

August 8, 2021  
Ephesians 4:25-5:2  
“A True Sweet Talker”

### Ephesians 4:25-5:2 Common English Bible

25 Therefore, after you have gotten rid of lying, Each of you must tell the truth to your neighbor because we are parts of each other in the same body. 26 Be angry without sinning. Don't let the sun set on your anger.

27 Don't provide an opportunity for the devil. 28 Thieves should no longer steal. Instead, they should go to work, using their hands to do good so that they will have something to share with whoever is in need.

29 Don't let any foul words come out of your mouth. Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits

those who hear what you say. 30 Don't make the Holy Spirit of God unhappy—you were sealed by him for the day of redemption. 31 Put aside all bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil. 32 Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ.

5 Therefore, imitate God like dearly loved children. 2 Live your life with love, following the example of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. He was a sacrificial offering that smelled sweet to God.

### John 6:35, 41-51 Common English Bible

35 Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

41 The Jewish opposition grumbled about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

42 They asked, “Isn't this Jesus, Joseph's son, whose mother and father we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'”

43 Jesus responded, “Don't grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless they are drawn to me by the Father who sent me, and I will raise them up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, And they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has listened to the Father and learned from him comes to me. 46 No one has seen the Father except

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the one who is from God. He has seen the Father. 47 I assure you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that whoever eats from it will never die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

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Do you know why ghosts are so bad at lying? Because you can see right through them!

IF I live to be 100 I look forward to people asking me how I did it so I can make up something like well I lived to be 100 by eating a pine cone every day!

A minister told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17."

The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

How many of you are liars? How do you define being a liar? Is a liar someone who does not tell the truth? Then the next question is the one that Pilate asked Jesus on his last day on Earth...so then what is truth?

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I think today we have, in general, a real problem with understanding the difference between truth and opinion. For instance...what's the best color for me to wear? Some would say pink...those people are mean but ok I get it. So I wear pink...and I go to a foot ball game and someone comes up to me and says, "I really don't like pink on you...it washes out your face and your color." (Is that a thing by the way?) So stay with me, here...so who is the liar? Was it the person who convinced me to wear pink? Or was it the person who told me they didn't think pink worked for me? Actually it may be that neither is the liar. What they were sharing with me is their

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opinions. Their honest opinions hopefully..so even if the opinion is not right for all concerned it was not a lie. It was simply an opinion.

A lot of things in life are opinion. For instance should we go into debt to buy a house? Some say, "NO!" Never buy a house unless you can pay cash for it! But for most if not at least many of us that is never a real possibility so we have to go and get a loan. So did either the one who told us to never get a loan lie to us? No, not if they were giving their honest view on the subject...if they were being sincere then it's not a lie it may be a faulty opinion but it was the sincere belief of the giver.

Now...some believe that anything that does not agree with what they believe is a lie. A lot of things in our world are people giving us their opinions based on their information...dare I even suggest we take a look at whether vaccines, masks, social distancing, hydroxychloroquine, and other things are truth or lies. You see for each of those we can find people who definitely believe others who do not agree with them are lying.

dictionary.com defines lying as: "a false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive; an intentional untruth; a falsehood. something intended or serving to convey a false impression; imposture: His flashy car was a lie that deceived no one. an inaccurate or false statement; a falsehood. It also says: "to speak falsely or utter untruth knowingly, as with intent to deceive."

So, as you can see...so much of the idea of lying is based upon there being an ability to actually KNOW or discern the truth. So to answer Pilate's question then...What is truth? dictionary.com says, "the true or actual state of a matter: He tried to find out the truth. conformity with fact or reality; verity: the truth of a statement.

a verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the like: mathematical truths. the state or character of being true. actuality or actual existence. an obvious or accepted fact; truism; platitude.

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There that clears that up!! Right??

Ok...so let me ask you another question...Do you believe the Bible is telling the truth? Would you consider it as a source that you can trust? If so then let's go back to the Ephesians passage for today and see what else it has to say. The first part of today's passage tells us NOT TO LIE and then it tells us to tell the truth to our neighbors and as we have seen that is not always as easy as we would hope. Have you been on Facebook lately? Those are my neighbors and I'm not sure if I'm supposed to try a certain medication or even if I can trust the fine folks who are wanting to sell me a motorhome for a \$1000.00! The next part of the passage is pretty straight forward...don't get angry! Actually what it says is be angry without sinning! Now whose talking doublespeak? When someone cuts me off in traffic and I get angry now I have to also think about not sinning as a result of that anger? Thanks Paul! Next I'm not supposed to let the sun go down on my anger! My folks always told me that a good way to stay married a long time is to never go to bed angry...Dad used to joke that sometimes that meant you sleep in a chair then! But you get the picture here...don't allow your anger to consume you...let it go.

You have no doubt heard about the fellow and his "trouble tree?" The fellow was a carpenter who was hired to help a man restore an old farmhouse had just finished his first day on the job and everything that could possibly go wrong went wrong. First of all, on his way to work he had a flat tire that cost him an hour's worth of pay, then his electric saw broke, and after work his old pickup truck refused to start.

His new boss volunteered to give him a lift home and the whole way to his house the carpenter sat in stone silence as he stared out his window. Yet on arriving, he invited his boss in for a few minutes to meet his family. As they walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When he opened the door, he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was one big smile as he hugged his two small children and kissed his wife.

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Afterwards, the man walked his boss to his car to say thank you. Now on their way out of the house, the boss 'curiosity got the best of him so he had to ask the man about the tree on the front porch. He said, I noticed when you came up on the porch before going into your house you stopped and touched the tree, why?

“Oh, that’s my trouble tree,” he replied. “I know I can’t stop from having troubles out on the job, but one thing’s for sure - my troubles don’t belong in the house with my wife and children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again.”

