

SERMON SERIES: Words Matter

SPEAKER: Scott Beckenhauer

DATE: February 16, 2025

Sermon Title

“Truth > Lies”

Introduction

This week, we continued our series called **Words Matter**. We spend so much of our lives communicating. We talk, text, email, post, comment, etc. And it is easy to focus on the quantity of our words and miss out on the importance of the quality of our words. The words that we choose to use communicate more than just their definition, but are a reflection of our heart and our faith. This week, we focused on the importance of speaking truth over lies. Lies create problems, cause relationships to be damaged and break, and lead us towards a life that is not reflecting our Savior. But when we choose to live our lives speaking truth, we actually exemplify our new life in Christ and build others up towards that same mission. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- What are some common “white-lies” that you have either heard or said? What makes them so easy to justify as something other than a lie?

Seek the Word

Read Proverbs 12:18-22 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- What does this passage say about God’s view on lying and trustworthiness?
- What does it mean to you when you can be counted on by others as trustworthy? What did it take for you to become viewed that way?

Read Matthew 15:1-20 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- What is the relationship between what is in our hearts and the words that we choose to use?
- Why is it significant that the words we say (slander and false testimony) are called evil alongside things like murder, adultery, sexual immorality, and theft?

Read James 3:3-12 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- What does this passage tell us about the dangers of the tongue (our words)?
- Would you consider your current use of words to be like salt water or fresh water?

Go Deeper

Colossians 3:9-10 say, “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on your new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in this image of its Creator.” For those of you who have been born into a new life in Christ, would you say that your words reflect that new identity, or are they still a reflection of your old self? What does it show the world around us when followers of Christ say “old-self” things while claiming a new self?

Talk About It

Scott introduced us to 3 filters for us to put our words through as we strive to have hearts aligned with Christ. For each “filter”, answer the questions and share what impacts can come from using these filters.

- **Filter #1:** Am I speaking the whole truth?
 - What does “truth” mean, especially in a culture where truth can be a subjective and personal thing?
 - How are we to balance speaking the whole truth while still striving for grace and peace?
- **Filter #2:** Am I guilty of gossip or slander?
 - What are things that are considered gossip and slander?
 - What are some easy ways that we justify or rationalize gossip and slander?
- **Filter #3:** Do I speak the truth in love?
 - How did Jesus communicate truth in love, and how can we follow that example?
 - Do you struggle communicating the truth about God in a loving way, or do you find yourself focusing on being loving so much that you dilute/change the truth?

Wrap Up

Reminder: Our **Words Matter**. That is something we have been focusing on for many weeks now. But it is important for us to recognize that our words are a symptom– a reflection– of our hearts. In all of our words, especially when choosing truth or lies, how we choose to use our words is an expression of what is going on inside of us. This has always been and will always be a struggle, but the hope for us is we have the best and perfect thing to fill our hearts and change what they produce, and that is Jesus. When we align our hearts with Christ and rely on our new life in Him to shape us, our words will be used to speak truth and love into the world around us, and bring about the Kingdom of God in a powerful way.

Challenge: Participate in our Daily *Watch Your Mouth Challenge*. Each day, find 3 people to encourage and speak life into, 2 moments where you can express gratitude to/for someone, and each day read, reflect, and pray Psalm 19:14 “May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

Prayer: As you close your time in prayer, ask God to continue transforming your hearts so your words reflect His truth and love. Pray for the strength to speak with integrity and to build others up with your words. Thank God for His love and grace for you that allows the Spirit to work in us and bring life to the people we interact with.