

# The New Way of Walking: Speak the Truth

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[0:00] And so, Father, as we look into the mirror of your word and we read that you say of us that we are new creations in Christ Jesus, we know you're not lying.

We know that this is true. This is who we are now. And so, Father, oh, the God who it's impossible to lie.

God, would you remind us that you have created us in your likeness, in true righteousness and holiness, and now we're to put away falsehood.

And now we are to speak the truth to one another. God, I do pray that you would unite us as a church and are being honest and truthful with one another.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Now, I'm not sure if what I'm about to say is a confession.

[1:06] It may very well be that. I have owned some ratty, nasty, old t-shirts that I have become sentimentally attached to.

Anybody else? Yes, I see that hand. I see that hand. Come on down. No, just kidding. And my dear wife will see me handling one of these delicate t-shirts because they have been through the ringer. And I'll be holding this t-shirt like a newborn baby to put into my drawer. And what she'll be doing is something like this. No way.

No way. No way. No way. No way. No way. No way. That's got to go. And sometimes I agree. And that t-shirt becomes rags.

And other times I just have to say, I'm not ready. Well, this morning we're going to have to rid ourselves of an old and nasty t-shirt called falsehood.

[2:17] And we're going to have to put on a new clean and just wonderful t-shirt called truthfulness. Honesty.

And what you need to know off the bat is that that t-shirt smells like Jesus. If you would open up your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 4.

We're going to be focusing on one verse this morning, verse 25. But we're going to start with a run-up in verse 17. So let's read verses 17 and we're going to read through verse 25.

The Apostle Paul says this. This is God's word. The God in whom it is impossible to lie. Now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds.

They are darkened in their understanding. Alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality.

[3:20] Greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that's not the way you learned Christ. Assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him as the truth is in Jesus.

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 to put on the new self created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Verse 25. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. For we are members.

We are members one of another. Our speech matters to God. What we say makes a difference.

Our words have an effect. That's God's design. And as Christians, those who have been made new by God, our words are to have a particular kind of effect.

[4:32] We are to rid ourselves of lying, falsehood. And we must speak truthfully to one another. And that truth speaking has an intended effect.

It builds the body. I've been saying for some time now, who you are determines how you live. And what we're going to see this morning is, who you are determines what you say.

How you speak. And so this morning, three moves to help you see what God means and to bring it to bear in our lives. First, we're going to start in front of the mirror.

And we're going to start in front of the mirror. And from the mirror, we're going to move to the closet. And from the closet, we're going to go to the church. So mirror, closet, church.

I hope it all makes sense. From the mirror. We all have morning routines, don't we?

[5:33] And I'm guessing at some point in your morning routine, you take a look at yourself in the mirror. Now, I'm sure that some of us, in this morning glance in the mirror, you walk by the mirror and you are like, man, you are stunning.

I can't believe you look so good. But the most of us, we wake up and we go and look in the mirror and it's more like damage control.

For example, teenagers, you wake up wondering, is there a zit on my chin? And your greatest fear is to see Mount Fuji on your chin that morning.

Is it not? Totally. Brothers, those of us who are getting on in the years, we walk in and look in the mirror and we pull back our hair and we say, has my forehead moved to a five head?

Or a six head? Or a seven head? I have a three head. Ladies, you're looking at your eyes and the bags under your eyes and you're saying, that is like pocketbook full, kind of size.

[6:45] That's kind of like Harley Davidson writing pouch size bags under my eyes. So we go and we look and it's damage control, right? And we're looking at the mirror because the mirror doesn't lie.

It doesn't. Did you know there's another kind of mirror that you can look at in every morning? James talks about it as the law of liberty, God's word.

Every morning, we can go to the mirror of God's word and it doesn't lie. It shows you who you really are.

Your true self. This morning, we've got to remind ourselves who we really are. We've got to look at the mirror of God's word, Ephesians 4, 17 through 24, and we've got to remind ourselves who we are.

