

Guidelines to Freedom Part 8 - the Truth Matters

by Alistair Begg

Alistair Begg's sermon emphasizes the critical importance of truthfulness as defined by God and the societal consequences of lying.

Duration: 46:04

Scripture: Exodus 20:16, Proverbs 10:19, Proverbs 17:28, Proverbs 18:21, John 8:44, James 3:6

Topics: "Freedom"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the challenge of delivering things to people on time. He shares a strategy of overestimating the delivery time to avoid disappointing the recipient. The speaker then transitions to the topic of lying and how it has become an art form in our culture. He emphasizes that lying is morally wrong and foolish, even though some intelligent and influential people promote it. The sermon concludes with the reminder that righteousness and transformed lives come from the gospel and the need to accept Jesus into our hearts.

Transcript

I invite you to turn to Exodus chapter 20. Exodus 20 and we come to the 16th verse. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

We come this morning to the issue of lying. Stories told of a minister in a small church who announced that his text on this particular Sunday evening was from the 29th chapter of Matthew. He asked his congregation how many of them had read 29, Matthew 29, and a whole host of them all put up their hands.

He said, thank you, you can put your hands down now. He said, I can see that my message this evening is especially for you folks. As you do not know, there is no 29th chapter of Matthew and my subject this evening is telling the truth.

Now the ninth commandment is a call to truthfulness. It forbids prideful lying that is designed to do down one's neighbor and simultaneously to exalt oneself. Positively, it calls for the seeking of our neighbor's good and speaking truth about our neighbor in such a way as to produce good in their lives.

The call to truthfulness expressed here in the 16th verse of Exodus 20 is as vital in our day as it was then, but many crimes at the time that this commandment was given carried with them the death sentence. And consequently, if a person gave false evidence in a court of law, it may well lead to the death of the individual, and it would in point of fact amount actually to murder. In order to address this issue, to safeguard against it, the witness was to be the executioner.

So that if one lied in a court of law giving testimony that was untrue, which brought about the death sentence on the individual concerning whom we spoke, then we would inevitably incur the blood guiltiness of the one about whom we had spoken falsely. Now in each of these commands, and we've tried to say this each time, in each of these commands implicit in them is the understanding that behind the Decalogue, behind the Ten Commandments, exists a personal Creator God who by dint of who and what he is, possesses every right to guide his creation in the way that he chooses. He is the source of truth in its essential character, he is the one who speaks, and we do well to listen.

Now we live in a climate where that is rejected almost exclusively. No one has been more responsible for this in philosophical terms than Immanuel Kant. Kant, more than any other philosopher of more modern times, was responsible for introducing the notion that there is no absolute truth.

That truth is in point of fact relative. That truth is only what we believe it to be. That truth possesses no existence in and of itself, it is only what we subjectively conceive of in our own minds.

Now the way this plays out in our culture is in the kind of silly statements that we hear all the time, where when we have made a statement concerning something, an individual may respond by saying, well that may be true for you, but it isn't true for me. You go to Cedar Point, they have that stick. I think it is 46 inches is it, or 42 inches maybe.

Whatever it is, it is a certain length, and you take your children there and they hold the stick up against them. If they are above the stick or meet the stick, they qualify. If they are below it, they get rejected.

Now I don't like that. So I told the people, I said look, that may be 42 inches for you, but that's not 42 inches for me. It's foolish, isn't it? The time right now, the proper time is 12.30, 1.30, 2.30, 3.30, 4.30 in the afternoon.

That is Greenwich Mean Time. It's at Greenwich that all time for the whole universe is chronological. That doesn't make it the right time, I'm just playing with your minds.

But if you want to know what time it is, that's where you go. And we start from there, from an absolute statement of time. It is there that they keep what a yard is.

It is there that they have established length, and time, and measurement, and it is by means of that, that everything else is then calculated. But as soon as we move into the realm of morality, as soon as we move into the realm of philosophy or theology, then Kantianism kicks in, and people start to say, oh but that isn't true. Or it may be true, but it is not true in all circumstances.

Now we need to understand that the Bible rebuts that at every point, because the Bible begins with God. In the beginning, God. God who is a truth-telling, promise-keeping God.

