

One Another

Speak to One Another

August 23, 2026

Introduction

(Title Slide) I had a good laugh this week reminiscing about a few of times in my life in which severe mental and spiritual stress manifested itself in the form of physical or biological symptoms.

- “Shingles” in grad school.
- Shakes in youth ministry, babies, and doctoral studies.
- Twitching/arm pain/back pain in my pastorate in SC (giving me drugs)

It looked like something was biologically or physically wrong, but the reality was that something was spiritually, emotionally, and mentally wrong.

In short, my body was trying to speak truth to me in a way that my heart and mind were not. My mind and my heart were believing falsehoods, but my body was willing to tell me the truth.

It was only because my physical body wouldn't let me live according to the falsehoods and lies I was believing.

Body

Our bodies are designed to live in truth within themselves. And what is true for our bodies is true for the body of Christ, the church. The church of Jesus Christ is designed to live truthfully between its members. **(SLIDE) Integrity. Honesty. Transparency. Candor. Clarity. Sincerity. Reliability. Dependability. Trustworthiness. Accountability. Vulnerability. Wholeness. Truthfulness. Forthrightness. Fidelity.** These are the adjectives that should accurately describe the way Christians within any given local congregation speak to one another. Paul puts it far more succinctly in Ephesians 4:25. Read it with me.

(SLIDE) Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. (Ephesians 4:25, CSB)

Body

Put Away Falsehood

(Slide - put away falsehood) To "put away falsehood" involves more than not speaking lies. The Greek word for falsehood encompasses all forms of deceit, hypocrisy, and the intentional misrepresentation of reality. It is a call to align our external presentation with the internal reality of our standing before God. It's a call to "walk with integrity." Falsehood ... deceit ... hypocrisy ... misrepresentation ... all of these things are contrary to Jesus and His Bride, the church.

Fall in the Garden led to falsehood. Adam and Eve worked hard to falsely represent reality by hiding and covering and blaming, etc. Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus lived truthfully in every way. And for those of us who have been redeemed by Him through faith, we have been given the Spirit to live as Jesus lived, not Adam and Eve. So the impulse to hide and cover and deceive must be replaced by a drive toward transparency.

Falsehood manifests in so many ways, but let's think about how this is particularly prevalent in the church these days.

(Slide) Staying quiet when you should speak up.

(Slide) Relentless positivity.

(Slide) Not being able to accept criticism. Somebody tells you a hard truth about yourself and you fall apart or get defensive. People stay quiet around you because they know what happens when they do not.

These are very polite and polished presentations of FALSEHOOD. So a church that puts away falsehood ... a church that walks with integrity ... doesn't actually present as perfectly polished or slick. **(Slide) A church in which people walk with integrity is a church in which people confess their lack of integrity and therefore their need for Jesus.** I don't think a church that looks flawless is as healthy a church as it initially presents. It is showing you a church where too few people are putting away falsehood. Over time, people in a church that present as having it all together breeds cynicism and skepticism. In a church where people live authentically and put off falsehood with one another, it breeds trust and acceptance.

So I think you should know that though we give a great effort each and every week to be effective and great at our ministries, the leaders and people of Beech Haven are far from perfect. The preaching has room to improve. There are some marriages being tested here. There are addictions being fought here. There is room for development in leaders here. We have things to figure out about our future that are challenging. But as people who want to put away falsehood, we don't hide those things or pretend those things aren't there. We acknowledge and in humility ask God to do his work in us in the light of His truth.

Which leads me to the second thing Paul says we must do, which is speak truth.

Speak Truth

The positive command is to "speak the truth." This is an active, communal responsibility. Biblical truth-telling means that our words and our actions are consistent across every sphere of life. It means our speech is dependable, our promises are kept, and our character is unified.

I think we all get that, but it does get confusing when it comes to practice. **(ONE SLIDE for first 3)**

Speaking truth is not the same as speaking your opinion. While our opinions are often shaped by personal biases and shifting emotions, biblical truth is rooted in the objective, unchanging character of God. We must be careful not to mistake our own preferences or perspectives for the truth we are called to speak into the lives of one another.

Speaking truth is not the same as having no filter. True transparency is not the same as having no filter; True transparency is the purposeful, loving commitment to honesty that seeks to build up the church rather than merely offload our own unchecked thoughts. We have to weigh our words with grace, ensuring they serve the listener's spiritual growth instead of just venting our own unfiltered impulses.

Speaking truth is not the same as saying everything you know. We are called to speak words that edify and build up rather than simply dump information. This requires **discretion**. We must prayerfully discern whether our words are intended to serve the listener's spiritual good or merely to satisfy our own desire to be heard.

(SLIDE) Speaking truth means speaking it to the person. We often find it easier to speak about one another to others than to speak to one another. True biblical communication requires the courage to go directly to the person involved.

SLIDE – Is it true, helpful, and point you to Jesus?

Living out the command to speak truth requires us to move beyond superficial interactions and embrace a disciplined, grace-filled approach to our relationships. As we apply these principles of intentionality and discretion, we reflect the unity and integrity that God intends for His body.

Why we Speak Truth

But perhaps most important is WHY Christians in the local church put off falsehood and speak the truth. Look at the verse again.

Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. (Ephesians 4:25, CSB)

Paul does not say, "Tell the truth, because lies are just a terrible thing." Even though they are. He doesn't say, "Tell the truth, because if you tell lies, you'll get caught." Even though that is

generally true as well. He doesn't say, "Tell the truth because a gentleman is always a man of his word." You don't hear any of that. All the other religious systems of ethics talk that way, but not Christianity. The motive Paul points to is "because we are members of one another."¹

The Christian ethic is a relational ethic.² *(Slide) A personal relationship with God is never a private relationship with God.* No matter how strenuous the effort, ***your personal relationship with God cannot be separated from your relationship with other Christians in a local church.*** It's only when we take this interrelation seriously that we can put away falsehood and speak truth.

Illustration

Back to "my body speaking to me" – how strange would it be if my physical, biological body didn't tell me about the problems in my mind and heart? What if my body had politely swept my issues under the rug? Where would I be now?

What if you were walking barefoot around your house while work crews were removing shingles from your roof, and your eye saw a nail but didn't tell your feet what to do? Our bodies are whole bodies. Its members are members to one another. *(Slide - Christians are members of one another, so we put off falsehood in all of its forms and speak truth in all of its forms).*

Conclusion

(Title Slide) Now let me tell you the part of my story I skipped over. The reason I could not admit what was happening in my head that year was because I believed that if I said it out loud to anyone (if I put away the falsehood and spoke the truth), then I would get labeled as a man in ministry who couldn't handle it. And by golly, I had built my ministry on being the one who could handle it.

I've told this story enough times to know that I am not alone. For many of us, that is why we hide. That's why we hold on to falsehood. That's why we avoid truth. We don't want to get labeled. We are fearful of living with the consequences of authenticity and vulnerability.

It is at the cross that we find the only foundation for true vulnerability. Because Jesus was fully known by the Father and fully loved, we are freed from the exhausting performance of hiding our brokenness. We no longer have to present a polished image to earn acceptance, because our standing before God is secure in His finished work. As we behold the One who was transparent before the Father and perfectly honest for us, we find the courage to put off the mask, confess our need, and step into the light, trusting that we are deeply known and completely forgiven in Him.

¹ Keller, Sermon, 1991

² Snodgrass, NIVAC