

The One Anothers (Part 4)

Selected Scriptures

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I want to begin this morning in a unique way; I want to start by giving you a test. Now some of you are in school or in college or in schools of various sorts and you're not necessarily interested in another test. But let me give you this test. And let me tell you this: if you pass this test then you don't need to listen to a thing I'm going to say this morning. Not that all of you need permission to do that, I understand. But you can ignore the message this morning if you have never done any of these things. Just give yourself a little test.

Lied or directly denied what you knew to be the truth. Told the truth in a way intended to purposely mislead someone else. Misreported your income on your tax return. Taken tax deductions that weren't legitimate. Misrepresented the quality of your old car to a potential buyer. Misreported to the Department of Motor Vehicles the purchase price of the car in order to save taxes. Kept the extra change that a cashier mistakenly gave you. You don't have to listen this morning if you have never given anyone an insincere compliment. If you've never exaggerated your past accomplishments. You know, I think the older we get we need to get one of those shirts I saw once that says, "The older I get, the better I was." If you've never exaggerated the faults of others. If you've never repeated an unsubstantiated negative or critical comment about somebody else. If you've never inflated your education or other credentials on a job application. If you've never inflated your office expense account records. If you've never charged personal expenses to your expense account. If you've never misrepresented to clients the quality of your product or its actual cost. If you've never failed to actually work the hours you were paid to work. By the way, this is a huge problem in our culture. A survey I read a number of years ago reported that 80% of employees do this to the tune of 3 hours and 45 minutes a week. If you've never worked on unapproved personal projects on company time or equipment. If you've never called in sick to work or school when you weren't. If you've never forged your parents signature on a note to the school. If you've never cheated on a test. If you've never plagiarized someone else's material. Never told a teacher that you'd read a book that you merely skimmed. Never made up an excuse in order to cover yourself. Never made foolish promises you had no intention in keeping. Falsely accused someone of something, betrayed a confidence, failed to keep a promise to your spouse, children or anyone else. Allowed your behavior to intentionally mislead someone else. Told someone that you would pray for them and didn't. Failed to acknowledge a sin when confronted. Or here's one that gets us all: Purposely tried to act more spiritual than you know yourself to be.

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You know, by a Biblical definition, all of those things that I've just read to you and many more, those are just a few samples, are different forms of lying. As you can see, not being truthful is pervasive in the human condition. That's what Paul says, isn't it, in his indictment of all humanity in Romans chapter 3? You remember in Romans 3, he begins with those general expressions of depravity. Romans 3:10, "there is none righteous, not even one; none who understands, none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; none who does good, not even one." And when he gets to the specifics, the very first sin that he identifies is in Romans 3:13 and it's lying, he says, "their throat is an open grave, and with their tongues they keep deceiving." That, folks, is what we are by nature. But we have been redeemed and the constant message of Scripture is that those who know God must deal only in the truth.

We're studying the New Testament commands that we usually refer to as the "One Anothers." We're looking not at every one of them but at the vast majority of them and we've organized most of the fifty or so commands that we're to be or to do something to one another into four categories and I've labeled those four categories as number one: motivation; our motive is to be love. Number two: occupation; we are to be occupied with serving and building others up. Last week we looked at orientation; how are we to think about others.

And today we come to the fourth category: conversation. You see, the Scripture has a lot to say about our words. Now I know what you're thinking because I found myself thinking the same thing this week. Do we really need to talk about the tongue again? Hasn't James beat us up enough already? I mean, I don't know about you but I'm still a little bloody and bruised from James 1 and James 3 and James 4. But there's a difference. What we have seen in our study of James is primarily the problems with our tongue, the sins of our speech; that is how we tear each other down with our words.

It's hard for me to use that expression without thinking a number of years ago, one of our girls said something that was less than kind to another one of our girls and Sheila asked them, "Girls are we supposed to tear each other down with our words?" Well, "Oh no..." one answered right away with a very proud smile. "Oh no, we're not supposed to tear each other down, we're supposed to tear each other up." You know, unfortunately a lot of Christians think exactly like that.

Now as we examine what the One Anothers command us about our speech, about our tongue, we learn primarily how we should speak, how we are supposed to use our tongues. You see, James told us the destructive power of the tongue, the One Anothers point to the constructive power of the tongue. The same tongue that can tear other people down or up, whichever you like is the same tongue that can, by God's grace, build others up. The unregenerate tongue, as we learned, is like a drawn sword eager to wound and to kill and to maim. But the believer's tongue can

become a trowel in the hand of God to build others up; to build up the lives around us. This is what we're commanded to do.