It's like God uses this passage and He puts it in front of you and He says, Daughter, son, this is who you are now. You're a new creation in Christ Jesus.

[7:51] Don't forget that. Remember that. Renew your mind on this reality. I've brought this about in you. You're not what you used to be. In fact, the first half of Ephesians, we learn that God has eternally loved us.

That God has radically changed us. That He's intentionally knit us to a body of believers. We belong now. It's who we are now.

And you can sum up all this by saying this. We are new creations in Christ Jesus. We're not what we used to be. The old is gone. The new has come.

We have a new nature. This is who you are now. Your former manner of life, which was the outworking of your old self, is no more.

And so verses 17 through 19, we are reminded of what we used to be. That's not who you are anymore. And so now, Christian, you're no longer futile in your thinking.

[8:55] The substance of your thinking has to do with real truth in Jesus. You're no longer darkened in your understanding. The Holy Spirit's flipped the lights on.

You're no longer alienated from the life of God. No, God has reconciled you to Himself through Christ, and now you have new life in Christ.

You're no longer ignorant. Lights on. You see truth for what it is. You see Jesus for who He is now. Fully God, fully man. You understand what He's done on the cross.

You understand what He's doing now, and you understand that one day He's coming back. He's going to make all things right. You're no longer the owner of a hardened heart.

God has radically changed you. Ezekiel 36 is true of you, Christian. God pulled out your stony heart, and He stuck back in a fleshy heart, a soft heart, a heart that beats for God, new affections for Him.

[10:01] Now, this doesn't mean you have no longer desires, sinful desires, but what it does mean is now you have a new set of desires, a desire to live for God.

Your old self is history. Your new self is the present reality. The old man is gone. The new man has come. Last week, I quoted from The Help and learned that it's not Abilene, but Abilene. Remember what she said?

You is kind. You is smart. You is important. Christian, you are God's. You are alive. And you are holy. Created in the likeness of God. Think Jesus. Created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

[11:02] You are the real thing, brother and sister in Christ. God's wrought a real work in you. And He has a new way for us to live now.

In verses 22 through 24, Paul uses this language to put off and to put on. He's talking about clothing, believe it or not. He's saying, hey, the Christian life is like putting on new clothes every day of your life.

You're putting on clothes that adorn the gospel. You're putting on clothes that look and smell like Jesus. That's who you are now. All this other stuff is gone. You don't put that on anymore.

So we are to put off our old selfish ways that sprang from a hardened heart. That's gone. And what we're to do now is we're to put on new Christ-ish ways that spring from a heart that has been made new by God Himself.

And here's what this means. We need to look at ourselves in the mirror of God's Word again and again and again.

[12:13] We forget who we are. We forget what God has done. We've got to remember God's speaking to us. You is mine. You is alive. You is holy.

You is Christ-like. So we've got to glance in the mirror here. We've been reminded of who we are from verses 19 through 24. So now from the mirror we make our way to the closet because God has given us a brand new wardrobe in Christ.

A new way to live. New clothes to wear. A new way of being. So now let's move from the mirror to the closet. Let me read Ephesians 4.25.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor for we are members of one another. And so what lies before us in Ephesians 4.25 through 5.2 is a wardrobe of things that are pleasing to God.

Things that adorn the gospel. Things that God wants us to put on over and over again. Things that God wants us to characterize us. But you know what?

[13:27] First I want to notice. Did you notice the word therefore in verse 25? Tell me if you know this song. Conjunction, junction, what's your function?

Hooking up words, phrases, and clauses. Anybody know that one? Sing with me. Conjunction, junction, what's your function?

Okay, a conjunction makes connections. The word therefore is making a connection. The Apostle Paul is moving from our new nature in Christ to our new practice in Christ.

That's what the therefore is there for. He's making a connection between who we are and how we are to live. And so we're moving from who we are nature to our practice.

And in verse 25, Paul is making this specific connection between who we are in Christ and what we say. How we speak.

