

## Who are you when no one is looking?

*Ephesians 4:25 ESV*

*(25) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

Over the last 3 years or so you would have heard me say at one point or another:

Every one of us has three people to deal with:

- the person they want other people to think they are
- the person they think they are
- The person they really are.

We live in a society and that is fixated with external appearances and shallow relationship.

Where the measure of a life is what another thinks about them, not who they truly are.

Now Paul, in the book of Ephesians is dealing with a similar problem.

Paul is writing here and he is in the middle of a discussion with the churches that filled that area of Asia and he is trying to help them see who they are to become in Christ and all that God has for them. He is talking to them about what this new Life as a Christian looks like.

He starts in verse 17 by saying; you must no longer walk as those that do not know Christ.

Then he goes on and talks about the need to put off the old man and put on the new.

How in Christ we need to stop the old and start the new.

That we are now longer bound by the old, but we are creatures of a different God now.

Not the little gods of our own life, but Children of the one true God.

How we are made in His righteous, in Christ.

Being born again is just that, we are born again.

We are supposed to be different, live different, feel different, and see the world differently.

But sometimes that is just TOUGH!

Especially when you read down the list of things Paul gives us:

- We should stop lying
- We should always tell our neighbors the truth
- Be angry but don't sin
- Do honest work
- No corrupt talk to come out of your mouth
- Don't grieve the Holy Ghost
- Don't be bitter, angry or slanderous

And to top it all off he says we should be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving

My first reaction...yeah right...good luck with that mate!

In reality what Paul is doing is giving us lifetime time goals, not instant demands.

This is where most people internally implode when they read these sorts of things.

Paul is saying that this is the new life we should be aiming to live.

These are the new goal post that you can be aiming for.

These are not things that are going to be achieved the moment you give your life to Christ.

Why was he writing these things?

Because he was dealing with people just like us

People from a pagan/religious culture who have been saved by a Holy God and don't have a clue as to what a real Christian looks like.

He was dealing with people like us and he was giving them very practical insights and guidelines for the rest of their life.

You see the gospel of Jesus Christ is immensely practical.  
It is not an ethereal faith.  
It is not a faith of oaths, codes and mystical chants.

I open James this morning to do my devotionals and had to stop because I found myself caught up in the immensely practical nature of it. The guidelines, the input, the coaching. I found it so rich in tips on day to day living, I had to force my self to pull away and get ready for church.

It is a faith that is lived out day by day by real people who are loved by a real God in spite of themselves!

And this God of ours, this savior does not expect perfection from us, in fact He is so aware of our frailties and tendency to stuff things up that He gives us very practical teachings through His Word about how to live this life successfully for Him.

## **Put away Lying**

The first thing Paul talks about is lying  
Put away lying  
Put away falsehood

A couple of thoughts to start with...

### **First thought:**

You can lie with your words.  
But you can also lie without saying a word.

Paul doesn't just say that as new creatures we should TELL the TRUTH. He says, you should stop being false and start BEING truthful.

Paul is speaking about a lack of authentic living.

A falsehood is a façade, deceit that runs much deeper than the words we say.

It is the life we live and the actions we take or don't take that make us who we are.

When Paul says that we must put away lying, he is not interested in what the moralists are saying, he is not insisting that this is a good thing in general for society and a nice thing for the church.

No, it is far greater than that.

He is saying that truth is who God is.

*Ephesians 4:24 ESV*

*(24) And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

There is no shadow of turning in God.

God is thoroughly and totally consistent.  
He is authentic through and through.

As new creations we are to be consistent like He is.  
We have been recreated in His image through the process of being born again. No longer bound to the old, but alive in the new.

As God is, so must we be.

### **Second thought:**

Now when Paul starts, he starts with the deepest thing within us. He doesn't start by saying that the fruit of this new life should be an external thing.

It is not first manifest in a change of behavior.

He is saying that the first fruit of your redeemed life, the first fruit of your born again experience will be shown by what you say and who you say it to.

*Out of the abundance the mouth speaks.*

Who you are on the inside leaks out and manifests itself through your mouth.

Paul is not talking about the words that come out of your mouth, he is talking about your inner being, your inner core, the things that these words represent.

You see, he has said in the verse before this, that we have been thoroughly and radically changed, we are no longer that old person, and we are someone totally different, totally new.

And that this change must effect every aspect of who we are and what we do, and that this truth or falsehood will be reflected in and by our mouth.

Speak truth to your neighbors.

Not just your neighbors in church.

Your neighbors in life.

Let the love of Christ rule and reign in your members.

