

## "SPEAKING TRUTH IN LOVE"

Ephesians 4:15–16

2 extremes that cause problems in ministry: 1. Those who will not tell people the truth. 2. Those who deal with conflict unwisely – cause greater problems. Our text gives the balance of maturity in ministry: Speaking the truth in love.

**Ephesians 4:15–16** but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—<sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

### I. SPEAKING THE TRUTH

#### A. Pastoring and all ministry involves people/relationships

##### 1. Where there are people – there will be conflict

a. Conflict between other people b. False doctrine (context) c. Conflict with people in ministry/church: Fighting you

1. They may be doing or saying things that are incorrect/unhelpful/harmful/unacceptable

2. They may be misunderstanding/misinterpreting – feeling offended

#### B. Our text connects maturity to communication

1. **V15** but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

a. Grow up: Maturity – instead of being a child

2. Immaturity is demonstrated by not being able to speak the truth: *I don't like drama!*

a. It creates tension/emotion; Awkwardness/anger/tears b. People can attack/belittle you: Try and make it personal

c. Punish you after silence/avoiding d. Quit ministries/giving/coming

3. An unwillingness to speak the truth will harm effectiveness - & cause greater problems

a. Man told me: I really like Pastoring, but I hate confrontation. Struggled in Pastoring. Not in ministry today.

1. Moral cowardice to not tell the truth: Cause greater harm! Give people no chance to change

#### C. So to be a man – to be a man of God: **You have to speak the truth!**

1. Not comfortable – but it just has to be done! 2. Awkward/dry mouth – so be it. I have to speak up

a. Do it now: Don't wait until you're in the ministry to start learning how.

b. Get advice/wisdom: Ask God/get advice/read books c. Practice beforehand d. Try and determine probable responses

### II. TRUTH WITH LOVE

#### A. Some people take pride in 'telling the truth' Either it's automatic/they enjoy it/they think it's their duty

1. But the way they say it causes offense – causes the problem to be bigger: *Trail of destruction*

a. What is in your heart will be the largest determining factor

1. Insecurity: Cause us to hear/see everything as a personal attack – a worth issue

2. Pride: We resent anything said to us – we are enraged when they don't listen/respond

a. **Proverbs 13:10** Pride leads to conflict;

#### B. Look at some communication errors

1. Approaching the other person as an enemy: I must destroy their arguments – destroy them

2. Speaking with unnecessary or unhelpful emotions: Anger

3. Accusing before finding out the facts: **Proverbs 18:13** Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.

4. Reacting with pride and offense: The person may say something incorrectly – but what is the message

5. Failing to hear or understand the heart motivations: Why are they reacting this way?

a. Past wounds/rejection? b. Fear?

#### C. Our text says we must speak the truth – but we must speak with love **V15** but, speaking the truth in love,

1. Our motivation must be love: *I want what is best for you. I want what is best for the church/ministry*

2. Our speech must be with love: *Not sarcastic/attacking/demeaning*

3. Sometimes love means we could back down & reassure – instead of all-out war

a. If you feel I offended – I'm sorry b. I want you to be healed

### III. MATURITY AND GROWTH

#### A. Speaking truth in love is linked to maturity: **V15** but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things...

1. It requires maturity to be able to do it/effectively 2. But it also brings maturity

a. You will never truly grow up until you learn to have difficult conversations with love

#### B. Speaking truth in love brings growth

1. **V16** from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

a. You will never truly grow until you learn to have difficult conversations with love

b. Joined and knit together...things function well when there is truth spoken in love

c. There is growth: Relationally/in effectiveness/numerically when there is truth spoken in love