[14:35] What comes out of our mouth. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. So God has purchased us a whole new wardrobe.

So imagine, you open up the door of your new Christian clothes closet. You're standing in front of this new wardrobe that God, your Father, has purchased for you with the blood of Jesus.

Now hanging on that closet rod are a variety of righteous and holy clothes. And we're to be putting these on every day. This is what's to be true of us day after day.

Now if you get real close to these vestments hanging on this closet rod and you get real close and you're like, take a deep smell, you're going to smell Jesus.

This is Christ-like behavior. This is what he's purchased us for. To be like him. And so, today we're going to look at true speech in verse 25.

[15:54] Next week we're going to look at anger. How not to sin in your anger and to be Christ-like. Then we're going to move on to honest work and then gracious speech and then what it looks like to have a posture of pleasing God and not grieving God.

And then what it looks like to live at peace with one another just like Christ did with us. And of course we'll wrap up by looking at what it means to walk in love with one another. These are Christ-like clothes.

It's quite the wardrobe. And for us who are dead in sin and now alive in Christ, it's time to get dressed. It's time to put the right stuff on.

It's time to live our lives in a way that's pleasing to God. And so this morning, like I said, we're going to focus on verse 25. Put off falsehood. Speak the truth with his neighbor.

Now, back to the closet. As you're looking at these lovely clothes, freshly purchased, you noticed balled up in the corner on the ground what appears to be some kind of old T-shirt.

[17:03] And of course, you do what any other human being does when they find a balled up T-shirt in the corner of a closet. What do you do? You give it the sniff test.

What does this smell like? And what you find is that this T-shirt reeks. It stinks.

It's putrid. And yet, at the same time, this T-shirt is strangely familiar. You've worn this T-shirt quite a bit.

It's a well-worn T-shirt. There's a lot of memories in it. In fact, to be honest, you would say there's a little bit of a draw. Now, if you were to put this T-shirt back on, you'd be tempted to fall back into a former way of life.

This T-shirt smells like falsehood. And since becoming a Christian, you can smell that rot. You usually can smell it before you see it.

[18:16] It smells of your former way of life, living in a web of lies. Lies about reality when we are ignorant of God. Lies about ourselves, myself, what I thought about myself before God lit me up with the truth of Jesus.

Thinking more highly of myself. Maybe you're thinking more lowly of yourself. Lies about other people. Imputing motives. Thinking things about them. Lying was a way of life.

It permeated our speech. Now, this particular T-shirt that you have just sniffed and unballed, it's all wrinkled and there is a word on the front of it.

Big and bold. Spinster! That's the name. Spinster. This was our former manner of life. And it's been put off. What do spinsters do?

They spin the reality of a situation to suit their selfish purposes. That's what spinsters do. And that was our former modus operandi, our former MO.

[19:23] That's the way we used to live. Now, the Greek word translated falsehood is a Greek word that we get the word pseudo from. You know, like pseudo self, false self, pseudo intellectual, pseudo science, and it literally means to lie.

To intentionally distort the truth of a situation. And we are not to put on the spinster t-shirt t-shirt anymore.

It's not who we are. Remember, God says, you is mine, you is alive, and you is holy. Created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

And it changes the way we speak. So what do you do when you find the spinster t-shirt? t-shirt? Because you find it throughout the day, don't you? You ball it up and you throw it out.

It's not who you are anymore. It's not who we are anymore because we've been born of the truth. We've come to see that the truth is in Christ Jesus.

[20:39] we live in reality now. A while back, a friend of mine was trying to help me with the colors of my wardrobe.

And this person was very graciously helping me to see that certain colors weren't becoming of me. Certain colors didn't work for me.

Now, I know a mix of metaphors, but brother and sister in Christ, lying is just not your color. It's not who you are anymore.

It's not true of you anymore. Now, the fact of the matter is that we all are tempted to spin things, aren't we? To lie still. Even having been made new, we are still tempted to put on the spinster t-shirt.

