*Introduction*

We live in a world where truth and falsehood or lies are blurred. We no longer really know what the truth is. When it comes to the news, we get told what they want us to hear. It’s all about propaganda, power and persuasion so that we know what the powers that be want us to know, and do what they want us to do.

And we fall for it, don’t we. Sometimes it’s because we believe everything we hear or it’s because we cannot be bothered to find the truth out for ourselves.

The problem is that this falsehood, this propaganda has got into the church and we are being deceived – by its leaders!

As Christians we are called to the truth, to be the truth and speak the truth. In other words we are called to be different and to live differently.

We saw last week that we were to be ‘givers’.

This morning we are going to see that we are to live differently to the world.

READ – Ephesians 4:17-32

W\e are to:

1. Put off the old and put on the new
2. Put off falsehood and speak the truth
3. Not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths
4. *Put off the old man and put on the new.*

***22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.***

Your old man is the same age as yourself. You cannot just remove him like an old coat, nor can you get rid of him by making a few promises at the beginning of a new year.

The old man is our natural carnal nature that wants to always put ourselves first, in fact its motto is “Me first”.

It is self seeking, self-praising, self satisfying in its nature – we could sum it up in one word “selfish”.

Whilst we were at the hospital on Thursday we met a man who during a conversation stated that when he got married, he told his wife in November “I’ll see you in December, I’m going on holiday for a month”, when his wife basically recovered from the shock, he said “that’s the way it is”

A very selfish attitude, I’m sure we would all say. Yet the reality is that we are all that way to some degree. We all want thinks our own way and we get upset when it does not go that way.

Paul tells us in Romans

***ROM 6:6-7 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.***

The problem is that we did change when we accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour but over the years we have allowed the ‘old self’ to return and make us what we were.

We are to put on the New man

***24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.***

When we accepted Christ we were lifted out of the pit, full of sin, and placed upon the rock, the firm and solid ground. That rock is the life of Christ Jesus – we are to be like him – righteous and holy.

In order for us to live the lives that Christ demands of us we have to also

1. *Put off falsehood and speak the truth*

***EPH 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body.***

Do you not find it strange that Paul is telling the Christians in Ephesus to stop lying and speak the truth? Sure Christians don’t tell lies, or do things they shouldn’t?

But the truth is that we all get caught up in this, perhaps some more than others, but we all do things and say things that we should not.

But Paul reminds us that we should not be like that, but be like Christ Jesus.

Paul goes on to say even more:

1. *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths*

***EPH 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.***

Well, we may be saying to ourselves “I don’t lie” but this verse really gets to the krux of the matter doesn’t it.

Unwholesome talk! – but surely that’s boring?

What does this mean? – unwholesome talk, well the dictionary calls it “to cause sickness” the Greek is *sapros* which means rotten.

Of the tongue, James states:

***JAS 1:26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.***

***JAS 3:5-10 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.***

***All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.***

Do you realise that when you swear, or when you gossip, or when you joke in a way that offends or is coarse, or you talk to someone in an angry way, you are spreading poison? You are setting a fire?

The result is threefold.

1. We hurt others – how often we all get hurt by others off-the-cuff comments, rudeness or joking.
2. We corrupt ourselves. That means that it does not matter how ‘religious’ or ‘good’ we think we are, as we use words and language that is not edifying to others, we are in fact poisoning ourselves – it corrupts the whole person.

And thirdly, we grieve the Holy Spirit!

***2COR 1:21-22 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.***

***EPH 1:13b-14 Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.***

***EPH 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.***

Every time we swear, or we say, do or look at something that is coarse and unwholesome, whether it be by actually physically speaking, or by looking or by thinking, we grieve the Holy Spirit within us.

The Spirit of God wants us to be like Christ Jesus not like the world.

Remember that the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirits

***RO 8:12-16 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.***

John gives us a simple test that tells us whether we are real Christians or not:

***1JOHN 3:10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.***

***1JOHN 5:2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.***

*Conclusion*

The outward mark of the Christian is how we act towards others, Christian and non-Christian, in our giving and in the way we speak.

Are we always putting people down by being rude, speaking our minds without love? Do we swear when we are out and about or even under our breath where we think no-one will hear – God Hears!

Are our actions hurtful?

Do we look down upon others?

***ROM 14:10-12 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written:" `As surely as I live,' says the Lord, `every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.***

That’s a sobering thought isn’t it? We all have to give an account to God – not for our salvation, but for the things we have done. Everything will be out in the open for all to hear.

Peter sums it up for us with these words:

***1PE 3:8-12 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.***

***He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.***

***For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."***

As Christians, professing the name of Jesus, we cannot walk in the ways of the world, or talk like the world talks.

We are to put on the new man and put off the old. Our talk should be only that which is beneficial to all and let us not grieve the Holy Spirit.

***1PE 4:7-11 The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.***