

# Do not lie

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[ 0 : 00 ]      Heavenly Father, as we affirm these words week in and week out, it can almost be easy for us to take them for granted.

But may the miracle, the magnificent miracle of what we just read, the fact that it's true, that Jesus really did, that he really did die in real time and real space, and he really did rise from the dead, ascend to heaven, and is alive today.

May that fill us with awe and wonder and worship afresh. Lord, as we dig into your word now, would you speak to us deeply? Lord, cut through our self-flatteries where we excuse ourselves from its application.

God, would you convict us of the sin in our lives and help us to receive your forgiveness afresh? May we hear you, your voice, the word of truth. Would you set us free from the father of lies? In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. And please be seated. This morning I was on the phone with a leader in the city, and unlike me, he has kids. He has adorable kids, and so I thought, you know what?

[ 1 : 09 ]      Can you give me some cute story that I can start today's sermon with? And so he shared a couple of things that were kind of relevant, perhaps, but none of them really fit too well. And so I asked him for a couple more stories, and then he said, you know what, Daniel, let's be honest.

You can just make up whatever story you want with my kids in it, and just make up the story and just throw their names on it. And I was like, okay, well, and he said, Daniel, you know that probably 30, 40, I don't know, 60% of those cute sermon illustrations are just made up anyways, right?

I said, well, actually, this morning I'm speaking on do not bear false witness. So I'm not going to do that. It's a good thing, too, because I probably would have been tempted.

So the text we're looking at today in Deuteronomy 5, as we're going through the Ten Commandments, this is the second to last one, the ninth, is simply put, verse 20, and you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Now, as that morning conversation showed, as we go through the Ten Commandments, it's really fascinating that although we all would say that we take the Ten Commandments seriously, that they're equal with one another, that there are certain commandments that the weight of them, you need no one to explain.

[ 2 : 25 ]      You shall not murder. Jonathan Cammary preached on that. Just two weeks ago, I was preaching on you shall not commit adultery. And these don't need someone to really try to explain to you the weight of it.

Perhaps you and I are struggling with adultery or murder, but whether or not we're trying to justify to ourselves that we know that these are heavy, heavy things. As a pastor here at Church of the Messiah, first as an intern, then as a pastor, so for the past four years, I've had the privilege of meeting up with people, a lot of university students, various people in the city as a pastor, sitting down with them week in and week out, helping them deal with their effort to get free from pornography and other lust issues.

In all my time, I've never had someone come forward to me. I don't know that George has ever had someone, at least in the time that I've been with him, someone come to him and ask to regularly meet up to become free of lying.

But as we read through the Bible, on what the Bible has to say about lies, you'll see that it has so much to say about this subject. That the words it says about lies, in some context, will actually mirror or sometimes be even more intense than the words it says about adultery.

Recently, I was going through Proverbs, and it really hit me. I was guest preaching in another church on Proverbs 7 that speaks to adultery, which is what I also preached here from the Seventh Commandment.

[ 3 : 55 ] And the words that it has on adultery are really, really serious. In Proverbs 7, it graphically goes through this passage where it describes this young man who's walking down the pathway of the prostitute, and she comes up, the adulterous woman, and she comes up and grabs a hold of him.

And it's this graphic passage, and it ends with this very sobering call to stay away from her because the way of lust is the way that leads to Sheol, to hell. It's really, really serious.

But as you look at what the Bible says about words, about lies, you'll find similar language. So in Proverbs, let's pull this up.

This is why you don't use phones for notes, because they do funny things. Okay, in Proverbs 18, verse 21, it says, The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

And if we had time to go more thoroughly through it, you'll see time and time again, it's using the same language that it used about Sheol regarding adultery, that adultery, lust, leads to hell, to death, that the same is true for words that are not of God, including lying words.

[ 4 : 58 ] Proverbs 26, verse 28, And a flattery mouth works ruin. What is flattery but another form of bearing false witness? Where a flatterer is trying to butter someone up, trying to, you know, kind of make yourself, gratiate yourself to them by saying things that might have a lot of truth in it, but you're crossing the line and you're saying flattery.

Flattery are things that aren't really fully true, but are nice to hear for someone. And it says a flattery mouth. As positive as a flattery mouth may sound, it works ruin.

Proverbs 25, verse 18, A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a war club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow. If you think about what those various weapons are, they're actually very different.

