

## Speaking the Truth In Love

### Ephesians 4:15

**Objective:** Encourage each to maintain bold integrity in speaking truth.

**Reading:** Ezekiel 13:1-12.

**Memory:** Ephesians 4:15, "...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

#### **Introduction:**

1. In Ezekiel 13, Ezekiel paints a desperate picture of a nation / people gone wrong. Folks are getting sloppy in following God, or not following Him at all. They are proclaiming words and visions from God that generate from their own minds. They are proclaiming acceptance and tolerance of sin of all sorts, saying "peace" when there is no peace. They are saying God will protect a nation that has in reality forsaken Him and gone their own way.
2. It may be tempting to say what we want to be true or what we know people want to hear, but we Christians, as the priests of God, as those who are responsible for knowing the Word of God,

#### **We must to boldly proclaim truth, in love.** (HOW?)

This is a daunting task. Especially when, like Moses, I wish God would send somebody else. But we are the church. We are the fullness of Him who fills all in all. We are responsible. Let me share some thoughts on how God intends for us to speak out. A key verse to keep in mind is Ephesians 4:15, "**...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.**"

*The first imperative for each of us, as we speak, is to make sure we speak...*

#### **I. Truthfully**

##### **A. We must know the truth.**

1. You will communicate something about God whether you intend to or not.
  - a. Your attitude and behavior says a lot. Whether you even trust in God or not.
  - b. Do you revere Him? Do you respect His Word? It will show.
  - c. Is He a God to be ignored? Manipulated? Is He as tolerant of sinful lifestyle as most Americans seem to be?
2. It might be tempting to tell someone who is living in sin, "It's okay", or "I'm sure god will understand". Make sure you know what you are talking about!
3. In Deuteronomy 18:20, "**But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.**"
  - a. We may not execute those who are thus sloppy today, but it is still serious business!
  - b. If you lay it out as God's word and God's intent, you better be sure!
  - c. Don't dare presume what you don't know! Find out! Study. Ask questions. Seek.
  - d. If it is something you "think" God might want, be sure to say it is what you think!
4. Truth because, if what you communicate is not true, it does not help and it will not save. In fact it may lead souls to their death.

##### **B. Such truth generates from sincerity.**

1. Make sure you are not teaching personal desires or trying to manipulate.
2. 2 Corinthians 4:2, "**...we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.**" Folks might not agree, might not accept, but they know when the effort comes from a pure and honest heart.
3. Jesus commends Nathanael John 1:47, "**Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.**" I hope God can say the same about me. Us.
4. Sincerity includes admitting, "I don't really know", but here is my current understanding and why..

##### **C. Communicate true understanding.**

1. Understanding of the Word truthfully of course.
2. Understanding of the people who hear, so the Word is understood truthfully.

3. Colossians 4:4, ***“Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”***
4. Make sure folks will understand what you are saying. Listen to them and get some feedback to know you are not misunderstood. Look for their reaction.
5. Jesus always taught with good illustrations. He used examples from everyday life.
6. Don't just quote Scripture, illustrate it and how it works.
7. They may not like what you say, may not agree with it or accept it, but they should understand what you are saying.

*A second imperative for each of us, as we communicate truth, is to make sure we speak*

## **II. Courageously.**

### **A. Not shrinking in fear.**

1. How often do we hesitate to speak out?
2. Let's not miss opportunities because we are afraid. Colossians 4:5, ***“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.”***
3. 2 Timothy 1:7, ***“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”***
4. You have every reason for courage.
5. The writer of Psalms 119:46-47, says, ***“I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame, for I delight in your commands because I love them.”***
  - a. Here is courage and willingness to proclaim God commands to anyone, even kings!
  - b. You can have such courage too, because Truth will stand the test.
  - c. Even small children can stand in the face of authorities if they have truth.
6. Remember how Peter denied Christ! Your failure to speak is essentially the same thing. And for same reason. Peter's failure alarmed him and strengthened him. It should do the same for us.
7. Have faith. Confidence. Courage. Romans 8:31 b, ***“If God is for us, who can be against us?”***

