



# Walk Worthy

of the calling with which you were called. – Eph. 4:1

EPHESIANS 4:1-5:21

LESSON 10 – SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE – EPH. 4:15

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# Speaking the Truth in Love

- ▶ One of the five results of proper church growth that we studied previously was that a growing church speaks the truth in love to one another. In fact, built upon the foundation of sound doctrine and sanctification, this is not only a result but a necessity for spiritual progress. If the church is to grow then the saints must be equipped to serve each other and speaking the truth in love is an integral part of serving one another.
- ▶ If we do not tell the truth how will others know our needs? And if we do not tell those in need the truth then how will they be able to trust God to meet that need?
- ▶ And then there is the point that if we tell the truth without love then we can hurt and damage one another. While we must only ever tell the truth it is so very important that we do so filled with love for those to whom and about whom we are speaking. Truth can truly be used as a weapon. But the maturing, discerning believer knows discretion – that art of being wise as a serpent but harmless as a dove.

# Speaking the Truth in Love

- ▶ As we examine verse 15 today, we see that we begin with a contrast. We have the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edification of the body – a work that leads to unity around the gospel and to the prevention of young or immature believers being tossed around by the ever-changing winds of false doctrine. And we see that there is a contrast.
- ▶ Some are being tossed around and deceived by false teachers and false teaching, but – and there is the key word for verse 15 - but, when the church works like it should then the saints are speaking the truth in love. What a contrast indeed. Speaking deceitful lies and false doctrine versus speaking the truth in love.
- ▶ One is deceptive, the other revealing! One is a lie and the other unvarnished truth. One is selfish and even hateful, the other full of love.

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ If the church is being equipped and sound doctrine is being taught and practiced, then we will be speaking the truth in love. The love we have in our hearts for God and for our neighbor will be made manifest in the words we use. Too many discussions between people at church are shallow. Let's face it, sometimes we do not want to talk to people. Sometimes we would rather remain in the shadows. And often we fake it – we lie by pretending to care when we do not. But if we are speaking the truth in love, we are edifying the church. We are being real and gentle and compassionate.
- ▶ How then do we speak the truth in love? How is it that we actually do this and make this a practical part of our conversations? The Bible gives us several ways in which we have opportunity to speak the truth in love towards one another. Let's look at a few today.

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ **Prayer**
- ▶ One of the most loving things we can do for each other in the church is to pray for one another. Intercession – taking the needs of another before the Throne of Grace – this is one way in which we are able to speak the truth in love. We can plead, praise, and persist in prayer until God answers! We should always be ready and willing to pray for one another and we should never tell someone we will pray for them when we have no intention of actually praying or if there is a good chance we will be lazy or forgetful and neglect to keep this promise.
- ▶ There really is nothing more intimate spiritually that a church can participate in together than praying with and for each other.

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. – James 5:16
- ▶ For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers – Romans 1:9
- ▶ Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me – Romans 15:30
- ▶ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel – Ephesians 6:17-19

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

## ▶ **Encouragement**

- ▶ We may also speak the truth in love to one another by encouraging one another. The word used for encouraging means literally to admonish, encourage, comfort, and strengthen one another. In fact we are commanded to encourage one another and one of the best ways to do this is to tell people the truth about God when they face trials and tests!
- ▶ Encouragement is a matter of lovingly telling people the truth so that they might look to God for help and be delivered from doubt, worry, and fear. It is coming alongside them and helping them carry their burdens. It is sacrificing for others so that they might find hope.

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. – Acts 11:23
- ▶ Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. – 1 Thess. 3:1-3

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

## ▶ **Counsel**

- ▶ Another form of speaking the truth in love is giving sound, Biblical counsel to each other. The Bible tells us that there is safety in wise and good counsel. And in truth, to receive bad counsel doesn't help anything at all. Some try to lie and distort circumstances in order to make someone feel better – but telling the truth in love always helps in the long run, even if it hurts for a while.
- ▶ Counsel is opening the Word of God and helping each other deal with problems, with sin, with struggles, with blind spots, or with serious temptations. And trust me, one need not have an advanced degree in order to counsel from the Word of God. We need to know the Word and we need to be filled with the Spirit and sensitive to His leading. He enables us to use the Word to solve problems and suggest solutions.

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ There is a role in the church for pastors and elders to counsel with the Word. And some do go on to earn degrees or be trained in the area of Biblical Counseling. Part of their role as shepherds involves giving sound counsel to those who need it and ask for it. This is another way that we speak the truth to each other in love. Every pastor should be a counselor – applying the truth of God’s Word to the circumstances that the congregation encounters in daily life.
- ▶ A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel – Prov 1:5
- ▶ Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety. – Prov 11:14

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

## ▶ **Rebuke**

- ▶ Some might think that rebuke is not speaking the truth in love, but what more loving thing can we do when a brother or sister sins than to tell them their sin! To confront, not to scorn or humiliate, but to reconcile and to bring repentance and restoration. Too many people in church do not deal with sin at all. They ignore it in their lives and the lives of others. But we in the church are commanded and expected to rebuke each other when there is a need.
- ▶ The term rebuke means to charge with a fault so that the fault may be corrected. This is indeed a loving act if done correctly, with humility and gentleness. We need people around us who are willing to risk hurting our feelings by telling us the truth about our sin.

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it. For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked. – Psalm 141:5
- ▶ Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. – Prov 9:8
- ▶ He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding. – Prov 15:32

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

## ▶ **Worship**

- ▶ You might be inclined to wonder about these last two categories of speaking the truth to one another in love – rebuke and worship may not be our first thought about speaking the truth in love. But we see that rebuke preserves us and rescues us from sin and likewise we are told to speak to one another in worship.
- ▶ Colossians 3:16 tells us, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ We are to speak the truth about God in sound, theologically deep songs. Singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the Lord gives us an opportunity to teach one another. There is no better method of learning than to put a subject to music! And putting sound Biblical truth to music and singing it to the glory of the Lord exalts Him and also lets us each hear the truth sung so that we through the worship of God might teach each other.
- ▶ We teach and admonish each other when we worship. That is why, by the way, the content of the songs we sing for worship is so crucially and vitally important. For a song full of bad doctrine surely displeases God and spreads false doctrine through the church. We must be very careful about the songs we sing because this is not a performance, it is not a recital, it is not a competition – it is the worship of God and a useful tool for building each other up in the Lord.

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God. – Eph 5:18-21
- ▶ In the congregations I will bless the LORD. – Psalm 26:12
- ▶ Praise the LORD! I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation. – Psalm 111:1

# How Do We Speak the Truth in Love?

- ▶ There are other ways that we can effectively speak the truth in love to one another, but whatever ways we find we must keep these basics in mind:
  - ▶ 1. Tell the truth – always.
  - ▶ 2. Tell the truth – motivated by love.
  - ▶ 3. Tell the truth – at the appropriate time and place.
  - ▶ 4. Tell the truth – for the glory of God.
- ▶ This is a result of proper church growth. A church full of people who cannot tell each other the truth in love is not a growing church.
- ▶ Go and practice speaking the truth in love today!

# Next Week

- ▶ Lesson 11 – I Will Build My Church – Eph. 4:15-16