IN ALL OF YOUR MEMBERS

Including this most unruly one.

Your tongue.

And that is exactly what Paul is talking about here.

Paul is starting a conversation about the fruits of a redeemed life.

The lack of falsehood

Speaking the truth

Being angry and not sinning

Give no opportunity to the devil

Not letting the devil steal your opportunities

Not being corrupt in your communication

Not grieving the Holy Ghost

Putting away malice

And finally, being tenderhearted and it is a conversation that highlights and shows us the areas that we can give ourselves to and gauge our progress by over time.

### **Third thought:**

And I am just being honest here, I find this daunting.

I look at the fruit that Paul is saying here, I look at the things that he is giving us to measure our lives by and I find myself short on many occasions.

But, then I think of the man who rewrote them.

A murderer at one stage

A religious bigot

A blasphemer

A man who was known for his fiery temper and strong leadership.

Maybe Paul, I know he is here is sitting back and looking over his life and saying....in reflection, this is what Christ has done in me, these are the things that I have come to value and appreciate now at the end of my life.

I can not control the length of my life.

But, I can control the quality of my life.

And also the depth and sincerity of my relationship with God and with others.

#### **Fourth thought:**

Authenticity is the first fruits of a redeemed life.  
Authentic living is not something that comes easy to fallen humanity

Think about it.

Was it not lying and deceit and falsehood and deception that lead to the fall of man?

Absolutely.

These are the very first sins that corrupted us.

Did not the seeing, all knowing God come looking for Adam?

Adam who he loved.

Adam who He loved to walk with.

Adam who he loved to talk with.

Didn't he come to Adam and ask...son...where are you...what are you doing....what have you done?

God loved to be with Adam.

He loved to walk and talk with Adam.

Adam, naked, uncovered, authentic in open and relax communication with his Father.

Nothing to hide.

Nothing to be ashamed of.

Accepted and accepting.

Then Adam did something he should not have done,  
and as a result of this internal decision that he made  
He changed his behavior in an external way.

When God came to Adam, he did not ask what had been said to him by the devil, or by his wife.

He asked what had been done.

*Genesis 3:8-12 ESV*

*(9) But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*

*(10) And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."*

*(11) He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"*

*(12) The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."*

The first effect that a sin filled life has on a person is that it destroys their created authenticity.

That is why Paul says here that the first fruits of a redeemed life is the lack of falsehood.

And Adam in his deceit, Adam in his sin  
Adam in his fallen state, hid from God.

Hid, from the Hebrew word "*cha-ba*".

To be secretive  
To hide oneself  
To harden  
To thicken

Paul says... The first signs of a redeemed life is an authentic life.

It is a life that is lacking in falsehood.

Let each one of you be real and honest with who you are and where you are up to in Christ.

Don't be thickened or calloused by the world and sin, false expectations, false relationships, false appearances.

You are a new creation in Christ.

Don't carry your secretive old self into this new life.

Don't carry the old lies, the old performance based fake agendas into the new way of living.

Don't hide yourself from one another.

Paul is saying be comfortable with your self, not with your old sin.

He has already told us that we are to put away our old self.

That we should not be given over to sensual pleasure and an ignorant ungodly lifestyle.

He is now going on and saying the start of it all, the start and first fruits of this new creation is living authentically.

**As we often do, let's start briefly with the negatives, here is what authentic living is NOT:**

- It is not an excuse for a sinful lifestyle
- It is not an excuse for a rebellious attitude
- It is not dressing poorly or inappropriately and saying that another just has to accept it
- It is not living a lifestyle of sin and proclaiming that you were just who I was born
- It is not being weird and blaming other because they think you are weird
- Doesn't give you the right to dump your garbage in someone else's back yard. In fact living an authentic life means you have to own your stuff!

In fact, if I saw that you were living in a way and a lifestyle that would take you away from God and end in eternal damnation, then it would be unauthentic of me NOT to challenge you and call you to repentance.

Paul is very clear that the process of sanctification results in change. But it is change over time.

It is change and a deep level for reasons of passion, not reason of conformity.

*We once had a guy who brought his exotic tiger type thing to church  
It was cool  
But I didn't think it was good to have it around the kids  
He said I was not accepting  
I said no, it was not an issue of acceptance...but responsibility....i didn't want kids eaten...hey the guy wasn't looking for a place to belong, he was looking for a place to perform.*

Paul is saying here that living an authentic life goes beyond being true to your *old self*.  
It is being to true to *the new self* within you.  
The born again self.

It is a sincere effort to grow and mature in a real and realistic way into the person that God wants you to be in Christ Jesus.  
In fact, all of the common excuses that I just listed are surface excuses.

