



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Ephesians

February 10th, 2019

Tell The Truth

Dr. Steve Walker

Well it's been a crazy week hasn't it? Amazing apparently there's more of it coming. So, buckle up. We will be here next Sunday as well. I don't know what services and what time. So, kind of keep your eyes open for that. It's amazing how something so beautiful can be so annoying at the same time. Right? So, I'm out shoveling my driveway yesterday because I made the ridiculous decision not to shovel it at the beginning of the week after it first snowed. So, by yesterday I had like a layer of ice, a layer of snow, a layer of ice, a layer of snow, like about eight feet high in my driveway and I thought maybe I should go out and shovel it. So, I get out there and wouldn't you know it, one of our members happens to drive by, one of you drives by my house and stops while I'm out there shoveling my driveway and he rolls down his window and I look over and he just is laughing, just laughing at me. I don't know if I was doing it wrong, probably, but I think he was laughing that I hadn't shoveled it yet. And so, I stand there, and he looks at me and he says, and I wrote it down, I want to make sure I say just like he said he said he said it laughing. He says, "I knew you'd be good at shoveling" And I thought I kind of put the shovel and I said, "What does that mean?" He goes "I listen to you shoveling it every Sunday." Yeah, I know I know! that I'm not going to tell you who that was but his name rhymes with Jim Hopkins. I'm just going to tell you that we're really close to that. I don't know if Jim's in the service or not, but we got a good laugh.

Open your Bibles to Ephesians 4. We're going to shovel some stuff out of this passage, I guess. So far, I think pound for pound Ephesians may be the most powerful letter in the whole New Testament. The first three chapters as we've mentioned many times Paul drove home the importance of us having right theology, it's imperative, it's absolutely imperative that we believe the right things about God, and sin, and salvation, and forgiveness, and judgment, and eternal life and all those things. But Paul doesn't just

stop. Well you know with theology, he never does. The next three chapters are the final three chapters of this letter are all about practically living out our theology and everyday life. Paul wants us to be sure that we understand that right thinking about God must lead to right living, righteous relationships, starting in our own families and in our own church. Now last week when Paul began his teaching about righteous living, he began it by talking about the subject of morality. We have the right theology our morals change. And specifically, our sexuality or our sexual morality. And there is no surprise to that that that was first on the list of first on the mind of Paul as he's teaching us how our theology has to affect our lives. We realize that the distortion of sex, and all things related to it can turn into horrifically destructive and abusive and twisted stuff.

So again, we're not surprised that Paul starts out with calling us to be renewed in the spirit of our minds to moral righteousness and holiness. But if you're like me, what Paul teaches on next may actually surprise you. So, I'm going to have you stand now for the reading of God's word, where we're in chapter four. I'm going to go back to verse 1 so you can kind of get a feel of the whole context start the transition that started in the last three chapters of Ephesians for verse 1 says, *"I therefore a prisoner for the Lord urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called."* So, there's a transition, he's taught for three chapters on what to believe in and why we believe it. And then he says now I need you to walk it out, needs you to walk the talk. I want you to skip over to verse 22, this is now after he talks about sexual morality in our lives in verse 22 he says *"I want you 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 a put on the new self-created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. For we are members one of another"*. Father in heaven, I pray that you would open our hearts to the depth and the weight of these words. Help us God to understand why Paul is speaking to this subject so early in describing our lives being pleasing to you. God teach us. Change us, where it's necessary, convict us and encourage us. I pray in Christ name, amen. Let's be seated.

Now from verse twenty-five through the end of the chapter Paul is actually going to focus on five more very specific examples of what it means to live the new higher standard of Christian discipleship. But he wants us to be sure that one of the first things that our faith is producing in us is truthfulness. And there are some really good reasons why telling the truth should be so high on our list of Christian living and Christian morals. Let me give you some of those reasons first of all it's very clear that God hates lying

and liars. Now I realize that using the word hate in the same sentence with God seems counterintuitive, but it's actually not. If you think about it, we wouldn't want a god that doesn't hate. We couldn't worship a god that doesn't hate things like murder, and injustice, and child abuse, and domestic violence, and rape, and divorce, and adultery, and racism. It would be hard for us to do what we just did if we weren't convinced that God has a hatred for those wicked things. And just so you know that this just isn't me presuming upon God I want you to turn in your Bibles to Proverbs Chapter 6, leave a place right there and Ephesians 4 because we're going to get right back to that. But I want you to look at Proverbs 6 with me. You'll remember this passage. Proverbs 6 beginning in verse 16. *"There are six things that the Lord hates. Seven that are an abomination to Him haughty eyes, [which is pride by the way] a lying tongue and hands that shed innocent blood, [that's murder], a heart that devises wicked plans and feet that make haste to run to evil a false witness who breathes out lies and one who sows discord among brothers."* Now notice both the lie and the liar are mentioned in Proverbs chapter six. And notice only lying is listed two times in Proverbs 6. And that should tell us something in fact that should reveal a lot.