God who cannot lie. God who in himself embodies truth. God who in his incarnate form says, I am the way, the truth, the life.

God who on account of his great holiness cannot tolerate sin. And in the list in Proverbs 6 of the seven things that God has said to hate, twice in that list, if you go to it and read it at your leisure, you will discover that God says he hates lies, and he hates deception. Now despite the fact that the Bible is so clear, the attitude of many in our society this morning is characterized by the misquote from the law courts, I promise to tell the whole truth and nothing like the truth.

Now people may not say that, that may be a misquote, but in point of fact in many cases it's actually true. And one of the great dilemmas of modern jurisprudence is that without an absolute standard of righteousness, without a concept of true truth, to try and try cases on the basis of truth on a sliding scale has got to be one of the great dilemmas of modern time. Especially when those who are in the jury have been brought up to believe that what is true for you may not be true for somebody else.

And so this great quest for truth is like going through a desert and coming upon mirage after mirage, it's just an illusion. Now if we doubt this in any way, let me quote to you from a couple of sources. The American Association for the Advancement of Science recently argued that, quotes, proficiency at lying, proficiency at telling lies may be the best measure of advancement with primates, that's us playmates, with primates much more adept at it than other mammals and human beings the most masterful deceivers on the planet.

So the evolutionary hypothesis says that what the Bible regards as sin, contemporary culture regards as a virtue. That what the Bible says is absolute, contemporary culture says is relevant, is relative. So if you don't think that it's a challenge for us to go out into our days upholding the truth of God's law, presumably you've never gone out to try and uphold the truth of God's law.

Some of you will be familiar with a magazine called Child. It essentially has to do with child psychology and it's April 1990 edition in an article entitled The Truth About Lying. It expressed the old view as it called it and the new view.

See which is your view. The old view, they said, like other issues of morality, was seen only in black and white. Children were taught that all lying was bad, deserving of strict punishment, and they were frequently reminded that, quotes, lying will make your nose grow as long as Pinocchio's, which of course is in itself a lie.

The old view, the new view, quotes, today some lying is considered normal. In fact a child's first few lies are seen as an important step in the development of self. Now does that kind of run counter to what we're looking at here? You shall not give false testimony against your friend in play school, in preschool.

Oh no, says the lady. We like to hear those early lies. It's an indication of the development of their little selves.

Stupid stuff. No wonder the Bible says the fool has said in his heart there is no God. That is not intellectual incapacity, that is moral foolishness.

And anybody with half a brain knows it's foolish and knows it's wrong. And yet some of the most intelligent people in our world today, some of the most influential thinkers, some of the folks who are always on the chat shows, always on the talk shows, are filtering this down so that it is embedded in our culture. And as Christians, once again, we sing our songs, we make our march, and we fail to challenge the culture at the point of greatest issue.

You have made lying an absolute fine art. It's just it's just something that you can become skillful at, and presumably the more skillful you become, the more human you are, the more you express your distinctiveness from other mammals. Interesting, very interesting.

Now let's talk a little bit about the means whereby we tell lies. How do you tell lies? Well you can tell lies with a wink of your eye, you can tell lies by silence, you can tell lies with a nod of your head, you can tell lies in a number of ways, but the most common way in which we tell lies is by means of what physicians tell us is essentially a two-ounce slab of membrane. In some of our cases it's a little heavier than that, I'm sure, but the slab of membrane encloses a complex array of muscles and nerves, and it enables our bodies to be able to chew and to taste and to swallow.

It's called the tongue. The vital part of human existence, God deemed it so, without a tongue no mother can soothe her baby to sleep, nor can she shout to her son, tidy up your room. Without a tongue no teacher can communicate with pupils, no ambassador can adequately represent our nation, no attorney can present truth in court.

Without tongues, in short, our world is reduced to unintelligible shrugs and grunts. So our tongues are vital, and the Bible says our tongues are vicious, vicious. Take a saw from your workshop and use it and use it and use it, it gets more and more blunt.

Take your tongue and use it and use it and use it in this way, and it gets sharper and sharper and sharper. A scorpion has all its venom in its tail, and a human being has all its venom in its tongue, so says the Scriptures. James chapter 6, verse 3, a fire, he says, is our tongue, a restless evil, it's full of deadly poison.