By there very nature they are unauthentic.  
They are shallow.  
They lack sincere motive and depth.

They are all based upon external acceptance.

I don't care if you come in wearing biker gear or cowboy gear or a \$3000 suit...I have them all in my wardrobe – they are not important to me...the clothes do not make the man.

Wear a \$5 watch or a \$4500 watch – I have them all.

Drive a \$1500 car or a \$150,000 car – I have owned them both.

But if your clothing, if your clique,  
If your car, if your external appearance is a big issue to you,  
then you are the one with the problem, not me, not the people in this church.

I have friends in trailer homes.  
I have friends in mansions.  
I have friends on farms.  
I have friends in condos.  
I have friends that ride bikes  
I have friends that fly planes.

The one common thing...they are friends.  
They are authentic.  
They are real.

Don't project your insecurity, based upon your previous rejection into your current relationship, onto your current church, it will stun you and limit you.

### **Four things I notice here that Paul outlines:**

#### **1. You have to put away falsehood**

Falsehood is something that you have to put away.  
You have to determine to be authentic.  
Authenticity is a risk you must take on every level with everybody all the time.  
It is a desire and the risk to be a living work in progress.  
That, if you are struggling you put your hand up.  
If someone needs help you give him or her a hand up.  
It is an openness of communication and relationship that few ever really experience, and never experience, if not deliberately cultivated.

You have to put this away.  
We have very little time on this earth to do what we can do for God and His kingdom.

I don't want to spend it in regret.  
I don't want to waste it on things that don't matter.  
I don't want to fill my life with relationships that have no depth.

In order for you to move from a life of falsehood to an authentic life in Christ you will have to make a conscious effort to change.

## Put away falsehood

To put away means to cast something off.  
It is from two Greek words that mean:

To separate from and put physical distance between something  
or to wear something no longer.

Authenticity is a cloak that you wear, it becomes your life.  
It is a mark of who you are.  
It is who people come to see you and know you by.

But you have to PUT off one before you can clothe yourself in the  
other.  
Knowing full well that to do so could hurt you deeply.

Richard Baxter in his book Reformed Pastor, written some 350 years  
ago gave 5 brief outlines for the code and conduct of a pastor,  
number 3 is:

*Ministers and overseers must have personal relationships with  
their congregations, risking familiarity and contempt towards  
themselves to achieve a greater good.*

How far we have come from that!

Being authentic and unwise is not the same thing.  
I am open with those closest to me, not ever stranger in the street.  
I am who I am with everybody, but there is a level of intimacy that I  
reserve for those who are authentic with me.

Religion trains you in facades.  
Life teaches you that to be honest and sincere will only get you hurt.  
Paul is saying rise above those two fears and those two experiences  
and know the joy and freedom of putting off the old and putting on the  
new.

## 2. Speak the truth

Is there anything like lying that is so easy to do and yet so hurtful to all involved.

Lying, pretense, façade,  
the unhappiness it causes,  
the shame it brings  
The relationships and hearts it breaks.

Yet how accepted is it?  
How easy it is to do

We lie to one person about one thing,  
then another about another thing,  
all the time trying to remember all of the lies, all of the deceit, all of the falsehood.

You see friend, we express ourselves most profoundly or most putridly with our words.

They are the true expression of who we are and what we love or fear.

Someone with a fear of man, will lie to avoid trouble.  
Someone with a fear of rejection will lie to be accepted.  
Someone with a pride issues will lie so as to not look bad.  
And immature person will lie to avoid the ramification of wrong behavior

A person starts by making one mistake and then feels bad about it so covers it up. This leads to another lie. Then the things develop into a snowball.

He knows that the only way out is to admit his error, but that would mean humbling himself so he doesn't.  
He continues to lie.  
Continues to juggle.  
One affair leads to another.  
One lie feeds into another. One justification leads to another.

All of this springs out of the river of falsehood.

All of it springs out of self.

Selfishness

Self-righteousness

Self-centeredness

Self-preservation

Paul is saying, this is not how we are to live.

This is not the fruit of a life that has been surrendered to Christ.

You can't live the life you once lived.

You can't act like that.

You can't be like that.

You are a new creation.

You are no longer a Gentile, a non-Christian.

You can't give misleading statements and call yourself a Christian business person.

You can't lie to get a sale.

You can't misrepresent yourself and pretend to be something that you are not...this is not telling the truth...this is not being authentic.

I knew a man once who was married and engaged in multiple affairs....that is not how a Christian lives.