Here's what we know to be true about liars in lying. First of all, we know that the Devil is the father of all lies. We know that the rebellion and the fall of the whole human race began with the Devil's lie to Eve in Genesis chapter 3, when the devil said God didn't really say you could need of the trees in the garden. That's why Jesus refers to Satan and John 8:44 as the father of lies. The whole human race fell. The whole human race was separated from perfect fellowship with God because of one lie. Is it any wonder God hates lying and liars? We also know that lying has no limits to its destructive forces. Reputations, families, friendships, careers, finances, and even ministries, have all been destroyed by lies or liars. And what's really sad is that we human beings tend to lie so much that we've come up with countless ways to call it anything but lying right. Just to name a few. We call it stretching the truth, bending the truth, withholding the truth, exaggerating the truth, and we even use the word untruth, all ways of just softening it a little bit. We even have a disorder called pathological lying. That's the person who lies for any reason at any time for no apparent benefit or advantage to himself. The devil is the father of all lies and lying is one of the most destructive forces in the universe.

We also know that liars will not escape God's punishment. Most Americans have a very short list of sins that qualify as punishable by God things, like murder and rape always make the list. But Proverbs chapter 19 verse 5 says *"a false witness will not go unpunished and he who breathes out lies will not escape"*. Proverbs 19:5. Is it any wonder that Paul teaches in Ephesians 4 that walking in a manner worthy

of the calling to which we have been called must include putting off falsehood in lying and putting on speaking the truth with each other.

Now another reason why telling the truth is so high on the list of Christian discipleship one is because God hates lies and lying but two is because God loves the truth and the truthful. As much as God hates lying. God loves truth and this explains a lot of things about God. A lot of things about his Divine Love for truthfulness. First of all, Scripture tells us very clearly that it's impossible for God to lie. If God could lie, it would call into question the rest of his character. He would cast doubt on his love, on his justice, and every other promise he's ever made. If we thought God could lie how could we believe with Paul that those who trust in the Lord will never be put to shame. We couldn't believe that. I think Hebrews 6:18 is a watershed verse especially for anyone who has ever been devastated by a liar and struggles to trust. *"God will never lie to you"*. Hebrews 6:18 as well as other passages in the Bible confirm and encourage us that it is impossible for God to lie. Praise God for that.

Another reason God loves the truth is because truth is personified in God's son. In Jesus, God gave truth. Flesh and blood that's why Jesus declared in John 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life. In other words, Jesus declared If you are searching for answers to your life, if you're searching for answers to who God is and who you are in relationship to God, you only need to look to a person, the person; Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 8:32, *"you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."* Set you free from confusion, and despair, and discouragement, and the deception, that Satan has brought into the world the truth set you free. And it just happens to be that the truth ultimate, unchanging, perfect truth is a person and his name is Jesus.

God loves the truth and the truth is so much because truth saves sinners. Paul wrote in First Timothy 2 Verse 4. *"It is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."* God wants everyone to come to a knowledge of the truth because it's the truth that saves us. Now what is the truth about sin and sinners that we need to know? Well first of all it's very clear to all of us that we've all sinned, everybody has sin, we're all imperfect, we all fall short of God's perfect holiness and standard of righteousness we've all sin. That's the truth, Romans chapter 3 tells us that. Another truth is that the curse of sin is separation from God and death, that's Romans 6, the wages of sin is death. Sin has brought eternal consequences upon the whole human race. Physical death and spiritual death, which is separation from God. Both of those are the result of rebellion and sin against

God. Another truth is that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us, praise God. That's Romans 5, he willingly took upon himself all of our guilt and all of our condemnation from our sin and he purchased our forgiveness with his own blood, so that we no longer have to die for the punishment of our sin because he died in our place. That is a truth. Another truth is that there is no condemnation for sinners who are in Christ Jesus. He took away our punishment, he took away our shame, he took away our guilt, and he took away all of our condemnation, and the final truth is that if we confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we shall be saved, that's Romans 10. Any wonder Paul wrote God wishes for all to be saved to come to a knowledge of the truth. It's because the truth saves us.