When you smash someone with a club, not that I have much experience, but when you smash someone with a club, it's this kind of brute force just, you know, dents their skull right in. A sword's so different.

Well, it doesn't like just bludgeon them. But it'll like cut through something and separates it. And then an arrow pierces through stuff that the other two couldn't do. And every one of them, it's very clearly speaking of this destruction, this death.

[ 6 : 06 ] And it says the man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a war club or a sword or a sharp arrow. It's destruction. As we continue on with that, if you go through Proverbs and beyond, in Exodus 23, it expands on the commandments.

It goes through the different commandments, kind of expanding on them. In Exodus 23, 1 and 3, it gets to false witness. It says, Listen to this.

Nor shall you be partial to the poor in his lawsuit. So, in expanding on what it means to not be a false witness, it says, Don't side with the many.

And the connotation there is, Don't side with the powerful, with the crowds against the innocent, the vulnerable. But then it says, Just, in just as strong language, Do not side with the poor man.

Don't pervert justice for the poor. And with a couple examples I read, from Proverbs and from Exodus, you'll note that in none of it, does it excuse your motivation.

[ 7 : 18 ] In none of it, does it say, Don't, don't lie. Don't bear false witness, for evil reasons. It says, Don't do it. With the, in the example of the flattery, Proverbs 26, 28, when it speaks of the flatterer, if you think about it, in many times, that that is, that that can be in our effort to encourage someone, in our effort to kind of elevate the room, we might be, you know, overly encouraging.

And it says it, that it brings ruin. When it speaks about, a lying tongue being, a false witness being like a, a club, or a sword, or an arrow, it doesn't say why, the person is lying.

It just says that, lies are like that. And then here in Exodus 23, it says, Now to decide with the powerful, nor even, to advocate for the poor. And if we're honest with ourselves, some of the times, in fact, perhaps many of the times, where we'll be most tempted, to lie, whether that's flattery, exaggerating, spreading a gossip, all the stuff, will be for nice reasons.

As Christians, one of the most common ways, that we kind of spread rumor, and gossip, and lies, that we use the words like we shouldn't, or when it ends with, so please pray for, you know? Like somehow we think like, if we're willing, if we're able to, just end the sentence, please pray for, then it makes it all good.

But, the Bible never lets that be an excuse. Your motivation can be kind. It can be to build up, and so you flatter. It can be to, have people praying for. And yet, where we are spreading rumor, where we're flattering, where we're, we're falsifying the truth a little bit.

[ 9 : 00 ] It brings destruction. It's like a weapon. It pierces, it cuts, it bludgeons. Some of the times, that we'll be tempted to lie, is perhaps, when it just seems like, our friend can't handle the truth.

Just the other day, a dad came to me, and was sharing about how, his son is in an unhealthy relationship, and his son, they've always been close. But he's afraid that, if he's honest with his son, about the relationship, that it's going to separate them.

And so, he's just really wrestling with this. And, in light of preparing for today, I brought them to some of the verses, we're looking at, and encouraged them, that the scriptures call us to truth.

There are times, where you and I feel like, our friend, our family member, just can't handle the truth. And so, we want to cover it up. We want to share something, just equivocate a little bit. But it doesn't matter, what is motivating, even if it's kindness, that motivates our lives.

Lies, the scriptures clearly show, bring death. A couple weeks ago, Diane Scharf, you know her, she comes here, she's been so gracious, in lending me her car a lot.

[ 10 : 10 ] And it's been such a blessing. Well, a family member was over, and they, someone with the car, is going to take the car, and like, oh, are you on the insurance? And I had to honestly answer, no.

And so then, they're like, oh, why is he on the insurance? So, Diane was like, no problem. I have great insurance, I'll call them, and I'll confirm, you don't need to be put on the insurance. So, she calls the insurance company, and they start asking all these questions.

Okay? And so then, Diane's like, you know what, I'll just get them to call you. Well, Diane gives me the message, I'm supposed to call the insurance. And I didn't. So, sometime it was by, Diane's like, hey, have you called the insurance? And I was just like, I know it's going to happen.

See, I only have a G2, and because of my age bracket, and my gender, and my, and the G2, it's going to make the insurance go up. I've been here before, trust me, okay? And so, I just looked Diane right in the eyes, and just said, Diane, you know, when insurance calls, just tell them that he's gone to Australia, okay?

He's going to Australia, because I was about to go to Australia. And Diane just looked at me, and just said, Daniel, but that's lying. I was like, no, literally, like, in three days, I'm getting on a plane to go to Australia.

