God's people fearing God, walking by faith in the face of great evil and oppression they've chosen to conceal the truth and present a falsehood. Bypassing childhood innocence and bypassing these possible dilemmas in Scripture that are not very clear, let's build our lives on rock solid truth about lying. The overwhelming biblical emphasis is on God's condemnation of lying.

So instead of building our lives on potentials and what ifs of scripture let's build our lives on things that we know for absolutely certain from the Bible. Proverbs 6:16-17, there are six things which the Lord hates and seven that are an abomination to Him and two of them have to do with our mouth. A lying tongue and a false witness who breathes out lies. That's clear. How about Revelation 21:7-8. As for the faithless, the polluted, as for the murderers, the fornicators, sorcerers and idolaters and all, what's the next word, give it to me, liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire.

So beyond childhood innocence and belong really unique hard to read never get a clear definition from scripture situations. We need to understand that our lives are at stake with this issue because Romans Three says, all have sinned, all have turned aside. They use their tongues to deceive. Romans Chapter 3:12-13. Friends, we have a problem and the problem lives behind this cage of teeth. It's our tongues and it's traced down to our hearts that are tempted to project all different types of falsehoods, to give all different types of hints and scents that things are different than what they really are. We have a problem and God has the solution and I want you to take a lot of hope this morning because God saves sinners by faith bait in the blood of Jesus.

Christian know this, Jesus saves us from the penalty of lying in the past. Jesus saves us from the problem of lying and presenting falsehoods in the present and Jesus is here today to save us from the possibility of lying and presenting falsehoods in the future. This is what we've been studying for the last couple of weeks. This is what Pastor Brian taught us if you were here, It's one of the best sermons I've ever heard. You need to hop on the website, can't hop on a website, need you to log in to the website and go get it. This is what Brian taught us last week. The summary is on the screen right now if you missed it.

How does God help us change. How does God move us from people who, we once lied, we were once full of falsehood but now he's making us these truth speakers in this community built for mission. How does he do this? He does it through three things. God exposes the darkness in our hearts is what we saw in verses 17 to 19 that we just read together. After we see the problem God then shines light into our hearts through Jesus Christ. it's what he does in verses 20 to 21. And then God renews our imagination for holiness, he changes our desires as we repent and obey.

What we're talking about for the next couple of weeks is how God does these three things in a Christian's life and how God really supplants particular sins and issues from our lives. That's where we are, that's where we're going in the next couple weeks.

Now listen, I know another question that might come up here and it's whenever God tells us to do something some of us who love the Gospel we're saved by grace, we're scared of falling into legalism here, we would ask the question, well, how can we be told to do something and maintain the gospel and not fall into legalism. Listen friend, it's grace from the top down. But still how should we take these commands from Scripture and still do it in grace and still do it drawing our energy and power from God.

We actually have these three infinitives here, don't worry, I had to look that up to understand what that meant too and the three infinitives in verses 17 to 24 are to put off, to be renewed and to put on. Colossians 3:8 actually gives us a clue to understanding all of this. Paul, the same author writing on a similar occasion said this, "But now you must also put away all the following, anger, wrath, malice, slander and filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old self with its practices and put the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator."

All right, so here's what this means. Christian, since there was a time in salvation when you said goodbye to the former way of life and welcome to the new, because that moment happened for you, your life and my life now is one of daily continually and repeatedly saying goodbye to the old and welcome to the new. We are constantly putting off the old and we are constantly embracing the new.

John Stott said it like this, "It is because we have already put off our old nature in the decisive act of repentance called conversion that we can be logically commanded to put away all these practices which belong to that old rejected life." So here's what we have. Christians are people who have said goodbye to the former life and said welcome to the new. The goal of the Christian life is to be conformed to the image of the son, not conformed to the image of our own desires, not conformed to our own wants and preferences. Our goal is to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

That happens first as we repent and we convert. That's the first step in this. And then Christian we take daily steps in this. All sourced in God's grace, all because of the power that Jesus gives us, all for the glory of God. But this is how we grow in who Christ has us to be. So in the next couple of weeks we're taking these ideas, how God does this in our lives and we're seeing how it happens with different areas. So for a few minutes let's just consider the issue of how God shapes our tongues to the image of the son.