There's another reason God loves the truth so much and it's this, truth sanctify is saved sinners. In John 17, we find Jesus praying to the father on our behalf and in a part of his prayer to God, he says Father sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth, John 17:17. Now sanctification is that supernatural process where sinners are being transformed into God-glorifying Saints, whose minds and hearts are being changed into the likeness of Jesus. Sanctification is that beautiful process that's taken place in the heart of every Christian, every born-again believer, where the way we think and the way we live is slowly but surely being changed so that we can live with joy and live in a way that pleases and honors and glorifies God. And here's what we know the truth of God's word is what has the power to change the way we think and live. That's what Jesus says sanctify them in your truth., your word is truth. Hebrews 12:12, for the word is living and active right. It's able to convict us, it's able to teach us, it's able to reveal in our own hearts are our own motives, and it's able to expose the way we're thinking that's wrong and deceptive in our own hearts, and then God floods in with his light of truth and we realize that's what that's what we're longing for, that's what we want, that's what we need. That's God that's the power of God's word in a believer's life. God loves the truth because his truth sanctify us.

God also loves the truth because truth makes love rejoice. Truth adds the joy to love. This struck me in a brand-new way this week. Like I had never seen before. Right in the middle of the most beautiful definition of unconditional love in first Corinthians 13. We read this line. *"Love rejoices in the truth"* and that struck me this week in a way that I hadn't seen before. Truthfulness in our relationships fuels the joys of love. Now the opposite of that is also very real isn't it? You want to destroy love's joy in any relationship, just douse it with some lies. Is there any doubt to why God loves the truth and truth tellsers so much? So are we surprised now when we come to Ephesians 4, and almost at the top of the list of

where Paul is telling us, as we're living out our theologies or living out what we believe, one of the very first things that has to go is lying. And we need to put on becoming people of truth, truth telling people, and so he says tell the truth. Simple as that. That's his point. Tell the truth.

Now the question is what that looks like in real time. How is our telling the truth supposed to be different because we have a relationship with God through our faith in His Son Jesus? How do we tell the truth? What does that mean? What does that look like? Well I think first of all Scripture is pretty clear. We are to tell the truth lovingly to each other, lovingly. Remember being truthful with each other doesn't mean we get to be harsh. It's not an excuse for us to be rude or mean and sometimes we're too quick to say statements like this "Hey I'm just telling the truth and sometimes the truth hurts". And we use it as an excuse to just be unloving and while it's true that sometimes the truth hurts, we shouldn't be the one inflicting the hurt. That's God's job not us not ours. A good example of this is when Jesus is talking to Nicodemus in John Chapter 3. Nicodemus was confused, even though he was a high ranking religious highly educated leader. He was respected amongst the Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees and yet he had no idea how God saves sinners and he had no idea how one goes to heaven. And Jesus doesn't rebuke him. Jesus doesn't mock him, Jesus doesn't scold them. He lovingly and gently told him the truth. He said Nicodemus unless you're born again you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. I think this is why Paul describes truth in Ephesians 4 verse 15, which we talked about a few weeks ago when he said this. We are to "speak the truth in love", because truth in the absence of love can be very hateful, can it not? Truth is always muted, it's always lost in the presence of anger, in the presence of hatred, in the presence of meanness, our ears can turn deaf to the truth. That is certainly very true in our parenting isn't it? Sometimes in our desire to be teaching our kids truth, we turn them deaf to it because of possibly being truthful with them in harsh and mean and hurtful ways. And so, we're to be truth tellers who tell the truth lovingly.

We're also to tell the truth graciously. Now grace is a gift, grace means a second chance, grace in the context of Christian truth telling as is gentle patience. Remember sometimes a brother or sister in Christ is weak in their faith or immature in their faith or even ignorant in their faith. And so, things like worry or fear or confusion or sin can surface in a brother or sister's life, and those opportunities provide us with a chance to graciously come alongside with truth that helps them grow. Not that condemns them, not that shames them. A great example again is Jesus with the woman at the well. The Samaritan woman comes to the well nobody would talk to her, let alone a man let alone a Jewish man, let alone one that

that people regarded as a rabbi, and yet Jesus sat there and talked, and he told her everything about her sinful past. But he graciously gave her an opportunity to change. That's why we read in John 1: 14 when Jesus came, it says *"We saw his glory. He was full of grace and truth"*. We saw the glory of Jesus Christ because we saw that he was filled with grace and truth. So, we are to tell the truth but where to tell it graciously.