And it is by means of our tongues that we fall foul of the ninth commandment so often. Somebody wrote these words, if your lips would keep from slips, five things observe with care, to whom you speak, of whom you speak, and how, and when, and where. Somebody else wrote, if all that we say in a single day with never a word left out, were written each night in clear black and white, it would make strange reading no doubt.

And then just suppose ere our eyes should close, we would read the whole record through. Then wouldn't we cry, and wouldn't we try a great deal less talking to do? And I more than half think that many a kink would be smoother in life's tangled thread, if half that we say in a single day were to be left forever unsaid. You see, that's why the Bible says that a perfect man is the man who has perfect control over this vital yet vicious little slab of membrane that we all understand.

So the means of our breaking the ninth commandment is our tongue. The source of the problem is, as we read in John chapter 8, that we belong to our father the devil. We like to do his deal, we like to speak the way our father speaks, and he speaks his native language.

What's his native language? He has a language all of his own, and it's lies. Everything out of his mouth is a complete lie. Anytime he ever uses truth that is in order to manipulate it, in order to create lies and chaos and distortion.

And so the world, held in the grip of the evil one, buys into lies like crazy. And religious people, going through their religious duties, proud of their associations in their background, unless their tongues have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, are the proponents of their father's material. And so consequently

we find that we lie from the beginning.

To Eve in the garden the serpent comes and says, hey, you know, if you eat that fruit, you will not die. That was a lie. And with a lie it began, and with lies it has continued.

What about the manner in which we tell lies? If the means whereby we tell lies is largely our tongues, although we recognize we do it with silence, what about the manner in which lying occurs? Well, let me just run through one or two, most of which are obvious. First of all, perjury. Perjury.

Courtroom lying. People going into court and taking an oath and then failing to tell the truth or deliberately misrepresenting the truth. Ask any trial lawyer and they will tell you in all honesty that this is far more prevalent than our culture is prepared to admit.

Indeed, one of the reasons that it is so difficult to try cases effectively is because of an endemic problem with lying. That is one of the reasons I think, and this is pure conjecture, that many of the issues are settled out of court on the basis of kind of counterbalancing the interests of people because it saves them from going into court and lying through their teeth and making it obvious to everybody that what they're trying to do is simply secure their own ends and their best benefits. Loved ones, it is not inconceivable that if this continues in this country, our courts, not only will take a long time, but they will prove absolutely totally useless.

And when that happens, anarchy takes the streets. Revolution takes place. And if we think that in this country we're not right for some kind of revolution, we're crazy.

Because the way in which the laws of this land were set up were posited upon the fact of a personal Creator God who exists, who speaks, and you listen to what he said. And so all your Constitution and your Bill of Rights and all that foster the greatness of this nation is posited on those truths. Without that as a given, this stuff is a recipe for total chaos.

Because then everybody's right becomes everybody's right. And so I have the right to do whatever I want to do. If I want to take all my clothes off and walk down Madison Avenue and embrace homosexuality, there is no one in the world has any right to tell me I shouldn't.

Because after all, I have my rights. You see, once you have broken the link between the God of all creation and the creature, then all you're left with is rampant, all-embracing anarchy. And we cannot hold it together, pro-tem, in this country on the basis of pragmatism alone.

It will not work. Now if that sounds like a prophet of doom, then maybe it is. But what it is, is to say this, if the church doesn't get on its knees and cry to God for revival, so that as in the great 18th century awakening before the 20th century goes out, or into the early 21st century, that God begins to restore amongst his people a concern for righteousness and for truth.

For if judgment first begins in the house of God, what will become of those who know nothing of Christ? If we do not do that, then we deserve what we get. And I now have lived here for ten years. There have been ten years of political agitation, political process, the mobilization of as much raw political power as is actually humanly possible, and we haven't done hardly squat for the kingdom of God.

Nor have we rectified some of the greatest ills that are before us. How long will it take for us to understand that when we get before God in honesty and relationship to the things of Christ and the gospel, and see

that righteousness proceeds from transformed lives, but does not create transformed lives. See, you cannot stop lying by an act of Congress.

