

Speak The Truth

In a recently published book entitled, "Tangled Web: How False Statements are Undermining America," James B. Stewart shows how the rising flood of lies in our nation is unravelling society itself. He cites Martha Stewart and "Scooter" Libby and Barry Bonds and Bernie Madoff as classic examples of this tragic phenomenon, and he suggests that we can not survive as a nation in this ethical environment.

More tragic are the studies by George Barna which clearly demonstrate that the professing Church is ethically no different from the unbelievably world. We lie at the same rate, we cheat at the same rate, etc. Barna says that the only significant statistical variation between the average unbeliever and the average professing Christian is where they are sitting at 11:00 on Sunday mornings!

The Apostle Paul has something to say about this. He shows in our text today that we must be people of the truth because 1) we have been radically transformed, 2) we have been clearly commanded, and 3) we have been compellingly motivated.

Read Ephesians 4:25

1. We have been radically transformed (v.25a)

Paul speaks of a life-changing experience we have undergone: "having put away falsehood..." or, literally, "having put away the lie..." What is this lie we have put off when we came to Christ? The lie that says that we are at the center of the universe and that our goal in life is to grab for all the worldly pleasures we can enjoy.

What is the truth that has displaced that lie? The truth that Jesus Christ is at the center of the universe and that my highest priority in life is to find my joy by bringing Him pleasure. Satan himself is the father of lies who seeks to destroy us; Jesus came speaking the truth and has defeated the evil one and set us free from his tyranny; therefore, we are committed to the truth with all our hearts.

2. We have been clearly commanded (v. 25b)

Now that we live in the truth, we must speak it. Let's consider four ways in which we must speak the truth:

1. *With a new world-view.* We now see things differently. We used to respond in fear and in pride. That is why we lied. We now fear God alone and we make Christ our only boast. We now believe that God is our Creator and Sustainer and Judge; therefore we choose not to dishonor or to provoke Him, but rather to please Him.
2. *With a new integrity.* We now tell the truth even if it hurts (cf. Ps. 15). We consider it vital that others be able to trust our word, because we are the people of God.
3. *With a new candor.* We now refuse to hide behind self-justifying, self-defensive words, which not only are untrue but also betray a lack of trust in the Lord as our Advocate and Defender. In his book, "The Human Element," Will Schutz describes the rigidities and defensive behaviors that occur in so many organizations because, down deep, we don't want other people to know things about us that cause us to despise ourselves. Brothers and sisters, we have been delivered from this garbage and have been commanded to act like it!
4. *With a new ministry.* Now that are liberated from the lie, we cease from flattering others (saying positive things about them that are untrue and only intended to ingratiate ourselves to them). We now have the truth, which gives us the power to encourage them (saying positive things about them that are true and which are intended to build them up in Christ).

3. We have been compellingly motivated (v.25c)

Paul explains why our truth-speaking is so important: “for we are members one of another.” John McKay, twentieth century missionary and later president of Princeton Seminary, once said, “A lie is a stab into the very vitals of the Body of Christ.”

It is interesting to observe that Paul is quoting here almost verbatim from Zechariah 8:16, where the children of Israel are being told that one day they will return in safety to the city of Jerusalem, the “City of Truth” (KJV), where they will “Speak the truth to one another” and all the nations will envy them. O, for that day!

How about your life? Are you telling the truth even when it hurts? Is there someone you need to apologize to for having misled them? Do you have defensive patterns of communication which you need to renounce and change? Are you using the truth to encourage and edifying others? Let us each one “speak the truth with his neighbor.”

Discussion Questions

- 1) In what ways have we been radically transformed? (cf.Ephesians 4:17-24) Why does this transformation preclude lying?

- 2) What are some of the ways in which we are to be truth tellers?

- 3) Why, typically, do we tell lies in the first place?

Suggested reading:

[Deception: Letting Go of Lying](#)

by Lou Priolo