

Do Not Lie To One Another
Colossians 3:9-10

Four high school boys couldn't resist the temptation to skip morning classes. After lunch they showed up at school and reported to the teacher that their car had a flat tire. Much to their relief, she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a quiz this morning, so take your seats and get out a pencil and paper." Still smiling, she waited as they settled down and got ready for her question. Then she said, "First question, which tire was flat?"

A lawyer from North Carolina purchased a box of expensive cigars and insured them against flooding, storm damage, and – of all things – fire.

Needless to say, his investment went up in smoke within a month, after which the lawyer filed a claim with his homeowners insurance company stating that he was owed compensation because "the cigars were lost in a series of small fires."

The insurer refused to pay, assuming (correctly) that the man had smoked the cigars himself. The judge, however, ruled that since the insurer had never stated what was considered to be "unacceptable" fire, the company did, in fact, owe him \$15,000 to replace his property. The insurance company paid the claim, but then had the lawyer arrested. He was sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine for 24 counts of arson and insurance fraud.

The moral of the story: Close but no cigar.

Our one another admonition today is found in Colossians 3:9 where I invite you to turn this morning as we discover together that we are "not to lie to one another".

As I was preparing the message this week I was myself faced with the opportunity to consider a lie for the benefit of the church. Carl and I have spent many hours together accumulating documents and

collecting financial data that we submitted to the IRS to secure federal tax exempt status related to our 501(c)(3). We aren't certain why it wasn't applied for when the State application was made, so we find ourselves doing some back tracking.

We mailed in the application and fee and waited. This last week we received word that our request was sent to a determination board because it lacks some information. Apparently our purpose statement, which seems very specific to us as to the nature of our existence does not meet the IRC's criteria. In order for the application to proceed, we need to amend that statement.

That seems easy enough to do, except that the deadline to comply with their requirement to submit the change is less time than our constitution requires to make an amendment. I considered several options. The first was to look at whether or not we could temporarily suspend that specific requirement in the constitution regarding the 30 day notice required for an amendment. Sturgis's *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* allows for suspension of procedural rules only but not for "basic rule of common parliamentary law such as rules governing notice."

How else can we get through this sticky wicket?

Option 2: The IRS form indicated that we only need to send a signed statement indicating that the change has been made without sending them the amendment. What if we signed it as if it were completed but had the vote afterward to comply with our constitutional 30 day notice requirement? That seems like a simple solution.

It meets their deadline and it complies with our procedural requirement of 30 days' notice. Would that be okay? The answer is what class? (NO – it's telling them I've done something I haven't.)

Why isn't it okay? It's not okay because it would be lying, even if the motive seems to be right.

There's an old adage that says two wrongs don't make a right. I'll add the one wrong doesn't make a right either.

Years ago when I was working in Quality Assurance I was looking at equipment in a catalog and there was a T-shirt that read "when all else fails, change the data."

By the way, this serves as notice to the membership that on September 18 at 10am we will be calling a special business meeting for the purpose of amending the constitution in regard to our Church's purpose statement. This will provide the clarity required by the IRS. You can read the proposed amendment located on the bulletin board.

Let's read our verse together which also includes verse 10: (KJV) "Lie not one to another seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, that is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

NIV "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

Leviticus 19:11

Exodus 20:16

We could spend a month of Sundays on this topic and not exhaust it, and that's no lie. So I have to try and condense it into one message. Here's the first point of three.

I. CONSIDERING AN HONEST ASSESSMENT ABOUT LYING

A church sign read "Truth is, lies have to be invented."

Abraham Lincoln, or as we have heard him called "Honest Abe" once said "no man has a good enough memory to make a successful liar."

Austin O'Malley wrote "those who think its permissible to tell white lies soon become color blind."

You may remember as a kid hearing or saying some variation of "liar, liar pants on fire, can't get over a telephone wire."

Hollywood has made such movies as "Liar, Liar", "True Lies", and "The Invention of Lying."

The music industry has its share of songs about lying. Consider the following: Eminem (that's not the candy) "Love the Way You Lie", or the song by Fleetwood Mac "Little Lies" and Dapeche Mode (did I say that right?) "Lie to Me".

