

Message: Putting on Christ Means Putting off Falsehood and Putting on Truth

TEXT: Ephesians 4:17-25

Introduction

- A. Studies over the last 3 decades indicate that lying is part of the fabric of ours and every human culture. Falsehood, unfortunately, is not limited to a few high profile politicians or the majority of prison inmates who claim they're innocent. The problem starts early, at an age when politicians cannot yet influence young minds.
- B. Some studies suggest adults on average lie 2x daily. A study by Michael Lewis, a researcher and professor of pediatrics and psychology at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in N.J., reported that ...
 - 1. 70% of kids 2 to 2 1/2 years of age lie.
 - 2. By the age of 6, almost 100% lie.
 - 3. Alarming? **Psalm 116:11 I said in my alarm, "All men are liars."**
- C. Why is lying so prevalent among us human beings? It's the product of the sinful nature with which each of us has been born.

Psalm 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.

- D. Wouldn't you love to be freed from all falsehood in your life? The good news is God, in His infinite wisdom, is in the process of restoring a sin degraded humanity and sin cursed creation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:19 For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,²⁰ and **through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross**; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,²² yet **He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--**

- E. 2 weeks ago we looked at the miraculous difference God has made and is making in those He has caused to be born again to a living faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. We saw Paul use a metaphor in 2:22-24 of disrobing and robing to describe the repentance and faith God has granted and continues to grant us.

Ephesians 4:22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.
- F. We see Paul continuing the metaphor in 4:25 and following with specific examples of what repentance and faith will look like in the life of the church, God's new humanity.

I. What is the falsehood we are to put off (repentance) and the truth we are to put on (by faith)?

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood (pseudos), SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR (Zechariah 8:16), for we are members of one another.

- A. "falsehood" = the "pseudos" = "the lie" or "the false"
 - a. E.g., a "pseudonym" = a false name (Mark Twain - Samuel Clemens)

- b. so “the lie” might be defined as ...
- any corruption or suppression or misrepresentation of the truth of God,
 - any insincerity,
 - any deception to produce personal advantage/gain or another’s personal disadvantage/loss.

B. “truth” = truthfulness, sincerity (contrast 4:20 “truth” with 4:24 “the truth”). Notice this usage in the text of Zechariah 8:16 which Paul quotes.

Zechariah 8:16 'These are the things which you should do: **speak the truth to one another; judge with truth** and judgment for peace in your gates.¹⁷ 'Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and **do not love perjury**; for all these are what I hate,' declares the LORD."

II. Why does God want us to put off the lie and put on truth?

A. For the love of Christ in Whom is truth (truthfulness) - we imitate what/Who we love.

Ephesians 4:20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as **truth is in Jesus**,

1. “truth” is sometimes subjective, what a person has - truthfulness, whole hearted sincerity. Truth is in Jesus.

1 Samuel 12:24 "Only fear the LORD and serve Him **in truth with all your heart**; for consider what great things He has done for you.

2. “truth” is used in this sense describing God in the chapter/passage that Paul quotes in Ephesians 4:25.

Zechariah 8:8 and I will bring them *back* and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and **I will be their God in truth and righteousness.**'

B. For the glory of God. Paul prays ...

Ephesians 4:24 put on the new self, which **in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.**

C. For the church’s health - “for we are members of one another.” 4:25b

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE *of you* WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, **for we are members of one another.**

1. falsehood harms the church

Proverbs 25:18 Like a club and a sword and a sharp arrow is a man who **bears false witness** against his neighbor.

Proverbs 14:25 A truthful witness saves lives, but **he who utters lies is treacherous.**

a. John Chrysostom “If the eye sees a serpent, does it deceive the foot? If the tongue tastes what is bitter, does it deceive the stomach?”

b. The unity of the body of Christ is built, among others things, on trust. If we do not trust each other, we will not grow in our love toward each other.

c. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (6:17). The sword of the devil is the lying tongue.

2. truthfulness heals and builds up the church

Proverbs 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but **the tongue of the wise brings healing.**

Ephesians 4:15 but **speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him** who is the head, even Christ,

D. For our own souls health, life, joy. Those who practice falsehood do not know Christ, have not “learned Christ.”

Proverbs 21:6 The acquisition of treasures **by a lying tongue** is a fleeting vapor, **the pursuit of death.**

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and **everyone who loves and practices lying.**

1 John 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, **is a liar, and the truth is not in him;**

III. What kinds of things to we need to put off and put on? In terms of specifics, how are the lies that we are to put off and the truth we are to put on manifested in our relationships with one another? From what do we want Christ to free us?

1. Deceptive speech

a. outright lie

Ananias and Sapphira **Acts 5:8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price."**

b. playing the victim when rebuked or admonished

c. insincere flattery or manipulative words

Psalm 12:2 They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.

Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

d. Twisting the meaning of the Scriptures to justify a continuance in sin.

Luke 10:29 **But wishing to justify himself,** he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

e. Using prayer requests as a means to gossip or exploit the generosity of God's people.

f. Saying we love God while not loving other believers.

1 John 4:20 **If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar;** for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

g. Practicing our righteousness in order to be praised by others.

Matthew 6:1 **"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them;** otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ² "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the **hypocrites** do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

2. Economic deception

- a. Knowingly selling possessions with the appearance of better quality than is the case. Hiding defects when selling houses, cars, etc. A false weight enables you to give a purchaser less than it appears. So also, hiding any defect enables you to give a purchases less than it appears you are.

Proverbs 11:1 A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight.

- b. Overemphasizing defects to justify giving the seller less than is fair.

Proverbs 20:14 "Bad, bad," says the buyer, but when he goes his way, then he boasts.

- c. under reporting of taxable income - I once read a US News and World Report survey that indicated 25% of "Americans admit lying on tax forms. Let not the church of God be among that 25%.

Proverbs 10:2 Ill-gotten gains do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.

3. Breaking of one's word, whether agreements, commitments, covenants, vows.

- a. verbal agreements - example: Holly's internet home school book purchase. After agreeing to buy a used book (and the seller notifying other inquirers that the book was sold, Holly found the same book at a cheaper price. What would you do? (Ill gotten gain is not good stewardship.)

Psalm 15:1 A Psalm of David. O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 2 **He who walks with integrity**, and works righteousness, and **speaks truth in his heart**. 3 He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the LORD; **He swears to his own hurt and does not change;**

- b. marriage vows

- c. church membership commitments

Conclusion

- A. Wouldn't you love to be freed from all falsehood in your heart, to be able to interact and serve and worship with sincerity, and not for show or praise or self-serving purposes? Christ died and rose again that we might be recreated in His image and receive the forgiveness of our sins.
- B. We who love Christ as Lord, by His Spirit's power can imitate Him in whose mouth there was found no deceit. When we put on truth, we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, for truth is in Jesus.

Romans 13:14 But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

Ephesians 4:21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as **truth is in Jesus**,

- C. If, arriving at the end of our lives, we have lost our integrity, will have lost everything - literally.

Proverbs 12:19 Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.

- D. Therefore, lay aside the old self and put on the new self created in the likeness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, (in repentance toward God) **laying aside falsehood**, (in faith toward Christ) **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.**