Prohibition doesn't work, because the heart of man is desperately wicked. And if we could get it as good as we can get it, it still wouldn't be that good. That's why Jesus said, go into all the world and do what? Preach the gospel.

Why? Because it has changed lives, that creates changed streets, that creates changed families, that creates changed schools, that creates changed cities, that creates changed cultures. Never in the history of man has culture been changed from the top down. It has always been changed from the bottom up.

Whether it is the Stalinist Revolution or whatever it is, it has always been changed from the bottom up. How did Jesus Christ change things? From the bottom up. What was going on in Corinth? Bottom up.

Think about your conversion. He says, not many of you were wise, not many of you were powerful, not many of you were influential. The people looked around and said, you know, that's right.

So what happened? Well, they were just a bunch of ordinary people who believed that Jesus Christ was true, and they proclaimed him as such. Now we're a little off the point, so let's get back here. That all started from perjury, and then I allowed myself a major tangential run.

And for those of you who want to let it go, then let it go. Now let me tell you another way in which we break the ninth commandment. We break it by rumor, by rumor.

The saying of things that just aren't true. The little gossipy statements about other people. You know, I thought about it this week and last week.

I don't know the bishop in Chicago. I've never met him. I don't know his life, and I don't know what he did or what he didn't do.

But I know this, that the very fact of the accusation may be enough to finish him. And I said to myself, what is to stop anybody doing the same thing to anybody? Imagine this week that somebody began a rumor that said the exact same thing about me. It isn't true.

It wouldn't be true. But the very fact that it started could be enough to finish your ministry. There need be no basis to it.

It need only be allegation. It can be a pack of total lies. But in the culture in which we live, where truth is relative and not absolute, where chaos reigns, where people love to believe the worst, where rumor abounds and sells millions and millions of magazines, we'd be hard-pressed to rebut the things said.

Shakespeare says of rumor, he says, rumor is a pipe, that is a musical instrument, blown by surmises, jealousies, and conjectures, and of so easy and so plain a stop, that the blunt monster with uncounted heads, the still discordant, wavering multitude can play upon it. Shakespeare did not think much of the proletariat. He calls the populace the blunt monster with uncounted heads, and the still discordant, wavering multitude.

He said you could go into the multitude and ask them to play this beautiful organ. They couldn't play it, but ask them to play on the pipe of rumor, and any one of them can play. It's so easy to play, and the way you blow it, he says, is on the basis of conjecture and jealousy and surmising.

You've been involved in rumor lately? Passed any rumors on this week? Passed on any unsubstantiated information to anybody? Stuff that you've got no way of knowing whether it was true or not true, but you like the feel of it? A little juicy one? A little kernel about somebody squeezed out from some corner, dropped in casual conversation, never made much of it, you don't need to. It drops like an incendiary device into an environment, into an office, into a coffee room, into a school, something that may damage the life of that individual, of that individual for a long, long time. One throwaway line concerning the high school senior girl, one passing comment concerning that student, one word of innuendo concerning that work colleague who has now gone on vacation.

Why? Slander does the same thing. Slander is a form of breaking the ninth commandment. We made much of it last time, we won't now.

Deception is another way in which we do it. Romans chapter 3, Paul says, of those who are godless, he says that deceit is on their lips. You can read that in verse 13 of Romans 3. They deceive by their very nature.

We deceive our moms and dads, and some of us were very good at it. When we didn't want them to know something, we told them something they did want to know. Okay? So what you do is you volunteer information fast, that is good information and is true information, in the hope that they will not pursue from you other information which is not good.

Believe me, I know how you do it. If you don't want to know who you were with, then to know who you were with, tell them about people you were with that you know they were glad for you to be with. And then as they get very glad about that, move on to something else in the hope that they won't come back and say, yeah I know you were with so-and-so and that pleases me, but were you also with so-and-so.

Deception. We do it in business. How about flattery? Flattery.

Someone said about flattery, flattery is saying things to a person's face that you would never say behind his back. You don't believe it. You don't believe it's true.

You never even drive in your car, you say the guy's a jerk. You meet him, you say, you know what, I hold you in the highest esteem. I have never once been so impressed with a presentation as by your presentation today.

