

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 25, 2018

Speaking the Truth
Ephesians 4:25

I. Turning from falsehood

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood,

- “Therefore”
 - We have been called to progress in putting off old and putting on new (4:22-24)
 - Paul will now give us several practical examples of how to do this
 - In the examples that follow from verses 25-29, we find three main components
 - Prohibition - Put off
 - Command - Put on
 - Motivation - Renewal of mind
 - These three main components are found in our one verse this morning
 - Prohibition - “put away falsehood”
 - Command - “speak the truth”
 - Motivation - “for we are members one of another”
 - Thus, our prohibition or sin that we are called to put off this morning is “falsehood”
 - However, before we talk about “falsehood,” we must examine the peculiar wording of the prohibition
- “Having put away”
 - The ESV translates this verse, “having put away falsehood” as opposed to a simple command form, which might sound more simply like, “put away falsehood”
 - NASB - “laying aside falsehood”
 - NKJV - “putting away lying”
 - NET - “having laid aside falsehood”
 - However, the three other places that this same exact word is found in the New Testament, it is translated in our English bibles as a command
 - And given the context of our passage, a command is most fitting with Paul’s writing
 - Previously, we were taught in Jesus to put off the old and to put on the new in the constant renewal of our minds
 - In the following verses, Paul will continue to unleash command after command for the Ephesians to put off and put on

- Proverbs 12:18 “There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”
- Proverbs 18:21 “Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”
- “More than simply telling direct falsehoods, lying also includes exaggeration and adding fabrications to something that is true. Cheating, making foolish promises, betraying a confidence, and making false excuses are all forms of lying, with which Christians should have no part”¹
- Anything we do that does not conform to God’s standard of Truth
 - Our current struggle against the flesh
 - Romans 7:11 “For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.”
 - James 1:14-15 “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

II. Telling the truth

let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor,

- We must speak up
 - The particular way that we are called to put on the truth is by speaking
 - We must open our mouth and speak to address falsehood
 - It is not enough to know that falsehood exists
 - And it is not enough to simply try to stay far from it
 - In our attempts to put off falsehood, we must speak
 - It is not surprising what we are called to speak—the truth
- We must speak the truth in the face of falsehood
 - Of course, the applications abound for such truth-telling since falsehood abounds
 - First, we must speak the truth in the face of the world’s ideals and “truths”
 - By now, this is unquestionably an unpopular position to hold
 - The thought of speaking objective truth in a subjective truth world is unpopular
 - The world’s truth is relativism and tolerance
 - The world’s truth tells everyone to celebrate each other’s differences, no matter how much you might disagree
 - The world’s truth is really a lie in the face of Jesus Christ

¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1810.

- Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life, and thus, He is the only way to the Father
- We must be resolved in our own hearts and minds to be bold and unashamed to speak of Jesus as the one Name in which salvation and eternal life can be found
- In light of eternity, this is not just a matter of being correct, but also it is a matter of being loving
- The church must speak the unpopular truth of Jesus to the world so that the world might encounter the love of God and eternal life in Jesus Christ
- Second, we must speak the truth in the face of doctrinal error
 - Falsehood has not only secured its foothold in the ways of the world
 - Falsehood has crept into the church and deceived many
 - Jude 4 “For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”
 - 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”
 - While many in our country claim the title of Christian, it is impossible to keep from wondering how many might be deceived
 - Of course there are those who have erred doctrinally on gospel issues and are classified appropriately as Cult groups
 - Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, International Church of Christ, etc.
 - We must strive to know our Savior and His Word better everyday so that we might be ready to give a response to these deceived Cult members
 - Then there are those who are less aware of their doctrinal error
 - Their church leaders are those who mean well but in reality, they have been deceived
 - In their own deception they are leading others and thus, deceiving others as well
 - 2 Timothy 3:13 “while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

- As we had mentioned before, there is a crucial balance in ministering to one another
- We must be both truthful and loving
- Here in verse 25, we see Paul’s emphasis on being truthful to one another
- When we commit to speaking truthfully and lovingly to one another, there will be no place for falsehood
- False beliefs, deceitful desires, and destructive words will all dissipate when each one of us speaks the truth to one another

III. Treasuring unity

for we are members one of another.

- As a means for motivation, Paul states that “we are members one of another”
- Thus, our commitment to speaking the truth to one another in the face of falsehood is vital for the sake of our unity
 - Paul reminds us that we are “members one of another”
 - Indeed, we are all united together as members of the body of Christ
- Such motivation recognizes both the destruction and the edification that our words can cause to the body of Christ
- Among any group of individuals, communication is a big deal
 - Any healthy business, team, marriage, or unit needs honest communication
 - Lack of communication is already a problem in these entities
 - When falsehood abounds, these entities suffer
- This example of the impact of truth and falsehood on a corporate body is illustrated with the nation of Israel
- This appeared to be Paul’s thinking when he quoted from the book of Zechariah in this verse
 - Zechariah 8:14-15 “For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘As I purposed to bring disaster to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, so again have I purposed in these days to bring good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not.’”
 - Zechariah 8:16-17 “‘These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate,’ declares the LORD.”
 - The failure of Israel to uphold God’s truth with one another led to God’s wrath that punished them and removed them from the land
 - When God brought back His people to the land after the exile, He instructed them plainly to speak the truth to one another

- In the same way, Paul is telling the Ephesians that they must speak the truth to one another and hate falsehood as God in fact hates falsehood
- We also must treasure the truth in the way that we interact with one another
- We must commit to speaking the truth to one another
 - This is the only way that members of the same body can help one another grow and develop into the maturity of Christlikeness
- We must remember that our failure to communicate the truth of God's Word to one another is giving an opening for falsehood to fill our minds
 - When falsehood prevails, we will do damage to one another and fail to maintain our unity in Christ