We're also to tell the truth boldly. From time to time speaking the truth to one another requires us to confront, to confront a lie, or to confront sinful behavior with truth. And for us to ignore sin and not speak the truth is a form of lying in a sense. That's why Jesus taught in Matthew 18. *"If your brother sins against you go and tell him it's sin, go and tell him his fault"*. But boldly still doesn't mean harshly or rudely. It means tell the truth, don't ignore sinful behavior. We see an example with Paul in Galatians 2, when he had to confront the great apostle Peter. Peter was being a hypocrite. He was acting one way around the Jewish Christians, and then when they would leave, he would act a completely different way around the Gentile Christians, and Paul called them out on it boldly. It wasn't me and he wasn't harsh, but he was bold. Peter that's hypocritical. How can you expect this and that and that and this, and he called it out just like it is, and Peter repented. Maybe a real time example might be in your own home. Maybe it's a spouse who's struggling with sinful anger and it may require you to be truthful boldly and calmly saying *"hey that tone, or that volume, or that behavior, or that response, is unacceptable and we'll resume this conversation we'll resume this discussion when you're ready to stop accusing, or you're ready to stop assuming, or you're ready to stop being so aggressive. And we boldly say that is sin, it's unacceptable. It might be where we have to be bold with a Christian friend who's choosing sin and thinking it's okay, thinking that for some reason it doesn't apply to their circumstances. The Bible makes an exception for them it could. It could mean we have to go to a Christian friend who is gossiped or spread personal information or even false information about another person or about you. And we need to go, and we need to sit down with them and say, "hey that's gossiping, you had no right to share that information with anyone"*. It may even mean sometimes having to deal with false teaching in your life group. Maybe there's someone that keeps speaking up and there they're sharing their opinions of God's Word with confidence and yet it's absolutely wrong. It's unbiblical and it's dangerously compromising the gospel and we need to say hold on a second, let's be sure, I don't think that's what it means. And we don't just ignore it because we're afraid to hurt somebody's feelings. Boldly but still graciously and still lovingly.

Now let me say this. Kind of as a side note telling the truth boldly doesn't mean that you confront someone every time, they irritate you OK? Or every time you get your feelings hurt because they don't agree with your decision or your choices. You don't have the right to never be irritated. That's not a constitutional right for you to claim, where just because someone bothers you that somehow you think you need to confront it or be rude about okay? Hey, let's face it we irritate each other. Right? Some people are more irritating than others, but that's when we cover it over with grace and love.

How about this tell the truth compassionately. Talking about the person who may have just made a life altering reckless sinful choice, they will need compassionate truth. We can be really fast to shoot our wounded in the church. Do you remember the woman caught in adultery in John Chapter 8? The Jewish law said death by stoning. And so, the religious folks grabbed this woman and threw her at the feet of Jesus trying to corner Jesus into fulfilling his rabbi duty to lead the charge to have her stoned to death. Remember what Jesus said to them, *"he who is without sin throw the first stone"*. And then he looked at her with truthful compassion and he said, *"Where are your accusers?"* and she said *"They're gone. And he said, neither do I condemn you. Now go and sin no more."* He didn't excuse her, he didn't downplay her sin, he didn't blame it on someone else, he truthfully called it sin and he compassionately called her to stop, and don't do it again. I think we better be careful who we are quick to throw stones with. Because these are the same people will be the first ones to stone us. So, learn how to tell the truth compassionately.