As we begin our study this morning, turn with me to Ephesians chapter 4. I want us to look at the big picture of the fact that our tongues can be constructive before we look at specifically how they can be constructive. In Ephesians 4:29, we find a verse that a year and a half we studied in our study on marriage and family. This verse sets out for us the tone for all communication regardless of its context; whether in the family or in the church or at work or wherever it is this is what our communication is to be like. This verse lays out the foundational mandate that should govern the content of what we say in literally every human relationship. Notice what he says, in verse 29, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth..." [no rotten word] "but only such a word" [only, notice that, exclusively] "such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." Notice that expression, "only such a word as is good for edification."

Now if you were here a couple of weeks ago you should recognize that word, "edification." It literally means "to build a structure, to build a building." But figuratively, it refers to building others up. That is, to promoting another Christian's spiritual health and growth. You remember a couple of weeks ago as well, we discovered our primary occupation as we interact with each other, the occupation of our interaction is to serve, number one, and to build up, number two. Well, the ways we build others up; there're really only two ways we can build others up. One of those is by our example, but the primary way we build others up is with our words and that's what Paul is saying in Ephesians 4:29. You are to use your mouth for edification, to build others up. Our tongues are supposed to be instruments in God's hands that build one another up or promote each other's spiritual health and growth. We are to speak in such a way as to build others up.

Now how can we do that? How is it that we can use our tongues to build others up? Well, when we examine the passages in the New Testament, and the commands, the One Anothers that deal with speech, how we're to speak to one another. You discover that there are essentially three basic commands concerning how we should speak to each other. And if we obey those three basic commands, we *will* build up one another by what we say and so we're going to look at those three commands of how to use our tongues to build others up. Because the first one is such an important theme in Scripture and because it's so contrary to our nature and who we are as unbelievers and to our flesh as believers, I want us to spend our time this morning looking only at the first in great detail. And next week, Lord willing, two weeks from today we'll look at the other two basic commands. But this morning, let's look at the first basic command of how we are to speak to one another.

The first command is be truthful. Be truthful. Now this is absolutely foundational. Turn with back just a couple of verses there to Ephesians 4, if you're still in in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 4:25. Here is one of those verses in the New Testament that drives home this responsibility to each other. "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another." Notice he begins with the word "therefore" which, of course, connects it to the context. Just before this, Paul has been laying out those great principles of sanctification that we've studied together. How is it that you and I, as Christians, are made more like Christ? It doesn't happen by osmosis, it doesn't happen by a divine spiritual zap. It happens by our seeking to do and experience three realities.

We looked at them in great detail, if you weren't here when we looked at the process of true biblical change; how it is that God changes us in sanctification I encourage you to get those four messages or go online and listen because that is so foundational to even what we're talking about this morning. But let me give you a brief review. Essentially, our responsibility in sanctification or the process may be a better way to say the sanctification involves three parts. The first is to put off, put off. Verse 22, "that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside (or put off) the old self." You've been made a new person, he says, I want you to take off the clothes that are suited only to the old person you used to be. Verse 23 is the second part, "be renewed in the spirit of your mind..." And the third part is in verse 24, "put on the new self which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

Paul is saying there was a spiritual reality that happened at the moment of your salvation. The old you died and the new you was brought to life by Jesus Christ. But you still retain your flesh, there's still a part of you that remains unredeemed and you must throughout life be in the process of putting off those things that are a part of who you used to be and a part of that flesh of being renewed in your thinking by the Word of God and the Spirit of God and then putting on the virtue that should be in the place of that vice. So that's the context, he says, "Therefore," verse 25, now that you understand that process let me apply it to one very specific sin, "laying aside falsehood..." Stop there for a moment. Here's the first part. Here's the here's the application of the principles he gave in the preceding verses to the issue of how we use our tongues. He says I want you to lay aside falsehood. The word picture behind lay aside is what you and I would do with a piece of clothing. If I were to take off my coat this morning and lay it here on the stage that's the Greek word. I've laid it aside. In fact, it's used this way of taking off clothing in Acts 7:58, where we're told that after they had driven Stephen out of the city, "they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul." It simply means "to lay aside." This became a common New Testament picture or description of the process of sanctification of becoming holy.

