

Sunday, October 18, 2009—The Weight of Our Words—To Tell the Truth: Beguilement, Deceit, Lying, and False Witness

Introduction

- Last week we began a new fall series of messages entitled *The Weight of Words: Measuring the Impact of What We Say*.
- In our introduction we looked at five principals regarding the tongue out of James 3.
 - Principle 1: Controlled Speech Is a Measure of Maturity—James 3:2
 - Principle 2: The Tongue is Small but Significant—James 3:3-5
 - Principle 3: Our Words Are Potentially Combustible—James 3:6
 - Principle 4: The Tongue is Like a Wild and Deadly Beast—James 3:7-8
 - Principle 5: The Tongue Tends to Promote a Double Standard—James 3:9-12
- Ephesians 4:9-21
 - Corrupt--rotten, putrefied, 2) corrupted by one and no longer fit for use, worn out, 3) of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless
 - Edifying—building up, the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness
 - Evil Speaking--slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name, 2) impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty
- Today we are going to begin looking at different forms of corrupt communication and evil speaking by considering the issue of telling the truth.
- Truth-telling has fallen on hard times. Our culture has shifted to the ethics of expediency and self-advancement, so falsehood is not only tolerated but even encouraged in many cases. Any slight untruths to gain a competitive edge are accepted in our modern culture.
- Truth is the underlying foundation for trust, confidence, integrity, faith, security, and stability. Conversely, falsehood is allied with suspicion, doubt, withdrawal, insecurity, conflict, resentment, and anger.

Why Is the Truth So Important?

- The Scriptures emphasize the serious nature of tampering with the truth.
 - Exodus 20:16—lying is forbidden in the 10 Commandments
 - Psalm 51:6—God desires truth to live within us.

- Proverbs 6:17—a lying tongue is included in the list of items that the Lord hates.
 - Revelation 21:8—liars are included with those whose eternal sentence will be the lake of fire.
- Why is truth so important to God?
 - *Reason 1: Truth Aligns Us with God*
 - God's intense concern for truthfulness centers on his very nature.
 - Psalm 25:10
 - Psalm 31:5—God is a God of truth.
 - Titus 1:2—God cannot lie.
 - John 1:14—Jesus Christ was full of Grace and truth.
 - John 4:24—without truth we cannot worship God.
 - John 14:6—Jesus Christ the way the truth and the life.
 - John 17:17—the word of God is the only source of objective truth.
 - Truth is absolute not relative. Truth is that which corresponds to its referent. Without the correspondence view of truth lying would be impossible.
 - *Reason 2: We are Redeemed to reflect God's Character*
 - Romans 8:29—our very purpose as believers is to be conformed to the image of Christ. If God is truth then we too must portray truth to accurately reflect God's image in our lives.
 - *Reason 3: Truth-telling is a Matter of Submission to God's Will*
 - God's Word commands us to speak the truth—regardless of the cost.
 - Proverbs 13:5
 - Colossians 3:9

Beguilement

- The word beguile appears twice in the Scriptures.
 - Colossians 2:4, 18
- The Greek word translated beguile carries the following meanings:

- to reckon wrong, miscount
 - to cheat by false reckoning
 - to deceive by false reasoning
 - to deceive, delude, circumvent
- Beguilement is the sin of disseminating false conclusions. It is to delude or be deluded. Although often done innocently, it is devastating. It plants seeds of mistrust, doubt, and confusion.

Deceit

- We tend to equate the facts with truth, yet its amazing how “facts” can be arranged to distort the truth.
- Consider the following sentences as examples.
 - Woman without her man is a beast!
 - Woman—without her, man is a beast!
- The words didn’t change, but the “truth” of the statement changed considerably thanks to two simple punctuation marks.
- The tremendous power of deceit is demonstrated in Genesis 3:1-6. Through deceit, Satan not only gained control of Eve but also caused Adam to sin thereby imposing the curse of sin upon all of God’s creation.
- Genesis 3:1—notice that at this point Satan is dealing with factual information. But Satan’s presentation of the facts suggested that God was restrictive and stingy. To Eve, serving God was now perceived as enslavement. She concluded that God was keeping her from experience the completeness of life.
- Genesis 2:16-17—after reading what God actually said we ought to be struck by his generosity and love. Adam and Eve could eat from every tree in the garden except one—what a kind and generous creator.
- Satan presented truth in a way that deceived Eve into thinking wrongly about God. He twisted the facts to gain an advantage this is what the Scriptures define as deceit.
 - Genesis 3:13
 - II Corinthians 11:3
- The word beguiled come from a different Greek word than one we looked at earlier. The one in II Corinthians is translated other places as deceive.
 - Romans 7:11
 - Romans 16:18
 - I Corinthians 3:18
 - II Thessalonians 2:3

- Deception has become a widely used technique for manipulation, self-advancement, and self-protection.
- Proverbs 20:17
- Proverbs 12:20—deceit is a sign of a wicked heart.

Lying

- Both beguilement and deceit tamper with, twist, and distort the truth. Lying is the direct communication of untruth.
- Lying is the base of Satan's strategy. In Genesis 3, not only did Satan deceive Eve by playing with the facts He lied to her about God and His Word.
- Compare Genesis 3:4 with Genesis 2:17. Lying is the central part of Satan's strategy.
- Romans 1:25
- John 8:44-- when we lie, we follow the Satan's course for this world rather than God.
- Untruth is still Satan's main method of operation today. He has pervaded our culture with the i.e. that there are no consequences to sin. Satan's lie are abundant:
 - Be as good as you can, and you'll go to heaven. Just be sincere.
 - Mankind is the result of a chance evolutionary process. There is not God.
 - Success can be measured by wealth and material possessions.
 - Freedom is found in doing anything that makes you happy.
- Colossians 3:9-10—lying is part of our old nature. This is why lying comes so easily; it is part of our flesh programming.
- Lying is a quick and easy way to gain advantage, protection, and promotion of personal interests. We lie to get people's attention and have them think more highly of us. We lie to get rich or to get elected. We lie to protect our reputations. We lie to escape punishment.
- Ephesians 4:15—this does not mean we should blast people with the truth.
- Colossians 4:6

False Witness

- The expression false witness is found in 21 verses in the King James Bible.
- Exodus 20:16
- Exodus 23:1
- Deuteronomy 19:16-18
- False witness refers to those who bear false testimony against another person, often for some personal gain.
- I Kings 21:1-16
- Matthew 26:60-61
- False witness is so offensive because it strikes injury, often irreparable, to innocent people, their reputations, livelihoods, and families. It had the power to kill Naboth and to crucify Christ.

Conclusion

- Beguilement, deceit, lying, false witness are all methods of Satan to defeat God's glory in us and through us. It is through these flesh patterns that he enlists us into his network of "nontruth" and gets us to participate in his lie program.
- Beguilement—disseminating information gleaned from false conclusions.
- Deceit—the willful manipulation and distortion of facts.
- Lying—the direct communication of untruth most often for selfish reasons.
- False Witness—willful false testimony spoken against someone else.