The first thing God does is this. God exposes the darkness and deceit and calls us to repent. How does God move us from being people of falsehood to a people of truth? The first thing God does is expose the issue you need to know that Paul is working out of the Old Testament promise from Zachariah Chapter Eight. God's people in the faithful city will speak the truth to their neighbors. So, when Paul is working here Paul is dealing with issues of fulfillment, community, witness and mission. They're all packed in to chapter four, verse 25. More is going on here in these few words than we can really grasp and lock on to with our minds, we need to know that.

God changes us for His glory and once we have a picture of who God is we need a picture of our sin and that's what's been going on throughout the book of Ephesians as a whole. So then we kind of ride up on chapter four, verse 25 and here it is. Put away all falsehood. Having put away. Having said no to the falsehood in the past we've got to continually say no to the falsehood in the present. And what's going on with falsehood?

Think about this. Just like a neighborhood represents many homes, so falsehood represents many behaviors. When Paul drops the word falsehood it's as if he comes in the room and he flips the switch and we can see all the sins that were living under the roof of falsehood. It's not simply lying but I focus on lying because that's the real tangible one that we get and we know we're guilty of. But falsehood is more than that. Falsehood is also giving the false impression. Falsehood is all different types of cheating. It's unkept promises, it's over extended promises, it's betraying a confidence, it's flattery. It's not even clearly doing the wrong things, it's doing right things for wrong motives.

We can have falsehood whenever we even get together and we talk about a time when we shared the gospel with someone but we embellish that encounter in order to elevate ourselves in front of the people that we're talking to. It's falsehood. No, I'm just talking about how I shared the gospel. We can even have falsehood there.

And here's the command. We're trying to shape up people for mission, we're trying to shape up people to look like the son So here's what God gives us. Having put away all falsehood let's be a people that speak the truth to one another. And time and time again God exposes this issue of falsehood based in the deceitfulness of our hearts. In Acts chapter five we actually have an example of this. Ananias and Sapphira they sold some land to give the money to the Apostles. But if you know the story when they actually went to give the money to the Apostles the Apostles looked at them and like this is it. They're like yeah, yeah, yeah, this is it.

Under the inspiration authority of the Spirit of truth, Peter looked at them and said in Acts 5:3, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" What's going on? Where did that come from? Filled your heart. Their hearts had been deceived into desiring the wrong things. They were greedy instead of truthful. What we need to know is that whenever we lie there is always a reason why that is deeper than the lie. Whenever we lie there was always a reason why that is deeper than the lie itself. It's not just that we make mistakes with each other, it's that we have hearts that are sourced in the wrong desires that are hanging on to different images of ourselves and different ways we're trying to control the world and it shows up. Well not just lies but all different types of false projections about who we are and what we're capable of.

God is gracious to reveal these things to us and all you have to do is read the headlines to see people who had lie compromise after compromise after compromise that eventually led to a major failure. We can think of Bernie Madoff who stole billions of dollars from his investors. It was a lie after lie after lie that like compound interest eventually came and found this man out. You could think of Lance Armstrong. You could think of him while he was celebrating at the finish line so many times and many of us looked at him and marveled behind all the glitz, behind all the photo ops and all the glamour. His titles got stripped from him for cheating, for presenting false hoods about who he was and his performance all along.

This is particularly tough but we got to see it. We can even think of Larry Nasser who exploited young female athletes, compromise after compromise after compromise. A little bit of falsehood here, a little bit of misrepresentation here, a little delusion here and there and before you know it we see these public falls that are incredibly intense to watch but when we watch them we think about our own hearts. It's only but the grace of God that we don't end up in that place. This is where God is gracious to show us where we are.

This is what Pastor Brian talked to us last week about the massive sinkhole. Sinkholes don't happen overnight. For a sinkhole to happen there has to be a long and a steady erosion over time beneath the surface when everything's just quite fine on street level and before you know it one day the whole thing comes crashing through. And this is what God does, this is what the Spirit of God could even be doing for us right now because he's gracious in this moment. Showing us the issue in our hearts.