You phone your wife, you say, I think I might get a raise, man. He was pleased when I told him that. I told him his presentation was great.

Your wife says, how was it? I said, it stank. It's flattery. It's lying.

What about exaggeration? Do you ever lie by exaggerating? I do. I have to be honest. Probably one of the ways I can lie better than any other is by exaggerating.

How cold was it? It was minus 55 degrees. It was so cold people were having their teeth extracted without any kind of anesthetic. How bad was it? Oh man, you read about the Second World War? That was nothing compared to this.

How far is it? You could drive for 15 hours, you wouldn't even go halfway. And in point of fact, it wasn't that far, it wasn't that cold, and it wasn't that bad. Yesterday I went to my first college football game ever in my

life.

People said, this is the greatest game you'll ever see. I was excited, up at five. Took my Michigan hat, put it aside in favor of an Ohio State sweatshirt.

Went through a conversion experience during the night. Swithered on a journey, left the Michigan hat in the trunk, put on the thing. Walked through the golf course, got to the stadium.

Found my seat, the very front row behind all the players. Could reach out and touch them. Ricky Powers, all the guys.

He's the wrong side or the right side, but all the guys. The sun shone, the band played. How bad was it? It was bad.

I was there, it was bad. I don't need to lie about it, I'm not going to exaggerate. What about creating false impressions? What about not correcting untrue statements when they're made? You're on a joint selling mission with one of your sales staff.

The sales guy says something in the conversation, in the negotiation that is patently wrong. You catch it, but it's actually to the good, especially if the client swallows it. You're on the horns of a dilemma.

Shall I correct him, or let it go, because after all, we could come out of this pretty nicely? You let it go, you get the business, put your head on your pillow at night. You lie. What about carelessness? Especially with our children.

Carelessness. Samuel Johnson put this very well. I read it years and years ago when I first became a father.

I thought it made so much sense. I've tried my best to deal with it. I'm not sure that I've come close to being successful, but Samuel Johnson said, accustom your children constantly to this.

If a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another window, do not let it pass. But instantly check them. You do not know when deviation, where deviation from the truth will end.

You never know, you see, if our children say it happened in the back window, and it happened to the front window, it seems rather scrupulous to say, no, no, honey, it didn't happen to the back window, it happened to the front window. But if you don't, they will then internalize this fact, subliminally they will say, you know, as long as it happened at a window, that's all that matters. The first time they have an accident in a car, and the officer asks them a question about whether they had their head out of the window or in the window, whether they had their seatbelt on or no seatbelt on, they may, having built up a legacy of 16 years of being careless about issues of scrupulous truthfulness, simply answer whichever way it helps them.

And you and I will have contributed to that, because we weren't smart enough to realize that careless talk is an evidence of telling lies. So if that's the manner in which we lie, let's ask then, finally, what is the motivation for telling lies? Why do we lie? Well, back in the Garden of Eden, the reason the evil one lied was because of malice and pride. He wanted to be something that he wasn't, and he was malevolent towards those whom he could influence.

Satan tells lies because he hates God, he hates people who are godly, and he wants to extend his anti-God revolt. When you and I tell lies, we're often driven by the same thing. We're driven by pride, or we're driven by hatred.

When we tell lies in order to impress other people, it's because of pride. When we tell lies in order to do somebody down, it's because of hatred. When I tell lies to protect my own interest, it's because of selfishness.

What about when I tell lies out of contempt? Or when I tell lies out of a desirable revenge? Or when I tell lies on the basis of embarrassment? In the book, *When America Told the Truth*, the acknowledgement there on the basis of research is, quotes, just about everyone lies. Ninety-one percent of us lie regularly. The majority of us find it hard to get through a week without lying.

One in five can't make it through a single day, and we're talking about conscious, premeditated lies. Of the people interviewed, ninety-two percent said the main reason for their lying was to save face, and ninety-eight percent said the reason they told lies was so as not to offend people. Now, we don't want to be offensive to people.

But there are times when telling the truth will hurt, and will offend, and the issue of truthfulness has got to direct us. Not whether a person's offended or not. Not whether a person's disappointed or not.