“Funny thing is,” he smiled, “when I come out in the morning to pick ‘em up, they aren’t nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.”

So...there’s one approach to getting rid of anger instead of allowing the sun to go down on it. And in addition to the “don’t let the sun go down on your anger, Paul suggests that thieves should STOP IT! Hope that helps! The thieves should stop stealing and GO TO WORK! And guess what they are not to go to work just for themselves but rather Paul says they should use their hands in their work so they can do good and have something to share with those in need. You ever notice how often the Bible tells us to help others, to give to others, to love others? There may just be TRUTH in that!

Next Paul tells us all that we should not allow foul words to come out of our mouths. I won’t ask for hands to see who struggles with this one. And instead of the foul words we are only to say that which is helpful! Ok...maybe I’m the only one but that is NOT easy! And when we say the helpful things it is to build up our community. And understand that as we build up the community with our helpful words it helps those who hear what we say. Just imagine a home, a community, a meeting, a time when all that is said is to help build up our community! That is what Paul desires for us.

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Here's another challenging one...we are not to make the Holy Spirit unhappy. And we do this by putting aside all our bitterness, not losing our tempers, no anger, no shouting or slander (which is basically not telling lies about others), and we are basically just supposed to stay away from all the evil. Instead...and are you ready for this we are to BE KIND, compassionate, and we are to forgive each other in the same way God forgave us in Christ!

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So...we are then to, according to Paul as he sums it all up...imitate God! Well that's easy isn't it? We are to be like the dearly loved children of God's that we are. I hope most of you know what it feels like to be dearly loved children...and sad for those who don't...but I hope you can at least understand that with our God...we all our dearly loved children! And by the way Paul sums all this up with a simple admonition...LIVE YOUR LIFE WITH LOVE!

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This love is following along with the example Jesus Christ gave to us as he loved us and gave himself for us. That is the kind of love we are to have for each other! That is the kind and style of love we are to live. We are to truly give ourselves for others just as Christ did!

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Have you been watching the Olympics? I must admit I haven't been as much as in some years. But there have been some amazing stories. Simone Biles having to step back to take care of her Mental Health is one of the bravest things we have seen this year...after developing a case of the "Twisties" meaning she could not get right in her head about how her twists and turns were going and how she would find the mat. If she had continued she could have been seriously hurt...but she admitted her trouble, didn't overly worry about the blowback she would get from our country or her team and by doing so she became a beacon of light for all of us who have dealt with any anxiety, depression, or mental health issues at all. Then she decided with the advice of her trainers and physicians to enter the competition for the balance beam. She changed her dismount to be a more simple one, one she said she had not done since she was a

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much younger girl...and she got a bronze! Afterwards she proclaimed that the bronze she won this year was now more significant than her golds she had previously won.

Then there is the story of American teen Nevin Harrison. Do you know her story? She won gold in the first ever women's canoe racing. Her story is that she was a sprinter...a track sprinter with dreams of making the Olympics in the 100 & 200 meter sprints. Then a few years ago at like 16 she started experiencing a lot of hip pain and it was determined she had hip dysplasia. The drs. told her no more running...sorry. She was devastated. But to burn off energy and to keep getting exercise she started paddling competitive canoes and it just happens (coincidence?) that she lived in one of the only places in the USA where one could take part in this sport at a high level. At 17 she won the Nationals and then the Worlds at the 200 meter sprint canoe and then just this week she won the Gold Medal in Tokyo. Another amazing thing about this is she was the only American to win a medal in canoeing and as I understand it, this particular sport will not be in the 2024 games. When she won she told an interviewer I was so frustrated and mad that I was not going to be able to be a track athlete...but now I would not trade this for anything!

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I'm guessing you have cried a few tears when you watched Jessica Long's Toyota commercials. If you have seen them and you have not cried...then well...you are completely different from me. These commercials aired during the Super Bowl first but have been on...all the time during these Olympics. The story is a wonderful reimagining of a phone call that happened when an American couple were told by an adoption agency that they were going to get a little girl, and then they are told that she has a rare condition (fibular hemimelia) the little girl who was born Tatiana Olegovna Kirillova in Bratsk, Russia had her legs amputated below her knees at just 18 months old.

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In some versions of the ad she is seen swimming over her childhood self and she is swimming through an orphanage and into her parents kitchen. The line that gets me every time is when her mom, Beth Long says, "I don't know what her life will be like but it will be amazing! I can't wait

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to meet her! And with that they show the swimmer Jessica Long looking and smiling. To date, Jessica has won 23 paraolympics medals with 13 of them being gold. She got her start in swimming by going to her grandparents pool and learning and beginning to be competitive. Then they took her to a para olympic competition and she saw that folks like her did compete and did not hide their disabilities. And if you have seen her smile...you know there is hope no matter what you face.

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PUTRID...ROTTING FLESH!

The Ephesians passage tells us to not let our anger cause us to sin...it's ok to get angry...just don't sin as a result, And of course...don't allow it to get us to waste our breath on foul language, We are not to steal but instead to earn so that we may give to others. It tells us to...Put aside all bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil. Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ. And it tells us we are NOT TO LIE! If we are able to do this...then we are going to be Living in Love and as Paul says, we will be living as Christ who lived a sacrificial life that was Sweet Smelling to God contrast that with the smell that words of slander cause!

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May we as individuals and as a church, over come that which would seem to hold us back, may we work to earn and share with others, may we put aside bitterness, anger, and every evil, and instead may we be kind, compassionate, and forgiving each other always...may we live in LOVE and may we truly be living Sweet Smelling sacrificial lives for God. Amen.

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Changing the word Israel to Church listen to what Psalm 130 says to us:

O Church, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.

<sup>8</sup> It is he who will redeem US, God's Church  
from all OUR sins!.