Movies and music aren't the only source. Consider that much of psychology embraces and teaches that some lying is reasonable, acceptable, and preferable in certain situations. Consider the following:

Dr. Alex Lickerman wrote an article in *Psychology Today* titled "Why We Shouldn't Lie". Yet in his article he begins by saying: "The idea of lying is strangely controversial. Most people seem to feel lying in some circumstances is not only acceptable but desirable. And, in fact, I agree. If you have to lie, for example, to save someone's life, or if lying turns out to be ultimately more compassionate than telling the truth, lying is probably the correct course of action to take. But most of the time most of us don't lie out of the spirit of compassion. And even when we do, we usually make the assumption that people are essentially fragile and have egos that will likely collapse, or at the very least be injured, if they hear unpleasant feedback."

My memory took me back to the day I was with my Dad signing Mom onto hospice. As we sat at the table with the nurse going over paperwork, Mom called to Dad and asked him "Am I dying?" What do you say? Out of compassion do you lie? I think Dad's response was we needed a nurse to help out.

As I read Dr. Lickerman's article I thought of Rahab back in the book of Joshua. He had sent a couple of spies into the land to check it out before they were to enter and conquer it. Their first stop was the city of Jericho. They came to the home of a certain prostitute named Rahab. City officials were told about these two Hebrew spies so they went to her house where the two men were last seen. She took the spies up on the roof and hid them among the stalks of grain. When she was questioned by Homeland Security, she lied and said they had left just before the gates were closed at dusk. If they hurried they could catch them. That was all a lie.

She lied as a way of saving them to save herself. It was self-serving. She understood who they were and believed, all be it immaturely, in the God of Israel that He was able to save her. She knew that if they lived, she would live. We find her as an example of saving faith in Hebrews 11. I have heard some Bible scholars explain her lie as merely doing what had been her practice and the natural instinct of human kind, that lying was acceptable but in time with growing faith lying would become a more distant practice for her.

St. Augustine, an early church father once said, "The true sin of lying is contained in the desire to deceive." He grouped lies into 8 different categories and went on to say that "God gave human beings speech so that they could make their thoughts known to each other; therefore using speech to deceive people is a sin, because it's using speech to do the opposite of what God intended."

An article in USA Today indicated a person lies 50 times a day. Another university study concluded that among its test subjects people lied 5-6 times every 10 minutes.

You meet someone at the store and ask how they are doing. Is it out of genuine interest or are you just being polite because you really don't care all that much because it would be rude not to say

anything?

Now the general response is "I'm fine." Maybe that's the honest answer or is it the answer you think they want to hear because truth is you'd like to say "well if you have 2 or 3 hours I'd love to really tell you how I'm doing if you're really interested."

Or how about when a telemarketer calls and you really don't want to talk to them so you say you have something on the stove or you were just getting ready to walk out the door or you can't talk because you're expecting an important call.

Someone says to the soloist that her song was powerful all the while thinking "yea, that really cleaned out my eardrums."

After the sermon someone says to the preacher that the message was really helpful and the person is thinking "It was helpful because I caught up on some needed sleep or balance my checkbook."

Webster's dictionary says a lie is making a statement that you know to be false, especially with the intent to deceive, to make such statements habitually; to give a false impression.

Warren Wiersbe defines it as a "misrepresentation of the truth, even if the words are accurate, the tone of voice, the look on the face, or a gesture of the hand can alter the meaning of a sentence. So can the motive of the heart."

If pride was the very first sin which caused Lucifer to fall from heaven, I think lying was the second sin when he deceived other angels in following him and then later came to the Garden of Eden and lied to Eve about the truth of God's Word to deceive her. I think we would all agree that outright lying is wrong. We shouldn't do it.

So, let me ask you a couple questions. The first: Is it ever okay to tell a little "white" lie?

Do you like my haircut?
How are you today?
Would pork chops be okay for dinner?

The second:

Is it ever okay to withhold some truth?

The teacher asks why you didn't get your homework done and you say it's because you were helping take care of your Grandmother, but you leave out that it was last month.

The boss asks why you were late for work and you state that there was an accident on the way, but you don't mention that you took a detour to get coffee.

Someone has rightly said that a half truth is still a whole lie.

People embellish a little bit on their income tax.
People withhold some figures on their income tax.
Students cheat on a test which I believe to be a form of lying because the intent is to deceive.

A report given by CNN indicated that "Cheating is a shortcut and it's a pretty efficient one in a lot of cases." The article went on to discuss an interview with a Sr. at a top High school in Virginia. She said that students have very little sense of moral outrage about cheating. For many, she says, the pressure to do well academically and compete for good colleges has made cheating a way to survive high school. She says "What's important is getting ahead. The better grades you have, the better school you get into, the better you're going to do in life. And if you learn to cut corners to do that, you're going to be saving yourself time and energy. In the real world, that's what's going to be going on. The better you do, that's what shows. It's not how moral you were in getting there."

