

Westland Free Methodist Church
"The Lies We Believe"
Romans 1:18-25
March 30, 2008

Goal: To convince people that lying is not worth it. Telling the truth is.

Premise of Series: Most of our unhappiness and emotional struggles are caused by the lies we tell ourselves.

I was on my way to prepare this message and the news report came over the radio. I was frozen in my car seat, listening to the convicting discourse by prosecutor Kym Worthy. Mayor of Detroit and Christine Beatty received 15 counts of criminal charges against them the morning I began this series studies. All the charges stem from lying and the intent to lie. Like many of you, I am taken at how this is affecting our community, and what we stand for. Lying under oath is one the most serious crimes a community leader can commit. So I decided to start our series with the mayor. Watch this video in front of the manoogian mansion. The body guard across the street has by now told us where we can

Video: Manoogian Mansion

What brought about all these struggles in the first place. Why is Detroit and our mayor so upset? Certainly we can point to the moral indiscretion of his personal life, and that is no small concern as community leader. But that kind of indiscretion is often overlooked by the secular community in this day and age. But what isn't overlooked and causes our community, state and even nation rise up is the issue of honesty. Or lying. Or not telling the truth at key points in a leader's life.

Telling the Truth

I want to spend the next few weeks working with you on the subject of truth telling. Telling the truth is so important, and the implications it has for our emotional and spiritual health, and even our physical health is unrated for sure.

In many ways we get it. We get offended pretty quickly when we find our someone has been lying to us. It can included an outright lie, and that is quickly confronted and our reaction is swift. But when important information is withheld, or someone has swayed us so that we might not notice something out of place in our lives, then truth telling gets a bit foggy in our minds.

When is lying lying? This is the big question we must ask ourselves. And we do not determine what lying is. God does. And his word has some definite things to say about how we can honor him, and each other in this area of telling the truth.

Illus. Junior is watching tv. His mother asks him, "Junior are you watching tv?" silence. After asking 2 or 3 times, the answer is a weak yes. Then mom asks, "what are you watching?" What does he say? "Nothing, mom."

Illus. The story is told of four high school boys who couldn't resist the temptation to skip morning classes. Each had come down with a bad case of spring fever. After lunch they showed up at school and reported to the teacher that their car had a flat tire. Much to their relief, she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a quiz this morning, so take your seats and get out a pencil and paper." Still smiling, she waited as they settled down and got ready for her questions. Then she said, "First question--which tire was flat?"

Illus. (adults) A store manager hear his clerk tell a customer, "No, ma'am, we haven't had any for a while, and it doesn't look as if we'll be getting any soon." Horrified, the store manager came running over to the customer and said, "Of course we'll have some soon. We placed an order last week." Then the manager drew the clerk aside. "Never," he snarled, "Never, never, never say we're out of anything--say we've got it on order and it's coming. Now, what was it she wanted?" "Rain," said the clerk.

We cannot change the circumstances that come upon us, but we can change our own defense mechanisms when those circumstances come.

Here are some typical things said to us, or things we say to others or even things we say to ourselves. They may or may not be true:

- The check is in the mail.
- I'll start my diet tomorrow.
- We service what we sell.
- Give me your number and the doctor will call you right back.
- One size fits all.
- This offer limited to the first 100 people who call in.
- Your luggage isn't lost, it's only misplaced.
- Leave your resume and we'll keep it on file.
- This hurts me more than it hurts you.
- I just need five minutes of your time.
- Open wide, it won't hurt a bit.
- Let's have lunch sometime.
- It's not the money, it's the principle.

Bits & Pieces, December 9, 1993, pp. 12-13.

Here's why God thinks this is such a huge issue for us:

Lies produce emotional misery.

Truth produces emotional health.

Read Romans 1:18-25(put NIV verses on screen)

Lying brings:

- v. 18 – godlessness
- v. 18 – wickedness

Lying is lying. But in all reality, we lying in varying stages. There are small convenience lies, medium life controlling lies, and then big life altering lies. We could spend an eternity grilling each other over the small nuances we might call lying, and that is not the goal of this series. There are really 2 important priorities in this series. One, defining truth telling according to God's word. And two, bringing this importance of truth to application in our everyday life.

Truthfulness brings;

- v. 20 – God's eternal power
- v. 20 God's divine nature

Why don't we tell the truth more often than we do? Because conveniently we want to avoid embarrassing ourselves or others. But in the end what happens? Here we see that by telling and living the truth of God, we drawing into our life

God's nature and his power. Now, aren't these very things we are trying to preserve when we withhold information from people, or tell them a slanted version of the truth, so they will be less offended, or so that everyone avoids a confrontation that unsettles the heart for a time.

Let me ask you this: If you knew someone was going to tell you the truth or shade a truth so that you felt better about yourself for a moment, which would you want from them. Most of us would want the truth. The idea that no one in our life is honestly telling us the truth, is unsettling isn't it.?

Definition of a lie: Lies are beliefs, attitudes or expectations that don't fit reality.

This means that what we are being told, or are even telling ourselves, are things that never stick. If there is no moral truth in the room, then the walls move, the floor moves, our lives have no beginning, no end, and life as we know it has no boundaries. God understands boundaries, and will not allow anyone in heaven unless they come to terms with those boundaries.