In Providence, how do we [inaudible 00:24:53] people. They just don't come and hear this and like, okay, that was something. Then we walk out of here with no action in our lives. We apply this and one way we apply this is here. Let's remain fiercely inhospitable to any known falsehood in our lives. Paul here is commending the church and I want to commend you as well. Paul is watching a church in Ephesus, putting away falsehood and daily removing the junk that was left with it. I want to encourage you. I see many of you that I know and have relationships with daily putting away falsehood from your lives.

I see you speaking the truth with one another and I encourage you now in this moment to excel still more. Let's be a people who are fiercely inhospitable to any known falsehood. Psalm 139:23-24 is the prayer that we should pray. "Search me oh God. See if there is any grievous way in me." And I know what you think. You're thinking like that's the prayer I really don't want to pray but we need to pray it. Like this is how we keep our lives from being a sinkhole, where not only us but our families and our friends and our church falls in with us. Search us God, know us, see if there's any grievous way in us is our prayer. And when you see any vestige of deceit lounging on the couch of your heart open up the front door and kick the whole thing out. In fact, toss the couch, go down to the bell tower burn it because the [pack one 00:26:27] yesterday and we'll get a new one.

We see any vestige of this lounging on the couch of our hearts we toss the whole thing out. We confess our sins, we repent and we receive the forgiveness that is ours in God. And Christian you remember you are in Christ. And that deceit does not belong in you anymore. The second thing that God does, how does God do this, what is God doing to move us from a people a falsehood to a people of truth and mission. Second thing God does is God unveils the truthfulness of Jesus and he calls us to obey him. So he shows us the issue. He shows us the Savior and he invites us in.

Let me help you see the Savior in light of the enemy. Ask yourself this question. Who is it in the Bible that lies? It's Satan. Satan is the father of lies. Jesus said of this Satan, when he lies he speaks his own native language. Church, follow me here. By implication, when we lie we speak the language of hell. When we come to one another with our falsehoods, with our shading of the facts, we unleash the culture of hell into our conversations and to our understanding of who we are and what God is calling us to.

Satan not just simply lies but he has all different types of false hoods about the things that matter. And in scripture, what are the things that we have accounts that Satan lied about, represented a falsehood about, the list will blow you away. In Scripture, Satan lies about God, man, creation, history, sin, righteousness, grace, faith salvation, life, death, meaning, purpose, relationships, heaven, hell, eternity and everything else.

And if you in your life, if you want to have a life that's based on truth, you're not based on a false word about any of these things, you're not letting that come into the foundation of your life and start to erode you at the foundation, then you need Jesus because Jesus comes along and Jesus speaks nothing but truth about everything Satan gives us falsehood for. Jesus our king, he comes and he conquers and he conquers with truth. Jesus gives us the truth about God, man, creation, history, sin, righteousness, grace, faith, salvation, life, death, meaning, purpose, relationships, heaven, hell, eternity and everything else.

Jesus came along and said I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. By implication, therefore, we are people of the truth and we speak the truth to one another. Think about it, Christ is the truth. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth. God's Word is truth. Not to live by Christ and by the Spirit and by the word. We put ourselves at risk of having hell fill our lives, having hell fill up our conversations and our relationships. So here's the teaching of Scripture. When you put that falsehood aside, when you get out of that old neighborhood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. And if you like me, you have moments where you despair and you think how in the world and I going to be able to do this if I am constantly being deceived. if my own heart's telling me stories. If sometimes the enemy's whispering lies to me, how am I going to do this, how are we going to do this together.

And for this to happen God must act and God has acted. God has sent His Son Jesus to earth, Jesus died on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus invited us to believe in him and when we believe in Him The Holy Spirit who's called The Spirit of truth in John 16:13, he Spirit of Truth comes in to set up shop and to dwell. He comes in and he takes the place of lies and he starts overturning them one by one. Sometimes comfortably, sometimes uncomfortably. But Christians, we have the Spirit of truth because we are united to Christ. And so much of us beating our sin depends on remembering this truth, daily appropriating and applying this truth and we got to live in this truth.