CNN included in their article a national survey by Rutgers' Management Education Center of 4,500 high school students which found that 75 percent of those surveyed engage in serious cheating. More than half have plagiarized work they found on the Internet. Perhaps most disturbing is that many of them don't see anything wrong with cheating: Some 50 percent of those responding to the survey

said they don't think copying answers from a test is even cheating.

Listen to these comments from the survey.

"I actually think cheating is good. A person who has an entirely honest life can't succeed these days."

"We students know that the fact is we are almost completely judged on our grades. They are so important that we will sacrifice our own integrity to make a good impression."

One researcher described lying as "an unavoidable part of human nature". Lying has been described as one of the most common wrong acts that we carry out, but while it seems acceptable to do to others no one likes to be lied to.

We are well entrenched in the election cycle and there is a lot of mud flinging between politicians about who is lying about what. I'll say no more.

Integrity and honesty no longer matter, but that's exactly why lying to the IRS about a vote is so important to me and why option 2 isn't even a consideration. I would rather be denied approval and retain integrity for myself and our church than to lie for the sake of a piece of paper that gives us certain status with stores when we make a purchase.

II. CONSIDERING THE HABITUAL ACTIVITY OF LYING

According to our verse, lying has no place in the practice of the Christian - for any reason. There are no exceptions. The tense of the wording indicates it is something that is to stop immediately.

H. A. Ironside says that "lying is one of the very first evidences of the [sinful} nature."

John 8:44 says "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire... When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

That's pretty strong language. The next time we

consider lying, even a little one or seemingly benign one, remember that it stems from the devil.

Let me give you some reasons people lie.

1. We lie to protect our self or others. There's an image to protect, an image to maintain. So a lie perpetuates that image, living a lie, keeping up pretenses. A person might fear losing respect from others, so they protect themselves with lies.

That's what Peter did to protect himself with when he denied knowing Christ.

How about when the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest and Jesus asked them what they were talking about. They lied about it being anything of importance.

Rahab lied to protect herself and the two spies.

Abraham lied about Sarah being his wife because he feared they would kill him.

Sarah lied about laughing when the angels said she would be a mother at age 90.

Isaac lied about Rebekah being his wife.

Cain lied about the whereabouts of Abel.

"Where's your brother?"

"How should I know? Am I my brother's keeper?"

He knew exactly where he was – 6 feet under.

2. We lie to punish someone else. Instead of trying to protect someone, we want to get someone else in trouble. A lie is vengeful and retaliatory in nature. It could be to shame the other person or to embarrass them or to inflict some painful consequence: a demotion, fired, in trouble with the law or a parent or teacher.

The wife of Potiphar lied about Joseph trying to seduce her because he wouldn't sleep with her. Joseph ended up spending time in the pokey.

3. We lie to profit by it.

Lying will bring about some tangible reward, a promotion, a bonus, a new job, ice cream, anything that will be of benefit now and for the future.

King Ahab wanted a choice vineyard next to the palace. Naboth wouldn't sell the family farm with all those luscious grapes. The king went home and had a big pity party in front of his wife, Queen Jezebel. She jolted him into reality "Aren't you the king, get up and take what you want." So she brought in a couple of worthless guys who accused Naboth of blaspheming God, which is interesting because they didn't care one bit about God. Consequently Naboth was stoned.

4. We lie to prove ourselves to others. It may be that we'll get attention from someone else like a boss or teacher or interviewer. We want to get in good with a club or group at school or work or community. So we make something up about an accomplishment.

There is the story of a man who really wanted to become a weatherman (and we all know how they always tell the truth). He attended three universities taking various classes and majors. The problem is he never finished any of them and didn't get a degree. However, that didn't stop him from applying at a local TV station passing himself off with a Doctorate in geophysics. He became known as Dr. Bob. His ruse was well played out and he became the consulting meteorologist for the *New York Times*. That same year he was hired by the Long Island railroad and baseball commissioner Bobbie Kuhn.

At the age of 40 he was living his childhood dream but that all came to a screeching halt when an anonymous letter was sent to the station urging them to check his credentials.

5. We lie to persuade others. We may want someone to go along with an idea we have or like our weatherman persuade them to accept us. In some way we try to influence the

decision of others. It may be for a vote, a grade, empathy, love, a job.

