

SERMON NOTES

EPHESIANS 4.25-27

SANCTIFIED SPEECH

INTRODUCTION

Paul had dealt with the great, soaring doctrine of salvation in chapters 1 to 3 of this letter. Then with verse 1 of chapter 4 he began the practical half of the letter, but still he was dealing with lofty matters. He was speaking about our need for unity in the church and for purity in our individual lives. Then in verse 25 it is as if the aircraft of his thought finally touches down and he begins to speak about the nitty gritty of godly living. With a thump we are where the rubber hits the road. Paul is talking about very practical areas of common wickedness: lying, anger, stealing and foolish talk.

SPEAK THE TRUTH (verse 25)

We are to speak the truth, indeed we could go so far as to say we *can* speak the truth, because we have already, in the past, “*put away falsehood.*” When God saved us he gave us a new self, that is he sanctified us, or he set us apart for himself. So sanctification has two aspects:

1. It is a one-off event that God does for us (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:11).
2. It is an ongoing process: we are being changed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a cooperative work whereby we strive, with God’s help, to be like Jesus (e.g. Hebrews 10:14).

Because we have *put away falsehood* we are to *speak the truth with our neighbour*. The Christian church is to be an oasis of truth in a sea of lies. Leon Morris comments, “Lying may be an accepted weapon in the warfare waged by the worldly, but it has no place in the life of the Christian.” We are to speak the truth to one another because of our special relationship within the church. Lies destroy churches. We must be able to trust one another, or we cannot function.

BE ANGRY BUT DO NOT SIN (verses 26&27)

There are four things we should notice in these verses:

1. Be Angry. This is a command. Anger is not wrong in and of itself. “The anger which is selfish, passionate, undisciplined, uncontrolled is a sinful, a useless and a hurtful thing, which must be banished from the Christian life. But the anger which is disciplined into the service of Christ and of our fellow men, and which is utterly pure and utterly selfless, is one of the great dynamic forces in this world.”
2. But Do Not Sin. Because anger is so often an ungodly emotion Paul goes on quickly to say, “Be angry *but do not sin.*”
3. Deal with Anger Quickly. We are to deal with unrighteous anger quickly, lest it fester and do much harm.
4. Give No Opportunity to the Devil. The reason we are not to *let the sun go down on our anger* is that if we do, it gives “*opportunity to the devil.*” We must deal with anger for the sake of our souls and for the sake of the church.