We also need to tell the truth faithfully. What I mean by this is that we're to tell the truth not only when it's convenient but sometimes when it's not so convenient. Some Christians, let's just be honest we're talking right here, it's family, some Christians are really bad at keeping their word. They don't follow through. They flake out if something better comes along. And in Matthew Chapter 5 Jesus gives divine instruction and calls this sinful habit evil. Matthew 5 he ends that discussion by saying *"Let your yes be yes and your no be no."* And unfortunately for a lot of Christians there yes means maybe. In Matthew 5, Jesus says listen if you give an answer if you make a commitment or a promise whether it be at your work, or with your family, or at your church, or maybe in a dating relationship, or as a parent, if you give your word or you make a commitment to do something or be somewhere or if you make if you make a promise in your marriage, be a man or woman of your word Jesus says. If you say you're going to be somewhere or you're going to do something or be on time; dramatic pause; you feel in the way to that one? See too many times I think we say we're going to be somewhere and then we don't show up. We say we're going

to do something, and we don't finish the job. We say we're going to be on time and we're late, and Jesus speaks to that in Matthew 5 pretty clearly towards the end of the chapter, and I want to say to all of us me included, when we give our word, we give it faithfully and if we don't, we repent, and we apologize, and we ask for forgiveness. We need to be truth tellers even when it's inconvenient. Especially if we give someone our word.

And then we need to tell the truth bravely. Being truthful can sometimes have not so desirous consequences, sometimes the truth will result in the necessary justice that is due some of the choices we made, and we have to own up to it truthfully, but there could be consequences, it's not easy. Other times it will mean rejection by someone that you lovingly, and even compassionately, or boldly, or graciously, tried to be truthful with, and they will reject you for doing that. Other times it'll flat out mean persecution by those who hate the truth because it exposes some evil in their own hearts. Telling the truth can be costly, but telling it bravely means that we own up to our own truth, both for doing right and for doing wrong.

Now want to conclude with a thought on being on the receiving end of the truth. If we are lovingly fulfilling our Christian responsibility speak the truth with each other it will mean that eventually someone will have to be bold, or brave, or compassion, or graciously truthful with us. Right? And so, if we're going to take Paul's teaching and Ephesians seriously, we have got to realize that sometimes we're going to be on the receiving end of truth. So, here's what I want to say to us. Receiving the truth starts with; be teachable. Listen and don't be so defensive. Don't try to make excuses right away. Don't explain it away. Just be quiet, be teachable, and listen. If it's loving, it's gracious God can speak through that to you. If you need to go back later and maybe explain some circumstances, okay. But in the moment just listen. Be teachable. Secondly be thankful. Thank the person for doing what God called them to do and taking the risk. God uses us to help each other grow up in our faith. Is it any wonder Paul puts that so near the beginning? Tell the truth to each other. We need each other to do that. Be thankful. And then be humble. Ask for forgiveness, if you need to. Maybe it's the person speaking the truth. You may need to say, "please forgive me." It may mean that the truth you are receiving is going to require you to go to someone else and ask for forgiveness to be able to say I am so sorry. It may be, that wasn't my intention, or I didn't realize my tone sounded like that, I didn't realize I come across so condescending in life group, where I had no idea that what I was believing was actually wrong, and I apologize. Just be humble. God uses that. I think you know what if we were to be really honest in here, I think too many of us are too

sensi- poo. I mean it's true. We easily get our feelings hurt. And it's not necessary when we're loving to each other and we're compassionate and gracious and truthful. We grow up that way. So, let's both tell the truth. And receive the truth, amen?

All right let's pray. Father in heaven. In the name of Jesus. Thank you for what seems so simple and yet is so profound. Thank you, God, for something that affects every relationship and everything about our lives. I pray God that we would take this instruction seriously and to heart. God forgive us where we have been fearful of being truthful. Forgive us God where we have feared man more than you. Help us God to be loving- truth tellers. God, we confess if it wasn't for the truth we would still be lost. So, Lord fill us with your joy, fill us with your love. I pray God for those in this room who realize more clearly and God for those who are at home listening who may be sensing that you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You've never surrendered to him, the way, the truth, and the life. You've never asked him to forgive you and to save you from the wrath of God and from sins death. God, I pray, I pray God that today would be the day of their salvation. May they hear the truth, and may it set them free in Jesus name, amen.

Hey, because you're in this room right now there are people right here who would love to help you take the next step a faith, to step over that line completely and turn your whole life and heart over to Jesus. That's why they're here and they would love to give you something to go home with. If you're at home and you sense that's you, if you're watching with someone, I would encourage you just to turn to somebody that you're watching this service with and ask them to help you take that step the faith. Maybe even explain it if you need it to be explained a little bit more. All right. All right. We're going to have another fun week here in the great Northwest. We will do our best to be back here so watch all those you know media things that you got to watch to make sure you know we're here, and we'll look forward to being together again. See you next Sunday.