So what do you do when you're tempted? Well, you start by renewing your mind on what's true. Remind yourself of who you are. I don't do this anymore because it's not my color anymore.

[21:50] It's not my style. I've been changed. And Christ who's changed me changes the way I am to speak. Your God has given you a new wardrobe to put on.

And so we fight lies with truth. We are to put on a new t-shirt. So having rejected our former way of living, spinning the truth for selfish purposes, we are to put on a new t-shirt.

So hanging in the closet is a clear and crisp bright yellow t-shirt. You pull it out. And across the front it says in three big words, keeping it real.

And you flip it over and there's one of those big circles with the cross through it. It's kind of like say no to spin. That's on the back.

Keeping it real. Speaking the truth. Living in reality. Being honest with one another. Genuine with one another. That's the new t-shirt. And when we put this t-shirt on, we're putting on a new way of Christ-like living.

[23:03] A Christ-like speech. Speech marked by honesty. Because we've come to know the truth in Jesus, and because he saved us to be truly righteous and holy, we are to speak truthfully to one another.

Honestly. We're to speak truthfully about God to one another. We're to speak truthfully about ourselves to each other. We're to represent ourselves accurately. We're to speak truthfully of one another to each other.

We're not to gossip. We are not to hide reality. We're not to distort the truth. We are not to deny what is true. That's spinster living.

Rather, it is pleasing to God to speak truthfully to one another because it's impossible for God to lie. Titus 1-2, God doesn't lie.

And we have been made in His likeness now. Now, I can imagine a situation in which you find yourself in a web of lies.

[24:11] You're a Christian, and you've been spinning the truth out of fear, out of shame, out of anger, out of disgust.

what do you do? Well, you first remember who you are, that you belong to Jesus now, and then you turn from your sin.

It's called repenting. These lies are wrong. It's not true of me, of who God called me to be. I must change now.

I must turn away from these lies. That's repentance. And the outworking of repentance shows up in a kind of truth speech.

It's called confession. Confession to God, and confession to those you have sinned against. We're simply agreeing with God that, yes, what I've been doing here is grievous in your sight.

[25:20] And then we confess to those we've lied to, those who are believing our pseudo truths.

We confess it. Now, if you're a step ahead of me, you're probably doing the math. You're probably thinking, what kind of impact will this have on my relationships with these people?

And so for you to take a step like this, you know you're going to grieve somebody. You know you're going to hurt somebody. You know you're going to strain a relationship.

Because essentially what you're saying is, I've been lying to you. Your trust in me has been misfounded. now you at that moment are even thinking about this, you may feel isolated, right?

Remember, God is saying to you, you is mine, you is alive, and you is holy. Your confession pleases me.

[26:37] I see you speaking the truth. In these kinds of situations, the starting point is speaking the truth about your lies.

Calling a lie a lie. Calling a falsehood a falsehood. And then what? What does faith look like moving forward, right?

What do you do then? What do you do then? Well, if you look back in the text, in 425, it reads, therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. That word speak, it's called an imperative, it's a command. And the nature of the verb is an ongoing action. We are to continually speak the truth to one another.

And so what it looks like moving forward is we continually remember who we are, and we continually speak the truth to one another. We are to live in reality with each other.

[27:40] It's righteous and holy living. Now, if you've strained a relationship because of your lies, the way to repair and restore the loss of trust is to speak truthfully to that person.

To say what you mean, do what you say, to follow through, to speak honestly. And what will take place as you're trusting God here is that God will gradually regain the trust.

He'll work a work of repair of the one that you have deceived and grieved. Now, let's say you've been the one deceived, the one lied to.

You, too, need to remember who you are. you are a new creation. And so you read in verse 27, I think, 26, be angry and do not sin.

You read in verse 31, guard your heart, don't be bitter. You look at verse 32 and you read forgive as God in Christ Jesus forgave you, walk in love.

[28:53] It's tall order when you've been sinned against this way, isn't it? Can I just, can I just say something here? We've got to realize that when we sin this way against one another, though we are able to forgive each other when this happens, there's still been a breach of trust.

