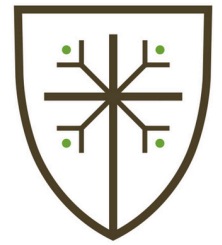


The Best Use of the Time

An Ephesians Sermon Series

SERMON NOTES



June 28, 2026

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"What's the Occasion?"

PREACHER

Rev. Will Stockdale

TEXTS

Psalms 119:129-136

Ephesians 4:25-30 & 5:15-20

Matthew 12:33-37

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it possible to know truth?
2. What can we do in the face of lies?
3. Do you think your words are set apart?
4. How can you order your heart so that the truth feels more convenient than lies?
5. What are some of your favorite encouragements? Do they carry the truth and hope that we can, in fact, be encouraged because Jesus triumphed and is reigning and redeeming?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Will continued our summer series on Ephesians, and today he focused on the best use of our words. Our words are important: they build up or tear down, illuminate or confuse, and speak truth or spread lies. Words can go so far as to make us skeptical about who we can trust. We question the possibility of truth because people lie, and lies move terrifyingly fast. Lies are a symptom of the fall when the enemy first deceived humanity. What are we to do in response to lies? Paul teaches about uplifting and edifying words so that we can combat lies.

What We Are to Do

Paul first exhorts the Ephesians to put away falsehood and speak truth, which prompted Will to define lies as false imitations of the real thing, giving the appearance of knowledge, even when they are devoid of it. Even though we've been taught not to lie from an early age, as we get older, the temptation to lie grows. In fact, we figure out sophisticated ways to lie without aggravating our conscience too severely, all while saving face or trying to get what we want: "I'm fine," "The proposal is already done and will be on your desk by tomorrow," and "I'd love to make it, but I have a prior commitment." Instead of taking the easy way out of tough situations or the quickest way to the top, we are to speak truth, even when it is hard. Speaking in truth requires courage and love, especially because the truth isn't always convenient. Thankfully, that love and truth come from Jesus himself. Knowing Jesus allows for proper encouragement, loving rebuke, and fitting reminder in the redemption he brings to permeate all that we say.

Why We Are To Do It

Not only are we called to speak truth to one another because we belong to Christ and therefore each other, but we are to speak truth because it is reflective of *the* occasion—that Christ is reigning *now*. Paul encourages the Ephesians to avoid corrosive speech and instead to speak in a way that builds up as fits the occasion. We may already know what this looks like, in part; when we listen actively to someone, we alter our response the more we take in so that it better applies. But listening to and advising a friend is a minor occasion compared to the eternal one we find ourselves in: the occasion of Christ's reign. Jesus's reign is the most significant occasion; it defines our lives and gives us ultimate meaning. We care about what we say because Jesus is our Lord.

How It Is To Be Done

So, are we supposed to address each other in hymns and singing, per Paul's letter? Probably not. But Paul's instruction about how we should address one another is new and different. Rather than hymns and songs, though there are certain occasions to do so, we must address each other with a reflection of the abundance of life we find in Christ, with truth, and with consideration of the Holy Spirit's work. Because God's promises are richly fulfilled in Christ, we have an abundance of life, of joy, of so much more. Therefore, we can and must come before each other with that abundance in mind and in our words. We must also speak truthfully as a reflection of the new life we find in Christ; there is one truth, so there is only one place we can ground our words so that they are true. Lastly, we know that the Holy Spirit is uniquely working in every one of us, so speak with the aim to build upon the work of the Spirit. Remember that we live in a world made by words and the Word. The words we say and the things we speak matter.