Now, the Greek tense or the tense of the Greek verb here for lay aside, could be translated something like this: be done with lying, take it off once and for all. Now, that doesn't mean that you in a moment are never tempted to lie again and never choose to lie again. What it means is

this, you reach a decisive point in your life as a Christian when you come to understand that God hates this, that it's wrong and you make a determination, a resolve to lay it aside in your life and pursue the truth. Specifically, here, the believer is to lay aside as a coat the practice of in any way distorting the truth. And instead, notice what Paul says he's to do: speak the truth.

Now, you'll notice that the word "speak the truth each one of you with his neighbor" are in all capitals in our New American Standard and that's because it's a quotation from the Old Testament. Specifically, this is quoted from the Septuagint translation of Zechariah 8:16, where God is telling His people through the prophet Zechariah that they are to manifest their repentance by speaking truth with one another. Now in this case, this is interesting, in this case, the verb tense of speak truth, describes a continual habit which characterizes the life. So we're to decide to lay off the falsehood and then we are, by a practice of habit, be speaking the truth as a habit of life.

This verse, by the way, encapsulates that principle of sanctification we just read about in the previous, verses doesn't it? Lay aside, be renewed and put on. You know what Paul is saying? I want you to stop lying. I want you to stop the falsehood, stop being deceitful, stop doing those things. Lay it aside. Make a determination to stop. Then I want you to be renewed in your thinking. That is, I want you to search out the Scripture and allow the Spirit of God through the Word of God to change your thinking about lying, to change your thinking about the truth and to give you a fresh resolve and desire to pursue it. And then I want you to pursue the path of obedience. I want you to speak the truth. Be speaking the truth. Listen folks, this is where our part of sanctification comes in. We have to pursue the path of obedience and as we try to obey as you and I determine to try to tell the truth and when we catch ourselves in the midst of a lie, we stop ourselves and correct immediately with that person, no that's not entirely right, let me tell you this. As we seek to obey, God does something that we could never do and that is He changes us at the most basic level. We can't change our hearts, but we can seek to obey God in the strength of the Spirit and as we demonstrate that effort and that willingness to change, God changes us. The best way to kill lying is by becoming known for telling the truth.

Where do you start? Well, you start by confessing and forsaking the sin of lying. It's a serious thing as we'll see in a moment. It's not a little thing. We can laugh about some of those things I read on the list earlier on but it's not a light thing to God. Confess and forsake the sin of lying. But don't stop there. Secondly, confess and forsake the sins of the heart that are behind the lie; the sins of the heart that are behind that lie. You see, when we lie that's an external action, really. There's some sin of the heart that led us to that lie. Now, I'm not going to spend a lot of time here, but let me just give you a couple of examples.

Why did Abraham lie about Sarah, his wife? Because he was afraid, he was afraid of what might happen to him if he told the truth. He might end up getting killed and sometimes when we lie,

it's out of fear of what might happen; the consequences of telling the truth. What about Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5, why did they lie about that piece of land and the full price? Because they wanted to look good, they wanted everybody to think that they were actually bringing the entire proceeds of the land and laying it at the Apostles feet and so they lied. They lied simply because their pride wanted them to look good. Sometimes we do the same thing. We lie, we make up stories about ourselves and how great we once were to make ourselves look good. So we can't just deal with the fruit of lying, we must deal with the root which is the sin of the heart that led us down the path to lie.

And thirdly, we must determine before God, and with His help, not to deny or contradict the truth in the future. We must choose to get on the path of obedience. That's how you start to deal with the sin of lying and telling the truth. We must all become known as truth tellers. Now, let me give you a couple of warnings; you see when people hear that you need to tell the truth, they take that and they warp it a little bit. Let me give you several warnings about telling the truth, what this doesn't mean.

Speaking the truth, number one, is no excuse for brutal and brash communication. Absolutely no excuse for using words like a sledge hammer to beat other people up. Yesterday, my daughter brought a cartoon into my office while I was studying. It was of a wife asking her husband the question that every husband dreads, "Honey, does this dress make me look fat?" Well, in the cartoon, the second frame the man responds and I don't suggest that you try this at home, men. His response was, "No, your fat makes you look fat." The last frame in the cartoon shows the man bloodied and near death and the little balloon coming out of his mouth is, "So much for candor." That's not what we're talking about. The Bible tells us we are to speak the truth in what? Love, Ephesians 4:15. So it's not a license to use brutal and brash communication.