6. We lie to please others.

We tell them what they want to hear thinking that's the right thing to do or say. Mom asks Alex to clean his room and when asked says he did to please her knowing all he did was stuff things under the bed

7. We lie out of pride.

A friend of mine tells about the days he played football at U of M. He used to tell people that in one of the games he played opposite of Mean Joe Green as he became known playing with the Pittsburgh Steelers. It is true that he played opposite of Mean Joe Green, but that was deceiving as he would later confess.

We would naturally think that lining up opposite of someone else means that you are here and the other person is right across from you on the line of scrimmage. The truth is while my friend was here Mean Joe Green was on the line in the opposite corner. It was pride.

8. We lie to prevent having to do something we don't want to do.

It may be getting out of what might otherwise be a long, boring conversation.

It may be getting out of doing chores.

Here's a thought: what if we were all like Pinocchio and every time we told a lie our nose grew?

As I said earlier from the study of one researcher lying is an unavoidable part of human nature which strikes at the heart of the matter. Let's consider our final point.

III. CONSIDERING A HALLOWED APPROACH TO LYING

Let's look again at our passage. Follow once more in verses 9-10.

Ephesians 4:22-25 This is the parallel passage.

II Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore if any man is in Christ (if a person is born again, saved) he is (what?) a new creation.” Underline that.

In Christ we have a new nature and we don't have to sin, we don't have to lie. We choose to lie because we are still influenced by the old nature. Romans 6:1-2 “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in (keep doing) it any longer?”

Paul tells us here that we have put off the old clothes, a symbol of our old nature, when we trusted Christ as Savior and have put on the new clothes of Christ's righteousness.

The Great Plague took place in 1665. It raged with fury in the city of London and did not discriminate against anyone – young, old, male, female, rich, poor. Those who could afford it fled the city. Those who remained lived in fear. Those who fled the city were met by angry villagers who were determined to keep the plague from coming to their homes.

Because people did not know what caused the plague, the most elementary hygienic practices were ignored. People in the city continued to send parcels of used clothing, often the property of the dead, to poorer relatives in the country or to relief agencies. Even clothes stripped off dead bodies of those who succumbed to the plague were sent to relatives.

You can imagine the joy of some people when they got clothes often better than what they were wearing. But then they were horrified when they discovered that these attractive garments had come from one of the plague victims. Sickened they would strip them off and immediately burn them.

John Phillips writes that it is with the same horror that we should strip off the old man and his deeds. They old nature is part of the curse or plague passed on by Adam when he sinned and it is to be put off.

If we now have a new nature given to us by God through our personal faith in Christ we must practice speaking truth because that is the nature of our new Father. God is truth.

John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only of the begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

About Himself, Jesus said “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me.” John 14:6

One Bible scholar noted that this sentence is in the aorist tense suggesting that it is an event that has already taken place. Our new identity has already been changed. The only thing that remains is for us to bring our behavior in line with our new identity. Romans 6:6-7 “For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”

Ephesians 2:10 tells us that we are God’s workmanship.

Our passage also says that we are being renewed which is in the present tense indicating that this transformation is an ongoing process. While our position has already changed, our practice needs to come in line with our position. Let me say it this way: while God sees us as holy through Christ we are still far from holy in practice which is changing daily.

I John 3:2-3 “Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. Every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.”

Howieism – “I’m not what I was and neither am I yet what I’m going to be.”

II Corinthians 3:18

I Corinthians 15:49

God didn’t just take the old self and give us a new paint job as if we were an old rusty car out of the junk yard buffed and painted to make us look new. We have been made new, now let’s act like it.

John MacArthur adds that “Christians must dress themselves spiritually in accordance with their new identity. They have died to Christ and risen to new life.”

Two things occur when we are saved. On the negative side we throw off the old nature while on the positive side we put on the new nature.

How do we do that? Our passage gives us a clue. We are being renewed in knowledge in the image of our Creator. It means we are to grow up, to be changed into a new kind of life. The source of this knowledge of course is the Bible from where we learn what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false.

II Timothy 3:16-17 – “All Scripture is given...”

I Peter 2:2 “As new born babes desire the pure milk of the Word that by it we may grow.

As we come to know and live God’s Word we begin to become more like Christ in character.

We can lie by many different ways: deceit, slander, gossip, insinuation, flattery, half-truths, excuses and exaggeration. They are all lies and our passage says that as a Christian we are to stop that practice.

As Christians we should love the truth.

As Christians we should learn the truth. Philippians 4:8 tells us to think on what is true.

As Christians we should live the truth. Ephesians 4:25 says we are to put off speaking falsehood and speak the truth.

We are called to be truthful with one another. Let’s be known as people who practice what we profess.