



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 2267

Colossians 3:9 "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices."

It was yet another car commercial that came on during a ballgame I was watching recently. This one stuck in my memory. It takes place in a classroom. Two kids are released from school because of the death of their uncle. They hop into the parents car that is awaiting them and off they go to the theme park. The parents high five the kids as they get into the car and the voice tells us that it's the third time that the uncle has died and they don't even have an uncle by that name. Skipping school to go to the theme park. Growing up in Indy, I used to cut out of school early to go to the race track to watch drivers practice for the Indy 500. What made this commercial troublesome was the idea of the parents condoning the lying and the lack of any guilt for what was done.

Our verse reminds us of the high and noble principle of being honest, truthful and the move to integrity as we have left our old sinful ways to follow Christ. Lying is acceptable anymore. It's even considered a standard practice in sales and business deals. We don't hear many sermons these days about honesty. Politicians lie. Kids lie. Workers lie to their bosses. A friend who is a police officer tells me that most times speeders would get a warning if they were honest. But they begin with a lie. Then follows the lame excuses. And, most times they receive a ticket. It is amazing with all this Trump-Russian scandal how many connected with the Justice Department have been caught lying. If you can't trust the Justice system, who can one trust? How can there be justice when an atmosphere of falsehood prevails?

And in this culture of lying two serious things come out of this:

First, we lie to ourselves. Biblically, this is referred to as "deceiving yourself." We believe we are better than what we are. We believe things are ok, when they may not be. We refuse to get help, to change or to grow.

Second, we lie to God. Now, the Lord knows the truth, but we forget that. We view God as the spiritual police and we find excuses and lies to cover up what we think He'll never know.

(OVER)

Any relationship, that includes our fellowship, marriage, parenting and even friendship, that is built around lying is shaky and prone to falling apart. Once the lying is discovered, trust is shattered. A person can apologize and promise never to lie again, but it takes a long time to build back that confidence and trust.

Why do we lie? The reasons are many.

1. We fear the consequences that come from doing wrong.
2. We don't want to do something.
3. We don't want to be bothered by others.
4. It's easier to tell a lie than to tell the truth.
5. We believe that we are protecting someone by telling them what they want to hear, even if it is a lie.
6. We like deceiving others.
7. It makes a deal go through.

There was a time when a promise and a handshake was all that it took to do business. Not any more. Have you bought a house recently? You basically have to sign a phone book of papers. I remember one title company that we used to buy a house required me to initial a page that said, "This page is blank."

Tell the truth. Do not lie, is what our verse demands. Telling the truth doesn't give you the right to be mean, unkind, in-your-face, and hide behind saying, "I just told him the truth." Telling the truth is hard. It comes with consequences. It can lead to other problems that we wish we left unknown.

We are not only to be honest with one another, but towards God. John wrote, "If you confess your sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Confess. The word means to "speak the same thing." God calls something sin and we declare it was a tiny mistake. Are we speaking the same thing? God calls something sin and we excuse it and justify it by saying we had a bad day. We didn't have our A-game on. God calls it a sin and we blame others for what we did. To confess is to speak the same thing. It's like an echo. If you are in a cave and you shout, "Hello," you ought to hear in the background a faint, "Hello." If you hear, "Good-bye," run. Confess your sins. Speak the same thing that God does. That is to admit wrong choices and wrong decisions. That is to admit you disobeyed God. That is the beginning of climbing out of the hole and finding the freedom of God's grace and forgiveness.

The first lie in the Bible? Satan. He told Eve that she wouldn't die if she disobeyed God. Jesus declared that Satan is the father of lies.

Do not lie. Tell the truth. Be honest. Our culture sees no shame in lying. It's the background stories now for TV commercials. I wonder how many lies we hear in a day? However, for us, we are going down a different path. We are to be a people of our word. We are to be honest to the core. We are to put away lying and speak the truth to one another.

God is truthful to us. We need to demonstrate that among each other and towards Him.

Roger Shouse (used by permission)