[ 11 : 12 ] And she's like, yeah, but in three weeks, you're coming back, right? And I was like, well, it's a true statement. He's going to Australia. Like, that's the truth. You're not lying. The definition of the truth is it's the truth, you know what I'm saying?

And Diane was just like, Daniel, you're lying. Anyway, I had to acknowledge, Diane was right. So often, we, you and me, we try to get around the truth that we're not comfortable with, in all sorts of brilliant ways.

I think some of the most, like, you can see the brilliance of the human intellect, when it comes to how we handle the truth, and able to navigate around it in ways that are lies. We can do it by just our silence on something.

Just by being silent, you allow someone to believe something that isn't true. Or in my case, I thought I was pretty clever, and I found a real statement that's true. He's going to Australia.

But it was designed to make them think I was leaving the country for good, but it was not a true statement. The reality is, I was still going to be using the car the very day I got back.

[ 12 : 09 ] So, when the scriptures forbid us from bearing false witness, it's not saying, make sure that every sentence, in and of itself, is always true.

But it is saying, do not, do not have someone believe something that isn't true, whether through false statement, through silence, or equivocation, or even true statements, designed to lead someone believing something that isn't true.

That's a, that's a big definition. To not bear false witness is to not lead someone in believing something that isn't true. And that is what the scriptures call us to do.

There's so many ways that we'll want to justify it, but in every single time, it will bring death. I, I saw the reality of that earlier this year.

When I met up with a young couple, they're dating, and they had, just repeatedly gone into sexual sin. And so, they asked to meet up. They're, they're from out of town, but they were coming through, and they knew I do purity talks, and whatever.

[ 13 : 08 ] So, we met up. And as we're chatting, it was incredible to, incredibly difficult to see the weight of the guilt, the burden of the shame, on the shoulders of this young couple.

And we're talking about this, and the girl is saying this, how she's betrayed what she believes, and, and yet she, she promised herself not to do this, and yet she finds herself doing this again. And so, they're talking about this. At one point, she blurted out something about how, she lives in a, in a Christian dorm, with like 20 other girls.

And one time, late at night, they're all chatting about purity, and their history. And she said, listen, like, I am the only one, of these 20 girls, who has, who has slept with someone.

I'm the only one, like, I'm the only one, who's, who's in sexual sin. I was like, you're the only, one of 20? Like, I don't know if you know the stats, but those stats make absolutely no sense, okay? And so, I'm just like, really?

So, as we're chatting a little bit more, she told me that she had lied to everyone, and that she had also said that she had like, only have like, held hands with a guy or something. They're talking about how far they'd gone, and she had, she had lied.

[ 14 : 11 ] I said, hey, just stop for a second. Do you realize that, if I met with any one of those other girls, they would say, I'm the only one, that's has, that's committed sexual sin, because you also lied.

And when I say you also lied, it's because someone else lied too. Like, you were in a room of people, who, in China, because you were afraid that you'd be the only one, you all lied to each other, and claimed that you had, and talked about how far you'd gone in relationships, and for sure, several of them, if not many of them, had lied.

As we worked through that, and it ended up being a really precious afternoon, working through this stuff with them, and putting a battle plan together for the couple, to have healthier boundaries, and all that stuff, talked about the gospel, and all of it.

As we walked through that, and I went home that evening, I looked at my own life, and saw, what are ways, that, that I, or that we are creating that similar context, to that dormitory.

Where there are, each one of us, has, has done things that are, not only embarrassing, but are forbidden. Done things that we regret. And you and I are, bearing false witness to our neighbor, by the way that we're presenting ourselves.

[ 15 : 23 ] I'm not saying that we should go around, with big placards, declaring all of our things, that might be, you know, to share it with someone, who's trust and confidential. Because we try so desperately, in a world where, with social media, and all the stuff, where we can really, like, Photoshop, and edit, and throw in a little filter, our favorite image of ourself, that we tend to not only do that, with our social media, but with the way we present ourselves.

We want to cover up, so desperately. And looking back, at what it looks like, to bear false witness, one of the, one of the ways, that we do, exactly what she did, and others, is at the beginning of the Bible, if you turn to Genesis chapter 3.

In Genesis 3, you know the story, the devil has deceived, has tempted Eve, and Eve and Adam, in turn, have both eaten, of the forbidden fruit. And they hear, the spirit of God, coming through the garden.

