

Unfiltered – Week 5 Small Group Questions

Opening Prayer

Ice Breaker

1. Pastor Jeff opened with funny examples of little "white lies" parents tell kids (like "we'll see" really meaning "probably not"). What's a harmless lie or half-truth you remember hearing — or telling — as a kid?
2. Do you have a phrase or saying you use to convince people you're really telling the truth (like "I swear" or "cross my heart")? Where do you think that phrase came from?

Discuss

Main Scriptures: Matthew 5:33-37, Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

1. Jesus said, "Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one." That's strong language. Why do you think Jesus connected extra words and oaths so directly with dishonesty?
2. In Matthew 5:34-36, Jesus says, "Do not make any vows! Do not say, 'By heaven!'... 'By the earth!'... 'By Jerusalem!'... Do not even say, 'By my head!'" Even respected theologians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer admitted the church has historically been "strangely uncertain" how to interpret this passage. Does it surprise you that a passage this direct has still been hard for the church to figure out? Why do you think that is?

Beyond vows specifically, Jesus and Solomon both point us toward a bigger idea: becoming people of truth, through and through. The next few questions look at what that looks like in everyday life.

3. Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 5:2, "keep your ears open and your mouth shut" when entering God's presence. Pastor Jeff compared this to Peter at the Transfiguration, blurting out an offer to build shelters instead of just listening. If being a person of truth starts with how we relate to God, why do you think listening is such an important first step?

4. Pastor Jeff said, "The fear of people makes me manage appearances. The fear of the Lord makes me surrender motives." How does living to please or impress others tempt us to shade the truth, exaggerate, or overpromise?
5. Pastor Jeff shared about a friend falsely accused at work who said, "I'm not afraid of the truth," and let his life and track record speak for him instead of over-explaining or panicking. What does it look like practically to be a person whose life is so consistent that it doesn't need extra words to back it up?
6. First John 3:18 says, "let us show the truth by our actions," and 1 Peter 2:12 talks about living honorably even among people who don't share our faith. What's one practical way someone's actions could "speak louder" than their words this week?
7. Solomon ends with, "Talk is cheap... Fear God instead" (Ecclesiastes 5:7). How does keeping a healthy reverence for God shape not just what we say, but the kind of person we become — someone whose words and life actually match?

Practice

This week, pay attention to how often you add extra words to convince people you're telling the truth (over-explaining, promising, swearing something is true). Practice simply saying "yes" or "no" and following through — letting your consistency, not your words, build trust.