Let me give you a second warning about telling the truth. Telling the truth does not require you to break a confidence or reveal legitimate secrets. Number three, it does not demand, and this is a key one, that we dump all our bad attitudes and hatreds on those who we whom we dislike. You know, we have all this stuff inside us, well I'm just going to be honest. Let me tell you what I think about you, buddy. I'm just being honest. The Bible told me to be honest. We should, instead, confess our wrong attitude and seek to put them off. That's not honesty, that's a pseudo honesty; it's actually hatred.

And warning number four, while we are readily to admit that we sin, truthfulness does not require us to broadcast detailed accounts of our sin to those who don't know about the sin and are not part of the solution. You know some Christians, I think, misunderstand this and I think that can be very hurtful. You only need to reveal the sin to those against whom you've sinned, seeking their forgiveness or those who can genuinely be part of the solution. Again, not the fact that you sin, but the details of the sin.

Now, notice this command is for all of us. It's for every professing believer. Back in verse 25 he says, "speak truth, each one of you." In context, of course, this is referring to every believer receiving Paul's letter. If you go back to Ephesians chapter 1 verse 1, he wrote "To all the saints who are at Ephesus," so none of us are exempt from this, folks. If you profess to be a believer in Jesus Christ, this is for you. And then the next phrase, "with his neighbor," defines the limits of our responsibility. We're only to speak the truth with our neighbor. Well, who's our neighbor? Jesus defines our neighbor as everybody we come in contact with. So in other words, God demands that every believer's interaction with every person he and he or she encounters be without falsehood and be characterized by the truth.

Why? Well, in context, Paul only gives us one argument for always telling the truth. Notice the end of the verse, "we are members of one another." He relies on that image that he loves, of the church as a body, and like a body has many members, he says listen we're all members of the same body. How can how can one member of the body lie to another member of the body? Not only is lying a violation of God's law, but it causes trouble and friction and conflict in the body.

Chrysostom the first able expositor of the Word back in the early church says said this. "If the eye sees a serpent does it deceive the foot? If the tongue tastes what is bitter, does it deceive the stomach?" Our body ordinarily doesn't see a part of our body doesn't ordinarily deceive the rest of our body. Now there are exceptions, in fact, I was talking with Charlie Yates and he was telling me that there is one situation when your eyes often do lie to you. In certain circumstances as a pilot, your eyes and your entire body becomes convinced that your instruments are in fact wrong and that, while your instruments tell you your plane is flying properly, your eyes and your body tell you the whole sense of what's going on tells you in fact that you are flying upside down. And, of course, if you're a professional pilot you understand this and you simply have to trust your instruments more than you trust your eyes. But occasionally an amateur pilot will trust his eyes with disastrous results. The point is this, our lying to one another is every bit as dangerous and illogical as our eyes purposefully lying to the rest of our physical body. That's the reason Paul gives here.

But there are other compelling biblical arguments for rejecting all forms of lying. Not only that we're members of one another but let me give you, briefly, five biblical arguments against lying. And it's very important that you understand this because it's so much a part of our culture, it's accepted. It happens all around us and we're easily sucked into it. Five more biblical arguments against lying of all forms and the necessity of embracing the truth.

Argument number one: God commands against lying, God commands against lying. We see that here in Ephesians 4, "speak the truth, lay aside falsehood." You see it also in Leviticus 19:11, and a number of other places, Leviticus 19:11, "You shall not deal falsely, nor lie to one

another.” Over in the parallel passage in Colossians chapter 3, Paul puts it in the negative, verse 9, “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.” So we’re not to lie because God commands that we not lie.

Argument number two and this one is quite interesting. God especially hates this sin. God especially hates it. You see, there’s one sense in which all sin is equally repugnant to God; I mean God can’t look on any sin with joy. He must deal with it. But there are sins, the Bible tells us, that are that rise above other sins in God’s hatred and this is one of them. Let me show you a couple of passages; turn back to Proverbs chapter 6. Proverbs 6:16, “There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him.” Now, the writer didn’t just mess up and write the word six and then wish he’d wrote the word seven. This is a Hebrew way of saying this isn’t an all inclusive list. Here are some things but there are other things that could be added to this list as well. But let me give you seven things that God absolutely hates that are an abomination. There is no more profound biblical word to express abhorrence and hatred than that word. God abominates these sins. Look at it. Verse 17, “Haughty eyes,” that is human pride; “a lying tongue” is the second sin. When the writer of Proverbs, Solomon in this case, comes back to this again notice he writes, “hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil.” Verse 19, “A false witness who utters lies...” And then finally, “one who spreads strife among brothers.” Listen, you want to make God mad? Then lie. It’s one of the sins that God especially hates.