So there's an example. There was a guy named Augustine, Augustine, however you want to say, Tomato, tomato. He was a powerful theologian in church history, combated many heresies that threatened the life and the future of the church. Augustine, before his conversion, how do I say this with kids in the room, he had sexual desires that were out of control. In this one town, there was actually this one girl that he spent a lot of time with and one day he was converted and everything changed.

One day he was actually in another town walking along the road doing his Augustine thing and the girl from his former life was in town, oh boy, saw him and started running after him. And she's chasing after him, "Augustine, Augustine, it's me." I'm just guessing that's how that interaction went. When that was happening Augustine, he's a new man. He met the truth, he's been changed. He saw her running after him screaming, "It is I, it is I." And he ran the other way screaming, "But it is not me, but it is not me, but it is not me."

What is going on there? He knew who he was and he knew who he was in the moment. He knew his former way of life, he knew his former way of falsehood, his former way of living, his former way of sin but he also knew there was a day when he encountered the truth and the truth set him free. And he no longer had to be defined by those old things, caught up in that old power, caught up in that old routine but he was a new man. So when his old sin came chasing after him with flattery trying to bring him in, he had a new identity because he knew he belonged to Jesus Christ. In the moment, if he wasn't daily appropriating that, daily bringing that in, he could have fallen.

But this is our work. We remember who we were and we remember who we are. The key to life change is not about having the right idea, the key to life change is about having the right person. Paul is talking about how you learned Christ, how you learned a person. Not how you learned ideas. The Christian life is not about getting facts right on a page though that's part of what's here. The Christian life is about seeing and beholding Jesus and trusting in Him. And yes, we're truthful, we're about propositional facts all the way down but it's not about abstract principles, it's about a person. And to beat sin, think about Jesus, think about who he is, think about what he did. Your present identity is not about what you've done, your present identity Christian is sourced in what he has done for you. So receive his life as your life, receive his death as your death and then receive his identity as your identity, daily bring that identity to heart and let's live that out.

And listen, if you're sitting here and you're like, man, I'm just on the outside looking in, like I feel like I'm crushed under the weight of the lies that I've told, the lies that I've heard, like I feel lost in my falsehood. And listen, the voice of Jesus is the only one that can lead you out. See him in this, repent of your sins, believe in him, he'll give you the power to change. And as we seek to change and be a community of change Providence we apply this in this way. Let's keep one eye on Jesus as we speak truth to one another.

Friends, we have no hope until we hear Jesus calling us to trust in Him. God saves us by showing us our sin and showing us Jesus and then God sanctifies us, he grows us up into Christ by showing us our sin and showing us Jesus, is the same both ways. It is only the voice of Jesus that can guide you out of the prison of deceit. It's the story of Jesus that keeps shining light in our hearts when we struggle to believe because listen, one of the many reasons we need to read this story all the time, we meditate on parts, we read the whole thing, we think about what it means, is when we read the story you keep finding liars, you keep finding cheaters, you keep finding manipulators and people who over-promised, under-promised and spoke half truths all throughout and you see how God intervened in their lives and Jesus will then speak hope into your life.

When you read this book and you see all the misfits, you understand it's okay to be a misfit and to be a part of this mission. None of us have it all together, none of us have it all figured out, that's why we need Jesus. So let's keep an eye on Jesus. As we talk to one another, let's remember the words of Jesus as we encourage each other towards life change. Let's remember the words of Jesus and keep an eye on him as we think about our parenting. Let's parent towards truth and not with guilt and with burdens. Let's encourage one another with Grace. Not [seeking 00:35:44] to burden each other for the things that we've done wrong but boost each other up because Christ has made all the difference.

Let's keep an eye on Jesus and confess our sins to one another and let's keep an eye on Jesus and forgive those who have sinned against us because we have all sinned against him. The third thing, the Third Way God comes in and makes us a people who were once known for being a people a falsehood and lies to being a community of truth and mission.