And what do they do? They hide. And the scriptures tell us, that they took fig leaves, they hid among the fig leaves, trying to close themselves, with fig leaves. I heard a speaker say it once, and so I looked it up, I'm not a botanist, but fig leaves, have this sap on it.

It's true. Fig leaves have a sap on it, that burns human skin. And so when Adam and Eve, hid among the fig leaves, and tried to cover themselves up, with the fig leaves, if they're covering up, their most intimate, sensitive, private areas, of their bodies, they're bringing this, burning sap, onto their very bodies.

[ 16 : 51 ] Just think for a moment, of how painful that would be. And when God comes to them, and calls them out from hiding, from cloaking themselves, with this, what does God do?

Well among other things, God makes them clothes, clothes that don't burn, that don't hurt them, don't harm them. Fig leaves harm. God clothes them. God clothes them. God clothes them.

And this is, incredibly relevant, to the issue, of the way that you and I, handle the truth. And that you and I, will find things in our lives, whether in our own lives, that we're trying to conceal, and cloak, or the way we present, about other people.

Well what we're doing, is that we're clothing the truth, clothing reality, trying to hide it away, by the creativity of our words. We're cloaking, concealing, and deceiving. And the, for all the variety, of reasons that we'll do, that we'll lie, so many of our lives, are for self-preservation.

Whether we are, trying to exaggerate, our strengths, or trying to conceal, our weakness, our shame, and our sin. In so many cases, about self-preservation, we're afraid that, those around us, can't handle the truth.

[ 18 : 05 ] And if we're real with them, what would that mean, for reputation? If we're real with them, what would that mean, for relationships? And so we conceal, the truth, we conceal ourselves, with our words, with our lies, with our deceit.

But the reality, that we have to face today, looking, at the ninth commandment, and you shall not, bear false witness, is that, though we do it, for self-preservation, just like those fig leaves, actually burn their skin.

So also, when we, cloak the truth, when we try to hide, among lies, it brings, ruin. As Proverbs 18 says, there's death, in the tongue.

David, in Psalm 32, writes about, the adultery, he had committed, not rather the adultery, but rather his, concealing it, his lying about, his bearing false witness. Just like the girl, in that story.

So David also, he had committed a sin, and he, was so afraid, of what would happen, if people knew the truth. And so he bore, false witness, by his silence. And he says in Psalm 32, that as long as he, kept his mouth shut, as long as he tried, to hide away, like Adam and Eve, it was like his, the strength of his, in his very bones, wasted away.

[ 19 : 22 ] Perhaps you could relate. If there's something, in your life, that you've tried so hard, to make sure, no one would ever find out. The amount of energy, that goes into, working so hard, to guard your words, so that you don't let, anything slip.

To always be clicking, alt tab, to be deleting, your search history, to be doing whatever it is, always afraid, of what will happen, if people find out. It's not the actual, just the act, that is causing, the sin, that you're trying to hide, that is causing, such exhaustion.

But it's the weight, of the effort, of concealing it. And so, as you try to unpack this, I'm going to read to you, a story. And it reads like, a children's story. But I hope that, you won't just discard it, for that reason.

But I want you to, just to listen, to these words. And to hear the truth, of the story, as I pull it up. I, had originally thought, and you'll see why, of reading this, during two weeks ago, on the sermon, on the seventh commandment.

But I think it's actually, more relevant, to the ninth. Do not bear, false witness. There was once, a great and noble king, whose land was terrorized, by a crafty dragon. Like a massive bird of prey, the scaly beast, delighted in ravaging villages, with his fiery breath.

[ 20 : 44 ] Hapless victims, ran from their burning homes, only to be snatched, into the dragon's jaws, or talons. Those devoured, instantly, were deemed more fortunate, than those carried back, to the dragon's lair, to be devoured, at his leisure.

The king led his sons, and knights, in many valiant battles, against the dragon. Riding alone in the forest, one of the king's sons, heard his name purred low and soft. In the shadows, of the ferns and trees, curled among the boulders, lay the dragon.

The creature's heavy-lidded eyes, fastened on the prince, and the reptilian mouth, stretched into a friendly smile. Don't be alarmed, said the dragon, as grey wisps of smoke, rose lazily from his nostrils.