Over in chapter 12 of Proverbs, verse 22, “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.” Notice the contrast. You have, on the one hand, those who lie and they are abhorrent to God, no stronger word. On the other end of the spectrum, you have those who deal faithfully, that is those who are truthful in their communication and God finds delight in them. It’s impossible to describe two greater poles than that; abhorrent abomination and delight.

A third argument against lying is, not only that God hates it, but the righteous hate it. Throughout the Scripture we learned that those who are truly righteous people hate this sin. Let me give you a couple of examples. In Psalm 101, David is describing, humanly speaking, his integrity; the integrity of his heart before the Lord, the fact that he was what he appeared to be. And as he lists that integrity and the elements of it, listen to one of the elements he includes in verse 7. David says, “He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house.” In other words, I’m not going to befriend and coddle and take care of a deceiver and “he who speaks falsehood, shall not maintain his position before me.” David said there’s nobody around me that going to be known for lying. It’s not going to happen. I hate it. In Proverbs 13:5 we read, “A righteous man hates falsehood.” If you are righteous, if God has changed you, then you have a hatred for this sin.

Argument number four: liars will be found out and punished. Look at Proverbs 12, Proverbs 12:19, the Proverbs says, “Truthful lips will be established forever...” Lips that speak the truth, the person who has truthful lips will be established forever. There’s stability, there’s endurance, but, “a lying tongue is only for a moment.” Now I think there are two points the Proverbs is making. I think one of them is that the person who doesn’t lie can rest at night and can live in stability because there’s nothing to be uncovered; whereas the person who lives in a lie has to always be concerned that that’s going to come out and that his secrets only going to last for a moment. But I think there’s also the implication of eternity as well. Look at Proverbs 19 verse 5; Proverbs 19 verse 5 makes the same point, “A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape.”

Usually in this life, a person who makes a habit of lying is found out. But if not in this life, certainly no liars will scoot past God’s throne of justice. No one will deceive God. No one will scoot past that encounter. And so all liars will be found out and punished.

The fifth argument and I think the most chilling, the most profound is there will be no liars in heaven; there will be no liars in heaven. Look at Revelation 21. I can’t turn to these chapters and these passages with out remembering that it was these very verses that God used to bring me to faith in Jesus Christ. It’s probably the first time I ever heard a true expository sermon and a visiting pastor was in our little country church and he was he was speaking to Christians. There was a small group of Christians gathered there that night. My dad was the music director and so I had to be there. And he was encouraging Christians and it was a very encouraging message for them. But for one young man it wasn’t. I was 18 years old. I had made a couple of professions of faith. I had been baptized a couple of times. Told everybody I was a Christian and these verses just absolutely opened my heart and exposed me before God. Showed me what I was and that I had no hope of heaven.

Revelation 21 verse 8, “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters...” What a terrible list and watch this, “and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Verse 27 of the same chapter speaking about the heavenly Jerusalem, “nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” Verse 15 of chapter 22, “Outside...”

[outside of all that’s blessed, outside of heaven, outside of eternity with God]-

“Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters,” and watch this, “and everyone who loves and practices lying.”

Listen, if you’re here this morning, whatever your profession may be, if you love and practice lying, if this is the pattern of your life then you’re not in Christ and you will not be in heaven and your only hope is to turn in faith and repentance and ask God to give you a new heart because

your part apart from the work of God's grace as Revelation 21 says, your part will be in lake which burns with fire forever. Those are the reasons we must not cater to lying.

Now most of us here are believers. How does this apply for us? Well, I am convinced that this sin of lying is a special temptation throughout the South and Texas. I've thought about this a lot because, you see, where ever people care about being courteous and polite, which is a good thing, it's easy to be tempted to go the next step and to shade the truth or to contradict the truth in order to be polite. And I think this sin that permeates our culture and we all see it around us also seeps into the church and our interaction with each other. So let's ask this question: When are we most tempted to lie or distort the truth in our act in our interactions with each other in the context of the church?

I jotted down four reasons that I think we often are tempted. Number one, perhaps the most common, to keep from offending others, to keep from offending others. This has a lot of different ways it shows itself. Sometimes we fail to confront sin in others because we don't want to offend them. This is why so few churches in the South practice church discipline because what could be more impolite than telling somebody they're a sinner and reading their name in front of the congregation? How rude! We tell people what we think they want to hear rather than the truth because we're afraid the truth, even spoken in love, will be offensive.