The third way God does it is God renews our minds with the benefits of honesty. So much of this is what Pastor Brian wonderfully unpacked for us last week. God comes in and he renews the spirit of our minds by helping us think about Christ. And that renewal is the fuel to fight our sin.

Here in this text we're given two reasons why we should avoid this sin. One, it's because it maligns Christ, and two, might surprise you, it's because we belong to one another. You see it? For we are members of one another. Why should I not sin, why should I put away falsehood, why should I avoid lies. It's because you and me Christian we belong to each other. This verse is aimed at forming a Jesus community unified in mission. We are a body, we are all connected. This is one of the major metaphors of scripture. And let me illustrate by showing you the greatest athlete in the history of the world Mr. Usain Bolt.

Now let's all be honest. Who's ever watched a race and then just been like all cool about it like, I'm just going to go to the kitchen and get something and you go in the kitchen and you can't help but just stretch one out. How many people have gone in the bathroom after watching this guy run stood in front of the mirror and tried it. You don't have to raise your hand, I see you raising your hand in your heart. We have all watched this man and marveled. Six foot five inches tall, 207 pounds of pure speed. Not just the greatest runner in the history of world, probably the greatest athlete who has ever lived.

Bolt represents, he gives us something here. In his life and how his career came to an end gives us an example of what it means right here for us to be members of one another, because in Bolt's body there are many parts. There are some six hundred and twenty five or fifty, whatever Wikipedia wants to agree on, muscles. We have all of these bones and they're all supposed to be working together. So in a race everything is really working together, everything's firing at the same time. And when one piece fails to do its job at a critical moment you have a picture like this. Not Bolt's career ending injury but Bolt's last race in London on the same track where he and his team mates set the world record for a running a lap under 37 seconds.

Bolt had one piece misfire at a critical time and the whole thing comes crashing down. Bolt later tweeted out a, that's a social media thing for some of you. Bolt tweeted out a picture of the injury with this explanation right here. Bolt says, "Sadly, I have a tear of the proximal," and some of y'all forgive me, "myotendinous junction of biceps femoris in my left hamstring." As best as I've been able to find out in the last week, Bolt had a tiny, tiny, tiny strip of his hamstring muscle pop at a critical time and his whole body, even though he was so big and he was so strong and his record was stellar came crashing down. He was injured.

In church, what does this mean for us? It means that you and me, we are a lot like Bolt's body. We are dependent on all the parts working together all the time. Why should I fight falsehood and lying in my lives? It's because we belong to each other. We don't want to malign our Savior Jesus Christ and we belong to each other. And when we do fail, we fail as a team. We unite, we surround, we support with Christ as our standard. We put our arms around one another. We receive the sins in confession of one another and we walk out of the stadium together in unified as a team. We are members of one another.

You think about this church, well, over 35 years now and running a really good race. We are not concerned with running everybody's race, we are concerned with running our race. And for us to run this race together we must remember we belong to one another. Why would I ever fight falsehood and lying and sin and deceit in my life? It's because we belong to one another and we got a race and it's a mission that God's put us on and we need every part firing properly at the right time if we're going to finish well and not to end in failure.

Lies damage relationships. They erode trust faster than anything. They destroy societies and corrupt cultures. Lies destroy community, falsehood destroys marriages, falsehood destroys churches. Lies and falsehoods, they are the territory of Satan and it's a cancer in the body of Christ. So can we just commit that we will tell the truth with one another? Can the church be an atmosphere where the Kingdom of God can be released and have its restorative effect on lives?

Let's be honest with each other, let's confess our sins to one another, let's fix our eyes on Jesus. And in conclusion let's imagine Jesus being glorified in the honesty of our intentions and interactions.

So much of this comes down to our imagination. It comes back to our desires which are housed in our hearts. And let me illustrate this with tax returns. Tax returns are due, right? Well, not yet but they're practically due. Think about how this works in the next couple of weeks. Some of y'all are like, man, we need to do that this afternoon. As we sit down to do our tax returns, if what we desire and harbor in our lives is a little extra cash or a little more control or just going on a cruise to a beach, then when we sit down to fulfill the tax return, then we will be tempted to lie to misrepresent and to practice all kinds of falsehoods.