I knew a man once who would look you in the eye and tell you he had done a thing and it was never done and yet called himself a Christian.

I knew a man once, who worked with the biggest churches in America, who time after time was stolen from and lied to because they didn't believe that they needed to honor their word.

They are not authentic in their faith

Their faith does not touch every area of their life.

Paul says these people are gentiles; they are unregenerate in their mind and life.

## **Speak the truth with his neighbor**

### **Falsehood affects the way the world sees Christ.**

Now this authentic living, this honesty of communication, is not just something that is done internally.

But it is something that must affect all of your relationships.

*Brennan Manning said*

*"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable."*

Does the world expect you to be perfect?

Does a sinning and fallen world expect you to be sinless?

I actually don't believe so.

What it does, is it expects you to be authentic.

A person who stands in the pulpit of their life day after day and preaches one thing yet abuses their children, their wife, steals from their company, or their church:

That's what a Pharisee is. A Pharisee lives a life of falsehood. They believe they are righteous and holy and have no need of a Messiah...oh they will tell you that they are waiting for one, but their are living like they have all the answers.

You see the world looks at that and says...there is no truth visible in their life.

No passion

No fruit

Hey, they are living like I am, so I must be ok.

The world has no problem with a sinner redeemed.  
The world has a problem with a righteous hypocrite.

### **Falsehood affects friendship**

There is a great line from Matrix 3.  
Neo is introduced to Seraph by way of a 5 minute martial arts battle.  
At mid point, with no clear winner, Seraph stops the fight.  
Seraph said "I needed to be sure that you are actually The One".  
Neo replied "You could have just asked".  
And Seraph says know someone until you fight them"...

The Bible says that iron sharpens iron.

That as we grate on each other in the natural course of close contact  
and intimate relationship  
as neighbors in life,  
as neighbors in church,  
as neighbors in business,  
as neighbors in battles with each other, and beside each other,  
We will know each other.

Diversity should strengthen not divide.  
If you only know the perfect me, the external me, the façade me, then  
there is no way that you will reject me, because you do not know me.  
And if you do not know me, you can never love me.

But if I know you and I choose to love you in spite of the fact that you  
tick me off every now and again, and then our relationship is based  
on common acceptance, mutual respect and a bond of friendship.  
If for some reason I ever had to go back to Australia, I hope there are  
lives in this room that would be grieve for the rest of their days.

I hope that there would some of you that would be heart broken.  
That would look back and say they were the best years and  
relationship we every had.  
Because I know that is how I would feel.

Would I make more friends? Yes  
Would I have great experiences? Yes  
Would my relationship or experiences be just as intense? I would hope so.

But I hope they could never be BETTER FRIENDS or BETTER EXPERIENCES...why?

Because that means that I never gave myself to you.  
That I withheld my heart from you.  
That I was not open and vulnerable.  
That I was false and I lived a hardened life.  
A life that was thickened by fear.

You see if I live a life open,  
transparent,  
a vulnerable life,  
that gives you the opportunity to either accept me and love me and walk with me and be enriched by our exchange,  
or despise and reject me.

They both come from the same place friend.

Paul says that the fruit of a redeemed life is that you have to put away the fear of rejection.  
You have to put away the fear that people will let you down.  
You can't be this new creation with all those old fear parameters.

You can't live shallow lives anymore.  
Life is too short, and the business of the kingdom is too great.

You must be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

#### 4. We are members of one another

*John Donne said:*

*“No man is an island up to himself”.*

Your lack of authenticity affects me.  
It affects my ability to know you.  
To love you.  
To know what you need and how to help you.

How come people on face book,  
people you don't really know or don't even really care about, know  
more about your struggles than your pastors or friends in the church?

Why do they?  
Why do you twitter your issues, instead of sit and discuss them?  
Why?

Because you're false.  
You don't really want help.  
You don't really want authentic relationships.

*What if you reject me?*  
*What if you don't like me anymore?*  
*What if you don't accept me?*

Then we are not authentic and you don't need to be here at all.  
But what if we can help?  
What if we do love?  
What if we can be trusted?

Let's take it one step further.

What if the issue is yours, not ours?  
What if you really don't want to change?

You just want another place to turn up and pretend and perform.  
You want to lift your hands and lie to God, not cry out to God.

Your need is our reason.

My pain should be shouldered by those I love.

And if they reject me, then they never loved me and I am richer for knowing that now.

I have been in church.

I have worked in church.

I have attended church.

When your acceptance was based upon what you wear, dress and say, it makes me sick to think of the heart ache it causes us.

And Paul is saying here that that is not the people we should be and that is not the relationships we should have.