Illus. Selling the Pontiac.

We don't have to go out looking for them. We learn our lies from a variety of sources – our parents, our friends, the culture we live in, even the church we attend. Lies make life emotionally miserable, even unbearable.

Definition of a truth: Truth is reality as it is, not as it seems to be.

John 8:32 – Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Illus. Buying the Pontiac.

The very boundaries we reject, and repel us, are the very truths that set us free.

Here are some principles to help you live by truth: (from Thurmans book)

1. Truth has to be learned.

- It is not in our nature.
- It is not automatic.
- It can be quite difficult and painful at times.
- Don't let convenience of saying one thing to get you out of an uncomfortable situation be your teacher. Early on this will deceive you
- When you first learn this principle, most uncomfortable situations will be the very thing you need to embrace. In time, you will find people honoring you for your truthfulness.

Illus. When your child has a choice to be nice to his or her sister, which is easier, loving and saying nice things or hitting with evil intent?

Illus. When the vase is broken in the livingroom, is the first temptation to fess up or let the nearest victim get in trouble. I had 6 brothers and sisters, no problem.

2. The more you practice the better you get.

- Shading the truth will lead you down a path of ruined relationships beginning and ending with God.
 - Telling the truth over and over again will breed health around you, and life will stop flowing from you and begin flowing to you.
3. **The better you get at telling the truth the healthier you become.**
 - and the healthier those around you will become. Yes, your truthfulness will change those around you. Do you want to change a person in your life? Make yourself better. Be more honest than you were before. And come to terms with who you really want to be.
 4. **The more you are able to see truth about yourself and life, the more you'll be able to see past your lie's smokescreens.**
 - I love this part. The more you tell the truth, the more this opens up the Holy Spirit's ability to speak to you, open doors to you, and allow you to see what God sees.
 - This means there is so much we do not see, when we shade the truth, keep information from people, or outright lie to others.
 5. **Telling the truth will bring you the hope and happiness you have always wanted.**
 - It's sort of like prosperity theology. But not the real kind. Telling the truth is like a healthy cure. It cures any spiritual disease, and in doing so brings life to the soul. Prosperity theology promises you will become rich if you give all your money to God. This is false theology. But in a similar way, truth telling will bring you hope and happiness.

Romans 1:25 - "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie"

By now you're thinking, he makes telling the truth sound as if it is easy. No, in fact in the beginning, it's just the opposite. It is difficult at first. People around you will not understand.

Kym worthy spoke boldly on Monday of this week. I think she knew that by doing what she did, there was no turning back, and she had better watch her back. It was reported, and even hinted in her report that she might be in danger as a result of her approach in this matter. She will probably have to have body guards just to get her through these tough days. But this much I am convinced of. She chose to tell the truth. She didn't hold back. If her motives for doing so are good or bad, that too will come out in the end. It always does.

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We must pray for our Metro mayor, Christine Beatty, Kym Worthy, and a host of others in the wake of this struggle for truth. When we were about to leave the Manoogian mansion, one of two cars blocking the driveway, pulled out, allowing some family members to pull out onto the street and make their way onto life as best they can live it. Truth or no truth hurts us all. I could only pray for the family as they dealt with the hand they were dealt. And we must do the same.

Chris Thurmond separates lies into 5 types:

1. Self Lies
2. Worldly Lies
3. Marital Lies
4. distortion Lies
5. Religious Lies

Refer to List of 30 Lies

Let me give you one example as we get into this series;

“You are only as good as what you do.”

Lies We Believe:

1. I must be perfect.
2. I must have everyone's love and approval.
3. It is easier to avoid problems than to face them.
4. Things have to go my way for me to be happy.
5. My unhappiness is externally caused.
6. You can have it all.
7. You are only as good as what you do.
8. Life should be easy.
9. Life should be fair.
10. You shouldn't have to wait for what you want.
11. People are basically good.
12. My marriage problems are my spouse's fault.
13. If my marriage takes hard work, my spouse and I must not be right for each other.
14. My spouse should meet all of my needs.
15. My spouse owes me for what I have done for him/her.
16. I shouldn't have to change who I am in order to make my marriage better.
17. My spouse should be like me.
18. I often make mountains out of molehills.
19. I often take things personally.
20. Things are black and white to me.
21. I often miss the forest for the trees.
22. The past predicts the future.
23. I often reason things out with my feelings rather than the facts.
24. God's love can be earned.
25. God hates the sin and the sinner.
26. Because I'm a Christian, God will protect me from pain and suffering.
27. All of my problems are caused by my sins.
28. It is my Christian duty to meet all the needs of others.
29. Painful emotions such as anger, depression, and anxiety are signs that my faith is weak.
God is weak.
30. God can't use me unless I am spiritually strong.

As reported in *USA Today*, Jerald Jellison said, "Each of us fibs at least 50 times a day." He explained that we lie about our age, our income, or our accomplishments. And we use

lies to escape embarrassment. A common reason for "little white lies," we're told, is to protect someone else's feelings. Yet in so doing, we are really protecting ourselves. According to Jellison, here are some of our most commonly used fibs: "I wasn't feeling well." "I didn't want to hurt your feelings." "I was just kidding." "I was only trying to help." [*USA Today*](#).