

## “Confident amidst Untruth”

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Graphics: rock climbing, climbing gear, mountain, ropes, carabiner, harness

Big Truth: The people of the Panama UMC are called to be confident in God’s provision, love, grace, and mercy. Often, when physical affliction, scrutiny, lies, unmet needs, and weakness are present in our lives, we tend to take our eyes off Jesus and focus on the immediate problems. The Apostle Paul gives us encouragement to be confident in God no matter what. Like a rock climber who faces all kinds of adversity, God has given us the tools to win the race for eternity with Him.

Focus Phrase: God’s truth secures me to the life of Jesus He wants me to live.

### 1. Introduction

- A. You’ve heard the phrase: “Liar, liar, pants on fire!” That phrase may take you back a few years, or maybe it takes you back to last week, if you’ve spent some time enjoying this gorgeous weather on a playground.
- B. Urban dictionary has this to say about that little phrase: “‘Liar Liar Pants On Fire’ is a playground taunt that’s used to call someone out whenever they think the other is lying. It refers to the fact that ‘fibbing’ is consider naughty, and pants *on fire* is a euphemism for spanking. Kids also like to scream it at adults who tell them stories about fairies and such. It is an overall stupid thing to say, since if your pants actually caught on fire when you lied, more politicians would be dead.”
- C. Now, that’s funny - kind of - but the fact that untruth exists in the world is a severe consequence of the Fall of humanity, when sin entered the world. And the moment sin became a problem for all humanity, it was through a lie. In Genesis 2:16-17, God said, “Of every trees of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” But then in Genesis 3:4, the serpent added one little word to change the whole meaning of what God had said, and it deceived Eve. “Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will **not** surely die.” A lie. They ate. God was not pleased. Sin entered the world.
- D. It wasn’t too long after that that we see Eve and Adam lying to God about what happened, to themselves about their nakedness, and to the world as they started experiencing the consequences of the lies. And it wasn’t really their fault, right? The devil lied first...they just had to lie because of the first lie. And so it goes on and on...
- E. God’s Word comes at lying pretty hard. And that’s because OUR untruths go directly against what God knows to be true and pure.
  - i. Proverbs 12:22 – The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.
  - ii. (From the 10 Commandments we read in) Exodus 20:16 – You must not lie.

- F. As followers of the person Jesus Christ, who is God and one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, **there's no room in our lives for untruth**. There's no room for us to believe the lies that comes from others and the world, no room for us to be misrepresenting the truth to others or to ourselves. And, in fact, the **lies we tell ourselves** may be the most difficult from which to be free, especially when we repeat them over and over again to ourselves.
- G. In addition, the lies around us take small bites out of our confidence as Christians...and humans, really. They break down community. They cause pain and frustration. Anytime untruth is present in a conversation or text or thought, we lose confidence in what God is doing in our lives. We also turn a little away from Christ to hide it...even as He's reaching out to us with the TRUTH about us and Him.
- H. Our sermon series is called **CONFIDENT**. And if there was ever any time in the history of the universe to learn to be more confident in God's truth and not believe the lies swirling around us, it's RIGHT NOW.
- I. So, this morning, in this third part of the series called CONFIDENT, we'll magnify what it means to be confident amidst untruth. So far we've been challenged to be confident when our bodies fail, trusting in God's provision, like a climbing helmet to protect us. Last week, we were challenged to be confident as we close the gap, having faith in Jesus and the life He wants us to live. That's like using a climbing carabiner to attach the rope.
- J. This week, we put on the harness of truth that holds us secure amidst dangerous circumstances.
- K. Let's pray and talk all about lies and our call to confidence as we become more and more secure in God's truth.
- L. **PRAY!**
- M. Turn in your bibles to 2 Corinthians 6, starting in verse 1...

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ 2 Cor. 6:1-3

- i. You'll remember that Paul was writing to the Corinthians to encourage them live out their Christian lives even when the culture around them was trying to prevent that. They were persecuted and dismissed. Some people in the church had drifted into looking more like the world than Jesus.
- ii. And, don't forget that Paul was also working out his own frustration and pain by helping the Corinthians to persevere through some of the things that HE was going through.
- iii. He started with the encouragement that they were in this together with God. And to, "...not accept the grace of God in vain." Basically, Paul was telling himself and them that they must accept God's grace **eagerly** with hope.

