

## SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

(Eph. 4:11-16)

### Introduction:

1. The immediate context of this passage is unity of the people of God by means of the unity of the faith (Eph. 4:1-10).
2. Walking worthy of our calling (via the Word), keeping the unity of the Spirit (who gave us the Word), and the realization of peace-producing love is all accomplished by speaking the truth in love (4:15).
3. Let us consider what it means, what it looks like, and what it produces.

### Discussion:

#### I. What it Means.

- A. There are three main words in this phrased that each contribute to the overall meaning.
  1. We are to SPEAK. To speak is an action, it is something we are to do, not simply think or feel. This calls to mind the great command of our Lord in Matt. 7:12. Our speaking is likewise to be active and positive.
  2. We are to speak the TRUTH. God's word is truth (John 17:17) and in the context of Eph. 4:11-16 that is exactly what is being referenced, God's word, THE faith. We are to actively and positively present God's word.
  3. We are to speak the truth in LOVE. Love is to be the "why" and the "how" of our speaking. We are to present the word of God to someone for their good and God's glory. We are to present God's word ion the most loving way possible (understanding that setting bones can be painful, but necessary).
- B. Understanding the words, we come to understand that we are to actively and positively speak the word of God to one another for each other's good and to glorify God.

#### II. What it Looks Like.

- A. Let us look at some examples of this in the Bible.
  1. Nathan and David (2 Sam. 12:1-14; especially note vv 9, 14 = murderer and blasphemer).
  2. Jesus and the rich young ruler (Mk. 10:17-22; note v21).
  3. Ananias and Saul/Paul (Acts 9, 22, 26; note 22:15, 16).
  4. Paul and the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 5:1-13; note vv 5, 6).
  5. Paul and the church in Philippi (Phil. 4:1-7; note vv 3, 7).
  6. John and Diotrefes (3 John 9-12).
- B. We can see in every example that speaking the truth in love is commanded for the good of the person spoken to and for the glorifying of God and His Kingdom.

#### III. What it Produces.

- A. The text says that it will produce growth in the pursuit of Christ-likeness (v15). Note that this growth is personal and congregational (vv 15 leads to v16).
- B. The text also implies that this will produce love among the family of God (Eph. 2:19; 3:6; 4:16). This love is manifold = it is the love between God and man, between God's people, and a shining light to the world (John 13:35).
- C. This last love is tied to the equipping for the "work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12) which aims to save men and glorify God (Matt. 5:13-16).

### Conclusion:

1. Its is commanded by God, it is simple to understand, its benefit is clearly revealed; the only reason to not obey/comply is that we don't want to. That is rebellion, that is a choice.
2. Let us be wise (Matt. 7:24-27) and obey, always speaking the truth in love for our good always (Deut. 6:24).
3. Invitation.

## MORE ON “SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE”

1. Christianity is not a spectator sport. Christianity is about doing, not refraining from doing.
  - Christians are to conform themselves to the image of Christ in order to be saved (Rom. 8:29; 12:1, 2). They are not to simply not conform themselves to the world.
  - Consider the simplicity and totality of Matt. 7:12. Christians are to do (not simply refrain from doing bad) good (godly) unto others. Christians are charged to be active and positive/godly.
  - The reason Christians are charged with NOT doing so many things or possessing so many attitudes is because those deeds and attitudes interfere or prevent them from doing and being as God demands.
2. God has revealed how we are to be (like Him!!!!). Consider a little trail = Gen. 1:26, 27; 1 Pet. 1:14-16 (Lev. 11:44); Rom. 8:29; Phil. 2:5; Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15; John 14:6-9; Luke 9:23; 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; et al. Good illustration of this found in Matt. 22:15-22.
3. To be with God there and then we must be like God here and now!!!! Darkness cannot be with light, just as sin (that which is not of God) cannot be with God.
4. The purpose of the Bible (and in a large degree Jesus coming in the flesh) is to give us the best possible image of God to aim for. The Bible generally, and the life of Christ specifically, gives us the clearest target to aim for (1 John 1:7; Phil. 3:7-17).
5. Love is truly the why and how of God, and thus is also the why and how of Christians. God created us because He loves us and wants to love us. His interaction with mankind from the beginning is the perfect definition/illustration of love (1 John 4:8). That is why Jesus said that love would be THE identifier of those who were truly His disciples. We can prove that Jesus came from heaven via our unity (John 17:23), but we prove our discipleship via our love for one another (John 13:34, 35).
6. Remember what love is, and what it is not (1 Cor. 13).
  - Love is necessary (vv 1-3)
  - Love is patient (long suffering)
  - Love is kind (to show one's self mild-Thayer)
  - Love rejoices in the truth (in contrast with that which is false)
  - Love bears (to protect or keep by covering, to preserve-Thayer) all things
  - Love hopes (has joy and full confidence in-Thayer) all things
  - Love endures (hupomeno = remains under, does not flee-Thayer) all things
  - Love never ends (fall from a position-Thayer)
  
  - Love is not envious (to exert one's self-Thayer)
  - Love is not boastful (self-display-Thayer)
  - Love is not arrogant (to inflate, proud-Thayer)
  - Love is not rude (inelegant-Thayer)
  - Love does not seek its own (insist on its own way-ESV)
  - Love is not provoked (made angry-Thayer; KJV adds “easily” to provoked)
  - Love does not think evil of (in conjunction with rejoices in evil and contrasted with love hopes all things)
  - Love does not rejoice (made glad-Thayer) in iniquity (unrighteousness-Thayer)