Not whether they're grieved or not. Surgeons and doctors have to face difficult issues of truth-telling at many points along their lives. And the well-being of the patient drives their quest for honesty.

If they're true to their oath. What about money, and the desire for acquisition driving our lives? People tell me, you know, Alistair, it's very, very hard to be in sales these days, because in many areas, sectors of the industry, all that people do is lie about their product. Or they lie about the time frame in which the product is deliverable.

And so, Alistair, you've got to understand that if we're going to live in that world, we're going to have to play that game. Or guess what? We're not going to have any product to offload on anyone. We're not going to have any business.

We won't have any opportunity to make things well and right for our family. Well, is that true? Didn't the Bible say that God will honor those who honor him? Is it not that sin is a reproach to any people, that righteousness exalts a nation? Is it not that even if we were to live in total abject poverty, and to put our heads on our pillow at night with a guiltless conscience, it would be worth far more than to put our heads on a fat pillow full of dollar bills that had come by ill-gain and as a result of untruthful speech? I had a talk with one of my children this week. I told them, listen, if you cannot be trusted in the tiniest of things, no one will ever trust you in the greater.

Some years ago now, a young man came to take a girl out on a date. I happened to be there. He came, and he indicated in the course of his conversation how excited he was to take this girl out.

What do you do? He was asked. I'm in sales. What do you sell? I sell parts for such and such an industry.

How is it going? We're having a great year. What's the biggest challenge? Biggest challenge, he said, is getting the stuff to the people when you say you're going to get it there. This is a verbatim story.

I was there. This is my story. This happened.

Well, what do you do when you can't get it there, I asked. He said, well, the best thing you do is you don't tell them that you can't get it there, at least not when they want it. I said, well, how do you do it? He said, well, what I do is, he said, I know if it has a delivery date in like two weeks.

Fourteen days, lead time. I tell him, seven. On the sixth day, I phone him.

I tell him on the sixth day, we ran into a little problem with the delivery. It's not going to be there tomorrow. Of course, it was never going to be there tomorrow.

It couldn't. But hopefully, over the weekend, it'll be there sometime around Monday, Tuesday. I make a note in my book to call him Monday, Tuesday, to let him know that unfortunately, it won't be coming Monday, Tuesday.

But by this time, I know that the lead time between that day and the day that I know it will arrive is a shorter time than what would happen if he went out to start fresh with a new supplier. So I've got him. And I'm doing really well.

I wasn't impressed. I told a girl, kick his right out the door. That's my advice to you.

She didn't. She married him. He destroyed her, divorced her, lied to her, used her despitely.

And anybody who had half a modicum of sense would have known that if a guy is prepared to do that, for something as inconsequential as when an order of steel will reach its destination, there is no saying what he will do in interpersonal relationships. Does the ninth commandment matter? It matters. You say, well, you know what, Al? I get really fed up with you on this stuff.

Because it's okay for you with your little black Bible and go up the stairs to that room of yours. And then you don't have to go out. You don't have to live there.

And you're going to tell me how to do this. I hope you don't feel that. I'll gladly come with you any day.

I'd like to go for a decent day's work sometime. That would be nice. I'll come with you.

I'll come on your travels. I'll come. I'll come watch you, listen to you, be with you.

I'd like that. I do that from time to time. People take me all kinds of places.

I'll come. That's fine. And I'll learn.

And if I'm wrong, I'll admit it. But what about when we lie out of a sense of fear? Fear of consequences. I've been facing that.

I've faced that flat out this week. It all started about 10 days ago when I got a pizza that cost me \$56. The pizza was \$10.

The speeding ticket was \$46. I took it home to my wife. I said, man, the pizzas are getting really expensive here in Bainbridge.

She said, what's the problem? I said, 56 bucks for a pizza. I said, look at it. She looked at it in the box and sticking out of the box was the ticket.

You know, I said, you know, happy Thanksgiving from Sugar and Falls Police Department. And there it was, 46 bucks. So I waited till the time was almost run out and then I gave them their money.

Thursday afternoon, I'm driving home from here. I'll be home as fast as I can. I promise I won't miss dinner.

I come down 43 and it's a snafu like it always is. 43, 91 a shambles. I said, I'm not, I'm not waiting in that mess.