But, if we sit down in that moment and we don't simply imagine gain, but if we can imagine Christ and His Church being hurt and maligned by our actions, our actions might be different. If we vividly imagine God's observance of the actions, the glory of Jesus and the church, Christ's body being unified together in love, then we likely won't represent falsehood in those moments. Because whatever captures your imagination will govern your behavior. So let's think about Christ, let's think about his church and let's let the infusion of those things in our hearts be what leads us and guides us. And in conclusion there are some of us here sitting here thinking man, if you only knew how hard it would actually be to tame my tongue or to uproot all the falsehood from my life.

I don't know if this life change is possible and I commend the words of John Newton to you. John Newton would say, "Look unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Look unto him as he hung naked, wounded, bleeding, dead and forsaken upon the cross." And Christian, this is something we do even now. We imagine these things as these words are read. "Look unto Him again as he now reigns in glory, possessed of all power in heaven and on earth with thousands and thousands of saints and angels worshiping before him and 10 thousand times 10 thousands ministering unto him. And then compare your sins with His blood. Then compare your wants with his fullness. Then compare your unbelief with his faithfulness, your weakness with his strength and your inconsistency with his everlasting love."

Is life change possible? Think about Jesus. Think about Jesus born as a young baby boy with a good heart that did not have the deceit of sin in it. Think of Jesus as a childhood boy, never lying about Band-Aids, never lying about the candy or anything else. He didn't lie once. Think of Jesus as a teenage youth. He never lied about his wages. He never lied about his whereabouts, hello. He never lied about where he was or what he was doing or who he was doing it with. Think about Jesus in His ministry from 30 to 32. Think about him as he ministered to people. Think about him as he never stretched the truth about God so someone else would get in. Think about him as he never lost his attitude or his temper or went too far with anyone in the relationship in any way. think about him as he lay on the ground being nailed to the cross.

Think about Jesus as the nails were driven into his wrist, his skin was torn, bones were starting to be exposed and he never lost his temper. He never said a word that was out of place. He never sinned against those people who were nailing him to the very cross. And Christian, as you think about him, realize that everything that is true of him is true of you in faith. Think about him in his baptism, as he was dipped down into the water and when he came up, we hear a voice coming down from heaven, we see the Spirit of Truth descending down on him and you hear the Father in heaven saying, "This is my son, this is my child, with him I'm loved and I am well pleased." And you know Christian, that is true of you today in the midst of Ephesians 4:25.

Think about Jesus. Think about everything that is true of him. If you have faith in Him, those things are true of you. And think of 1 Peter 2:22. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his life. And you Christian, if you trust Him in faith, you are in Him. You are in Christ. And this is the message of Ephesians, you are in Christ.

So let this be the fuel in your tank of faith to give you the energy to remove all falsehood. You are in Christ. Let's pray.

Father, we sing the songs a moment ago. Now we feel the reality in a little different way that all of our hope is in you all our life is in you, all of our power is in you because God, we feel the weight of our sin in a moment like this, that yeah, we got falsehoods, yeah, we've told lies. But then father you're quick, you're quick to show us the son, to remind us of where our energy and our strength come from and to renew our faith in him so Father we say thank you. Father, we need your spirit to do a work right now, to take your word and to take these last few moments and to apply the truth to our lives and then God, we need the courage to walk in whatever you reveal.

So Father in heaven we ask that your spirit would move. As we take a moment to think about the word that's been shared with us, spirit, would you move in all of our hearts. Would you remove and uproot falsehoods even now as we remember Jesus again. And Father even as we have this opportunity to tithe and to give an offering, Father, would you help us to do this full of faith, trusting that life is better lived with you than without you. Help us to even give from a heart of trust. And father, as you speak to us now and we take time to continue to take it in, we pray that you'd then give us the strength to stand and to sing with confidence because you see us today not in our sin, you see us in the righteousness of Christ. Father, would you be so good to speak that better word to us now in Jesus' name, amen.



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