Grace from God is defined as getting what you don't deserve...salvation, forgiveness, and redemption. "Don't receive that in vain...not without it making a huge difference in your life." Eagerly.

- iv. The reason he had to write that was because they were down in the mouth because of the things that people outside the church were doing and saying. And the things within the church that people were saying and doing. Some of it was causing some serious questions about what God was up to.
- v. Paul went on in verse 2 to quote from the prophet Isaiah 49:8, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." And then said, "Now is that time!" It's urgent that we stop listening to the lies and start working together to advance the Kingdom of God right there in Corinth.
- vi. As we read in verse 3, Paul's main concern with being eager, working together, and being urgent, was that he didn't want to put ANY barriers in the way of people seeing the truth in the mission to spread the Gospel.
- vii. Then, in the next section, he proved it...let's take a look...verse 4...many scholars call this the 'hardship list.' Basically, Paul said that because they've gone through THESE circumstances and are still alive and kickin' for Jesus, then they can shine God's truth to the world...despite the lies.

#### **B. READ 2 Cor. 6:4-10**

- i. That's quite a list! We aren't sure how dramatic Paul was being there - seeing that he even repeated some of those things for emphasis - but WOW!
- ii. Not only have they endured through all of those attacks and kept going, but they did it (verses 6-7) "...by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God..."
- iii. When the world - maybe those in the church even - tried to snuff out the mission, Paul and his team endured in the power of God.
- iv. They DID that because they were confident in the truth of the message. They were faithful and humble, trusting in God's provision even when they were tired, weak, and thrown in jail.
- v. The thing we see in this string of hardships is that what they were doing for Jesus was being misrepresented. People were trying to tear them down because they were a threat to the authority of those who were in charge. Jesus' kingdom threatens the kingdoms of this world and its leaders.
- vi. Paul was making it clear that just because something LOOKS one way doesn't mean that it IS that way. So many lies and half-truths are floated out there and just because they appear to be true doesn't make them true. (You know that not everything on the internet is true, right?)

- vii. For Paul and his fellow servants, it may have appeared that they were out of their minds when they were speaking in tongues. It may have appeared that they were trying to disturb the peace or change the way things worked.
- viii. Instead, Paul asked the Corinthians to not only look at the heart of Paul's actions and message, but be prepared, NOW, for those around THEM to misrepresent truth and lie about who Jesus and His kingdom were about.
- ix. Press on...in the truth...in patience and love and the power of God. Let God show you the truth about who HE is and who YOU are.

### 3. Application

- A. (harness) Paul knew that he couldn't hang on to the rope without being securely fastened to it by trust and faith. But even with trust and faith, if it all was a lie, then there was no point.
- B. So what Paul did was to tell the church that they needed to be securely wrapped in the TRUTH, so that trust and faith were fruitful for Jesus.
- C. This harness is a fun device! If you've ever worn on of these, you KNOW that it's not necessarily the most comfortable piece of equipment. Unlike a helmet or broken-in shoes, the harness' job is not to be a lounge chair.
- D. The harness is meant to hold you tightly, securing your bodies to the carabiner and to the rope that's attached to the rock wall.
- E. The harness doesn't care if your bottom is gently cradled. The harness only cares about keeping you alive during the climb, safely able to do all that you are called to do while climbing the wall.
- F. **This harness is truth.** This harness is not grace or mercy. This harness is black and white. This harness is the set of things that God knows are true.
- G. If you and I knew, believed, and only shared the set of things that God knows to be true, the world would certainly be an interesting place. That would also avoid SO much pain and chaos.
- H. Yet, our reality is that the world is filled with lies. Those lies cause you to lose your confidence in your fellow humans. Those lies cause you to lose your confidence in what's true about yourself. And, those lies also - as we saw in Genesis 2 - can cause you to question God's truth, wondering if He is who He says he is...and means what He says.
- I. The harness of truth is what secures your life to the truth claims of God, and combats every deception of the lies of this world.
- J. Truth gives us confidence against ALL untruths.
- K. We know the world is currently in a campaign to debase and debunk the things of God, and the truth offered through Jesus' death and resurrection. Because we represent all that, the church itself is under attack.