And so we can't be thinking that since I forgive you, all is well. It's not. There needs to be a repairing of trust in the relationship.

And so if someone's been lying to you and they confess that to you, please, by all means, forgive them as God and Christ has forgiven you. But you're going to be honest with them. You're going to need to say something like this.

Now, I'm glad to forgive you and I want to trust you, but it's going to take some time to trust you fully again. as you follow through with what you say.

As you walk the talk and talk the walk, I will purpose to trust you more and more. We're living in reality, aren't we? Now, if you are stuck in either of these situations, the one who's been lying or the one who's been lied to and you just don't feel like you know where to go right now, well, God has grace for you.

[30:17] Keep it real. Be honest and ask for help. Your elders, we're glad to help you with this. There are mature Christians in this church that can help you with this.

Go find help. The church has a role to help, which brings us to the last point. So we've looked at the mirror, we've moved to the closet, now let's talk about the church.

Did you notice in verse 25 that Paul provides another reason to speak truthfully? He says this, therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth and speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

For we are members one of another. What Paul is doing here, what God is doing is reminding us that we are a body. We have been intentionally knit together by God.

Each of us are individual members of the body of Christ and interdependent organism with Christ Jesus as our head.

[31:32] That's what Paul is saying. And he's saying that the health of our body depends upon our speaking the truth to each other. Look at Ephesians 4 15.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. Our speaking the truth to one another builds up the body.

It grows the body. And in this text, it's clear that each of us has a responsibility to speak truthfully to each other. Let each one of you speak the truth.

We're to keep it real with each other. We're to be honest with each other. Authentic. that's who God has made us to be. We've been created in the likeness of God.

And now we live it out by speaking truthfully. Two chain reactions with two different effects in a church. You ready? Here it goes.

[32:31] Living the old way, the former manner of life. It's like cancer to a body. Here's the chain reaction. We forget who we are, we lie to each other, we misrepresent ourselves to each other, and the result is mistrust between each other, leading to disunity in the church, which leads to atrophy of a church, which leads to a non-believing world looking at us and saying something like, God makes no difference in their body.

Is there a God? That's one chain reaction. Here's the second chain reaction. It's not like cancer. This is health. This is goodness.

This is God's grace. We remember who we are. We remember what God has done for us in Christ. We are new creations, and we purpose to keep it real, to speak truthfully to one another.

And in that truth speaking, even when sometimes it's hard to say something to someone, when we're being honest, it ends up building trust. And with that trust comes unity, and with that unity comes growth, and with that growth comes God's glory.

People are saying, what's going on there? And we get to say, God's at work. Two ways to be as a church. I vote for the latter.

[34:03] Let's speak the truth to each other, because we love each other. Imagine this. Christ the King Church, wearing our bright yellow keep it real, say no to spinning t-shirts, spread out throughout the week, throughout the city, throughout the region, in workplaces, in schools.

We're speaking the truth wherever we are. It's how we do it. And sometimes we're going to catch some heat for that. But it's the right thing to do.

It's who we are now. Now imagine this. When we gather as a church, with our keeping it real t-shirts on, on a Sunday morning, at Wednesday night Bible studies, when we come together in small groups, we're purposing to speak honestly, live honestly with each other, there's some good that's going to happen there.

God's going to be with us. He's going to grow us. He's going to get a glory unique to Him. See, what's at stake here is our unity and our health as a church, and ultimately God's glory, witness to His name.

So we've looked at the mirror, we've checked out our new wardrobe in the closet, and we've seen how Paul lands that in the church. Let me pray for us, and we'll close.

[35:43] God in heaven, we take great joy in knowing that You are a God who is a truthful God, and You're calling us to be truthful as well.

God, would You make us a body that delights and being true, being honest, keeping it real. God, would You grow us here?

Would You help us to put off the old way and to live in light of who we now are? God, make us a people who speak the truth and love to one other.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.