I'm not what your father thinks. What are you then, asked the prince, warily drawing his sword, as he pulled in the reins, to keep his fearful horse, from bolting. I am pleasure, said the dragon. Ride on my back, and you will experience, more than you ever imagined.

Come now. I have no harmful intention. I seek a friend, someone to share flights with me. Have you never dreamed of flying, never longed to soar in the clouds? Visions of soaring, high above the forested hills, drew the prince, hesitantly from his horse.

[ 21 : 47 ] The dragon unfurled one, great webbed wing, to serve as a ramp, and to his rigid back. Between the spiny projections, the prince found a secure seat. Then the creature snapped, his powerful wings once, twice, and launched them into the sky.

The prince's apprehension, melted into awe and exhilaration. From then on, he met the dragon often, but secretly. For how could he tell his father, brother, or the knights, that he had befriended the enemy? The prince felt separate from them all.

Their concerns, were no longer his concerns. Even when he wasn't with the dragon, he spent less time with those he loved, and more time alone. The skin on the prince's legs, became calloused, from gripping the rigid back of the dragon.

His hands grew rough and hardened. He began wearing gloves, to hide the malady. After many nights of riding, he discovered scales, growing on the back of his hands as well. With dread, he realized his fate, were he to continue.

And so he resolved, to return no more to the dragon. But after a fortnight, he again sought out the dragon, having been tormented with desire. And so it transpired many times over, no matter what his determination, the prince eventually found himself pulled back, as if by the cords of an invisible web.

[ 22 : 52 ] Silently, patiently, the dragon always waited. One cold, moonless night, their excursion became a foray, against the sleeping village. Torching the thatched roost, with fiery blasts from his nostrils, the dragon roared with delight, when the terrified victims, fled from their burning homes.

Swooping in, the sermon belched again, and flames engulfed, the cluster of screaming villagers. The prince closed his eyes tightly, in an attempt to shut out the carnage. In the pre-dawn hours, when the prince crept back from his dragon trysts, the road outside his father's castle, usually remained empty.

But not tonight. Terrified refugees streamed, into the protective walls of the castle. The prince attempted, to slip through the crowd, to close himself in his chamber. But some of the survivors, stared and pointed toward him.

He was there, one woman cried out. I saw him on the back of the dragon. Others nodded their heads, in angry agreement. Horrified, the prince saw that his father, the king, was in the courtyard, holding a bleeding child in his arms.

The king's face mirrored the agony of his people, as his eyes found the prince's. The son fled, hoping to escape into the night. But the guards apprehended him, as if he were a common thief.

[ 23 : 59 ] They brought him to the great hall, where his father sat solemnly on the throne. The people on every side, railed against the prince. Banish him! He heard one of his own brothers, angrily cry out. Burn him alive!

Other voices shouted. As the king rose from his throne, blood stains from the wounded shone darkly on his royal robes. The crowd felt silent in expectation of his decree.

The prince, who could not bear to look into his father's face, stared at the flagstones of the floor. Take off your gloves and your tunic, the king commanded. The prince obeyed slowly, dreading to have his metamorphosis uncovered before the kingdom.

Was his shame not already enough? He had hoped for a quick death without further humiliation. Sounds of revulsion rippled through the crowd at the sight of the prince's thick, scaled skin and the ridge growing along his spine.

The king strode toward his son, and the prince sealed himself, fully expecting a backhand to blow, even though he had never been struck so by his father. Instead, his father, the king, embraced him and wept as he held him tightly.

[ 24 : 59 ] In shock disbelief, the prince buried his face against his father's shoulder. Do you wish to be freed from the dragon, my son? The prince answered in despair, I wished it many times, but there is no hope for me.

Not alone, said the king. You cannot win against the dragon alone. Father, I'm no longer your son, I'm half dragon, said the prince. But his father replied, my blood runs in your veins. My nobility has been stamped deep within your soul.

With his face still hidden tearfully in his father's embrace, the prince heard the king instruct the crowd. The dragon is crafty. Some fall victim to his wiles and some to his violence. There will be mercy for all who wish to be freed.

Who else among you has ridden the dragon? The prince lifted his head to see someone emerge from the crowd. To his amazement, he recognized an older brother, one who had been lauded throughout the kingdom for his onslaught against the dragon in battle and for many good deeds.

Others came, some weeping, others hanging their heads in shame. The king embraced them all. This is our most powerful weapon against the dragon, the king announced. Truth, no more hidden flights. Alone, we cannot resist him.