Another reason that we lie in the church I think, a second reason is to make others like us. Now there's nothing wrong with wanting to be liked. That's a common human thing. I mean it would be something wrong with you if you wanted people to dislike you. The problem is what are you willing to do to accomplish that? If you're willing to sin to accomplish that, it's a problem. It's wrong, it's become an idol. And sometimes we do this. We flatter people or use our mouths in other ways to distort the truth in order to win the affections of people.

A third reason we're tempted to lie in the church is to avoid conflict, is to avoid conflict. I've personally seen this happen in churches throughout the South and I know our church isn't exempt as well. Here's how it happens. You know several people, several Christian people are together discussing an issue perhaps informally, perhaps in a meeting various contexts. One or two speak out and they tell what they would like to see done. The others in the group, standing out in the foyer talking, all shake their heads and nod affirmingly, yes that's a good idea, but of course, they say nothing. And then they leave and they tell their friends about how much they disagree. All the time they're nodding their heads in the affirmative. Now why didn't those Christians speak up? Because they didn't want to cause conflict; they didn't want to create potential disagreement so instead they were tempted to dishonesty. If you find yourself doing that it may very well be dishonesty.

Now there's a fourth reason we are tempted to lie in the church and that is out of fear. We just don't know how other people are going to respond to the truth and so we shade it a little bit. We tilt it a little bit. We cannot do these things. We must lay aside all forms of falsehood and be speaking the truth with one another and yes, in love. And, by the way, let me give the balance you see in our culture here in Texas and throughout the South, there's this sort of cultural tendency to be too polite and therefore to shade the truth, well, the other side is no better. You know there're other cultures that some of us are from like California that tend to be too brusque and too eager to speak everything that's on your mind. That's not good either, the truth is somewhere in between where we're willing to speak the truth in love, and in grace for the good of the one who hears.

We must not allow the mindset of the culture in which we live to push us into its mold. If you're tempted to lie or to deceive, to keep from offending others, to make others like you, to avoid conflict or out of fear, recognize that that is a clear violation of the command of our Lord. Listen folks, our speech should be gracious and courteous and polite, but it must always be the truth spoken in love. Paul says, "therefore laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another." You want some good news? Here's the good news. Our God never lies because He is the truth. Numbers 23 verse 19, "God is not a man, that He should lie ... has He said it and will He not do it? Or has he spoken, and will He not make it good?" Titus 1:2, we have "the hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie promised long ages ago." Hebrews 6:18, "It is impossible for God to lie." And of course our Lord said of Himself in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me."

Here's the good news and the great encouragement. God has always told you exactly what He thinks. You can pick up His word and know that if He's made you a promise, that promise will never change. God thinks about you exactly as He said He does in His word. That means if you're in Christ, He has set His love upon you. He has forgiven you. He has justified you. You will always be in the presence of our God in this life and death is not the end. It's not final. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord and we will live with Him forever and He will spend eternity lavishing us with His grace. He will forever and has forever accepted us if we're in Christ.

I love the quote from Charles Spurgeon. I came across it in college and it has remained I think my favorite quote throughout the years. In a message called, "When I See the Blood" based on the Passover; when I see the blood I will pass over you. He says this, listen carefully; here's our hope: "God cannot, and here we speak with reverence to the everlasting God, cannot reject a sinner who pleads the blood of Christ for if He did so, it were to deny Himself. He never can revoke that divine acceptance of the resurrection and if you go to God, my hearer, pleading

simply and only the blood of Him that did hang upon the tree, God must un-God Himself before He can reject you or reject that sacrifice.” Let’s pray together.

Our Father, we’re reminded of ourselves that we are sinful. That we are, by nature, liars and that even though You have redeemed us and made us new that we still retain our flesh which is so tempted in this way. Father, help us to lay aside falsehood in all of its forms and to be committed to speaking the truth as a pattern and habit of life with one another, with everybody. Lord, help us to take this as seriously as You do. Father, may we as we interact with one another in the life of the church, build each other up by how we speak to one another and may that start with this basic command to speak the truth. Father, we thank You, as well, for all that You are that You are truth and that You never lie, that Your promises to us in Christ are absolutely yes. Lord we thank You in Jesus’ name, Amen.