So I did a right-hand turn through Pizza Hut. Down the side of Pizza Hut, round by Dunkin Donuts and zipped out onto 91. Beautiful, I said.

Looked in my mirror, looked left, caught a light. They were all still snarled up. I said, crazy people.

I can't believe it. I went, I just moved along 91 about 40 yards. I looked.

I said, no, it's the pizza man again. Right behind me. Right behind me.

So embarrassing. It's really embarrassing. And then I got, so he got a flash and all those lights.

Pulls you off around the corner. I'm trying to get as far away from humanity as I can. Get around by the town hall.

Guy comes, usual thing, you know, puts his hat on, comes up, roll the window down, try and look contrite. He's starting to give a speech about cutting through private property. I said, look, I said, I don't, I said, what, why did you stop me? He says, you cut through the thing.

I said, look, what's wrong with cutting through the thing? I said, you want to come down here every night and try and negotiate that junction? I said, you cut through the thing too. He says, you're not allowed to cut through the thing like that. I said, well, I don't think that's fair.

I said, in Scotland, you are allowed to cut through stuff. I said, in fact, in Scotland, that's commended, that kind of thing. I mean, any run-of-the-mill individual can wait day in and day out in a big queue like that, but only the initiative takers can cut around a corner and zip home for their dinner.

So now this guy doesn't know what to make of me. I said, I said, furthermore, I said, I'm in deep trouble. I said, there's only a matter of days since one of you guys got me with a pizza.

He says, what do you mean, got you with a pizza? I said, well, I said, I'm going home, the pizza steamed up the windows, I'm just driving along, and all of a sudden, it cost me \$56 instead of \$10. He says, give me your license. So I gave him the license and he went back to his car.

You know that horrible feeling when you look in the rearview mirror to see if he's writing or not writing? Then I said to myself, there's plenty of ways out of this. I said, first of all, think about it, Al. You could have been going for a pizza.

You could have been going for donuts. So when he comes back, I'll tell him, I was going to get a pizza. I changed my mind.

Now this is driven, this is called lying driven by fear. Okay? Because I know he gets me twice within the space of eight days, I'm going to need a limousine service, or somebody's going to have to pick me up in the church bus. So he comes back, and he says, you know, he says, you were not exactly meandering through.

He says, you were flying through. It's obvious you weren't stopping for pizza. I'm glad I wasn't going to use that line, I said to myself.

I said, no, I said, yeah, I was flying through. I said, I did it. I did it.

And then he said, take care, Mr. Begg, and gave me my license. And then, the reason I tell you that story is one, because I'm relieved, and two, because I want you to know, I'm trying to let you know that I am in the real world. I may not be in the steel selling world, but I am in the real world.

And I thought seriously about trying to prevent myself from a thorny end by just spinning out a little kind of half-truth, because after that, by the time I got home, I could have convinced myself that I was actually thinking about stopping for pizza. And then I had just slipped my mind. And then let me finish with this thought.

We will never speak the truth until we know the truth. We'll never live the truth until we embrace the truth. Sometime in the early 1970s, Johnny Cash had a song.

I won't sing it for you, you should be relieved, but it's one of the lines when the young man standing in the witness stand, the man with the book said, raise your hand. Repeat after me, I solemnly swear. And the man looked down, and the judge looked down in his long hair, and although the young man solemnly swore, the truth doesn't seem to matter anymore.

It didn't really matter that the truth was there, with the cut of his clothes, and the length of his hair, and the lonely voice of youth cries, what is truth? That is what Pilate asked when Jesus stood before him. I find no charge against Jesus. What is truth? And the reason that many of us are shackled by our lies is because we have never come to the one who is truth, who holds out to us the cleansing, the forgiveness, and the renewal that we need.

Once again, the ninth commandment shows me I have a problem, reminds me that I cannot in and of myself cure it, turns me to Christ, who in this case is all truth, and all life, and all forgiveness. And it actually comes down to the question posed in the song that was being played before I began to speak. Jesus is at the door of your heart, seeking entry, seeking to take my lies and change them to truth, seeking to take my deadness and turn it to life, to take my darkness and turn it to life.

So today, if you hear his voice, will you not heed his call?

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