[ 26 : 07 ] Part of what makes this story so true and so real and so accurate is the very final words where he says, truth, alone we cannot resist him. The reality is that as you and I cloak, conceal our weaknesses, our lives, when we remove ourselves from the truth, we become alone.

And the reason that Sunday mornings you and I aren't just in front of our computer or on our phones at our home watching some live service, hearing a preacher who is much more trained, experienced, and better than me, but the reason that we'll show up with real people and interact with real people to be part of a real community is because we desperately need community.

God made us to be here together so that we're not alone. For us to live in the truth, for us to live in reality before God, it requires us to be with each other.

And the tendency we have as human beings is either we do what Adam and Eve did and we try to hide ourselves among the fig leaves or we cast aside the fig leaves and just embrace our brokenness and we take pride and glory in our brokenness, in our nakedness.

And so instead of trying to hide ourselves in the fig leaves, we're just like, yo, I'm going to own it, okay? And so we just stop trying to fight it and we just wear it. And by wear it, I mean we don't wear it. We just walk around naked, taking pride in it.

[ 27 : 40 ] Today, there's a good example of that a few blocks from here. But the scriptures call us to another path, to neither conceal nor to just flaunt it, but rather to be clothed by God himself.

The scriptures, it's using the language, it's using the imagery of Genesis 3 when in Isaiah 61 there's a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, of the Savior, that will set us free from our brokenness, from our death.

And it speaks of him clothing us with righteousness. Just as God clothed Adam and Eve with clothes that he made, so God today clothes us with righteousness as we in truth come before him and confess our sin.

And so that's why week after week we come together. And I think it's one of the most beautiful things about the Anglican liturgy, which is that we confess our sin together.



That each week, together, we hear each other be declaring a brokenness. brokenness. So I just want to read something that we'll be reading together in a moment. In a few minutes, together in communion, we'll say, Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have sinned in what we have done and what we have not done.

[ 29 : 02 ] Our sins are grievous. The burden of them is intolerable. And we'll continue on, declaring together, hearing each other's voices declare, that we stand before God with a burden that is intolerable, a burden that we cannot bear.

It's one of the reasons that we use the word communion for the Lord's Supper, is that there's a community in the confession of our brokenness and of our sin. As we declare before God and each other how broken we are, as we refuse to bear false witness against this, we then come and we receive the broken body of Jesus that was pierced for our transgressions, that was crushed for our sins, as we receive afresh the forgiveness, a forgiveness that lets us out of hiding, that we can stand before God without burden removed, where we can stand before God.

As we drink the blood, the Bible says in Leviticus 17 that life is in the blood, that as we drink the communion, the wine of communion, we're receiving afresh the blood, the life of Jesus, that he not only forgives us of our sin, but that he gives us the grace, the strength, the life, the divine life we need in order to live out the life he's called us to.

If you've ever tried to just change a behavior, you hear a message on telling the truth, you're like, okay, I'm going to tell the truth. I'm not going to flatter, I'm not going to exaggerate my strength, I'm not going to conceal.

It might last you a few minutes after Sunday, but it'd be just fine to revert back to our patterns. The impossible task of changing our behavior comes as we receive the strength from God.

[ 30 : 53 ] It's not going to be an overnight change, but all of the commands of God are commands and invitations to live the way life was made to be lived.

The reason that the scriptures forbid us from lies, as pleasant as they can sometimes be, is not because God wants to crimp our style or kill our joy, but because he, that is the place of life and thriving.

As scary as it could be to confess our sin, to be real about a brokenness, to be honest about someone's, about your friends when they ask you for your opinion, to be real with each other, is because that is the place of community, that's the place of truth, that's the place of freedom.

And so we're able to give ourselves to that great cause of obedience to God through receiving the strength, the grace, the life that's found in his blood. Would you pray with me?

Heavenly Father, we can talk and talk and talk about being people who don't hide among flattery, pleasantries and conceal through our silences, presenting false images of ourselves or perhaps hurting others' reputations.

[ 32 : 02 ] God, we can try so hard, yet in our efforts, our failed efforts, we find afresh the reality that God, we need you. We need saving from ourselves.

And so in a few moments as we take communion, Lord, would you help us to come out of hiding and receive your forgiveness? forgiveness. And would you help us to receive that grace, that strength, that life that we need in you?

Would you set us free from our lies and empower us to live in the freedom of the truth, the truth that sets us free? In Jesus' name, amen.