- L. Church, it's time for us to check that we have the harness of truth securely fastened so that you and I can grow as confident followers of Jesus.
- M. That harness will refute the lies in your life. Those lies come from 3 places:
- i. **The lies comes from the world around you.**
    - a. You hear about these lies in the media or through articles...through politics and schemes of business.
    - b. They comes through slick marketing and trying to sell you a lie about who you need to be, but apparently aren't.
    - c. Confidence comes when you focus on God's truth in scripture. Confidence comes when you intently listen to the truth revealed through the Holy Spirit, who Jesus described as, "the Spirit of truth" in John 16:13.
    - d. The only antidote to the lies of the world - used to sell, defeat, and unhinge you - is the **solid rock of the truth claims in scripture**...and the promises of God for you and me. Read this (Bible).
    - e. But the world is not the only source of untruth...
  - ii. **Lies also can come from other people in our lives.**
    - a. Now, I'll admit that sometimes you and I can either misrepresent the truth out of ignorance, or those around you can. You can't know everything there is to know and things sometimes appear different than they are.
    - b. Yet, even with that being said, how many times have I withheld the truth or had someone else mis-represent something intentionally to me? Deception can be subtle. It can also pretend to be innocent or protective.
    - c. Yet, God's best plan - securing ourselves to the harness of truth - is that you and I be honest with those in our lives. That takes something that we find so hard to develop - **trust** in each other.
    - d. Trust in each other is the foundation for accountability, which is critical to experience in marriage, and friendship, and in the church. It's harder to develop with acquaintances or co-workers.
    - e. Confidence comes into our lives when we lovingly hold each other accountable...not believing the lies...learning from the reason for the untruths and working through it.
    - f. Strap on the harness of truth and dive deep into each others' lives in the same way that Paul invested in the lives of the Corinthians.
  - iii. Finally, and probably most difficult, is the have confidence to stop **the lies you tell to yourself** - and the ones I tell to myself.

- a. “I’m not good enough.” “I’ve screwed up too many times.” “If anyone saw me as I really am - saw what I do - then they would reject me.” “God is displeased with me.”
- b. Or, the opposite is something like: “I’m way better than that guy.” “I have all together and wish other people did, too.” “I’m really important.” (my fave) “I’m too sexy for my shirt.” You get the idea.
- c. Listen, God’s not buying ANY of it. He didn’t send his only Son to die on that cross so that you could lie to yourself of your worth - positive or negative. God sent Jesus to die for your sin and sent the Holy Spirit to tell you the truth about who you are - the unadorned, precious, humbling, hopeful, plain truth.
- d. Confidence comes when you see yourself clearly as God sees you - loved, forgiven, and redeemed, ready for everlasting life with Him.
- e. And when you see yourself in that way, you can see others in that way too. There’s mission in being confident in the truth about yourself.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. The children’s rhyme ‘liar liar pants on fire’ has been around since 1841 or so. There are more words to the rhyme, but like many children’s rhymes from that era, the words are super disturbing, so I’ll spare us.
- B. And even though that poem has been around for 150 years, lies and untruths have been around since the beginning of humanity...and are ever-present in our lives.
- C. Yet, as we strap on the truth of what God knows to be true about the world - not what WE think is true, we become more confident in who HE is. As we buckle down on the truth about ourselves and the people around us - that each of us is loved and called to grow to be more like Jesus - we become more confident in who WE are IN Him alone...and not what the world wants us to be or do.
- D. We, as a church, are called to seek the truth...to LIVE truth...and to SHARE the truth about Jesus. When we do THAT, then EVERY lie is smashed, EVERY untruth becomes foolishness, and EVERY insecurity we have is transformed into a powerful pathway for walking in this world for Jesus.
- E. Are you believing the lies of the world today?
- F. Are you believing the false narrative that’s playing in your mind??
- G. Strap on your harness of truth and climb. Climb with Jesus, secured to His life by faith and trust.
- H. Your pants are NOT on fire...but the Holy Spirit wants to light your HEART on fire for Him. Let’s pray...