### **B. Such courage generates from faith.**

1. “Faith” is trust and confidence and the accompanying behavior.
2. Speaking courageously comes from a determination to trust God and be true to Him no matter what. Because He exists and cares. I love Him and belong to Him and will be faithful and true even if I die or suffer embarrassment.
3. Faithful to Truth - is knowing the truth and trusting the truth
  - a. So, you have alarm and concern over what will most certainly happen if folks don't know, if they continue their sinful and ignorant lifestyle.
  - b. Courage to speak because you KNOW judgment is coming.
  - c. Courage to speak because you KNOW the difference between right and wrong.
  - d. Courage to speak because you LOVE the one who is headed for destruction.
4. The Apostle quotes Psalms 116:10 in 2 Corinthians 4:13, ***“It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak,<sup>14</sup> because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.”***
5. If you believe, you can also speak, you will be moved to speak, by what you know and by your love and trust in Christ who IS the power and the resurrection!
6. You KNOW God is powerful and merciful and hears your voice and knows your situation.
7. You KNOW He is a rescuer Who is alive and at work and working through you and WITH you.
8. This faith enables you to speak courageously.

### **C. Courageously is not belligerently.**

1. Sometimes we tell people off! Pin their ears back. Really set them straight!
2. We yell something and say, “There, I did it”. Not the same thing.
3. From worldly standpoint we may feel we took a stand, stood up and accomplished something.
4. But, truth that does not come through love is often not heard, or is distorted.
5. The tone of your voice, the attitude with which it is delivered may communicate, “that can't be from God!” And the Word of God, the Truth is mis-delivered. It comes across all wrong!
6. If it is putting others down instead of showing them the light and love of God it is not right.

This leads into the third item in speaking as we should. We need to speak truth and do so courageously, but it is also imperative that we speak the truth

### **III. Lovingly.**

#### **A. With the other's best interest in heart.**

1. **Ephesians 4:15, "...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."**
2. It is not about winning an argument or a debate. It is about saving souls and becoming increasingly Christ like.
3. If I speak up and we walk away enemies because I approached it with a wrong heart, then I loose, even if I was right.
  - a. Applies not only to spiritual truths and evangelism, not only to correcting those who are caught up in in a sin, it applies to family discussions as well.
  - b. I should have my spouse's best interest at heart. My children's.
  - c. Love should allow your words to be heard whether you are introducing someone to the Truth of the Gospel or correcting a Christian in their doctrine or behavior.
  - d. The good, kind, loving intention of our heart should be obvious as we speak.

#### **B. Let love temper and guide your words.**

1. Love chooses it's words carefully.
2. **Colossians 4:6, "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."**
  - a. Salt makes it palatable.
  - b. If you are not sure "how to answer everyone", take time to pray first; **"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."**
3. Take some guidance from the "love chapter" 1 Corinthians 13.
4. **"Love is patient."** Are you strong enough and confident enough to listen to what they have to say? We don't need to shout folks down to win a hearing whether you are talking to family, correcting a Christian, or evangelizing. Keep track of your thoughts and your truth and wait until they are done venting, then calmly present what God has given you from His Word. They can hear you better when they have talked themselves out anyway. (Sometimes I need to make notes so I don't forget or get all tangled up with too many things at once.)
5. **"Love is kind."** So, I need to choose my words carefully. I need to not be harsh or abusive in my language. I need to be respectful and honor them as I speak truth to them. **Kind** words or truth.
6. **"Love is not rude or easily angered."** So no snide comments or cutting remarks. Voice should not have to grow loud or have an edge.
7. **"Love always protects,"** I may be courageous and bold, but my goal is not to offend. My goal is to enlighten and to save and to help. I can communicate truth without embarrassing a person or scolding them in front of others. Or making them look silly somehow.
8. **"Love always hopes, always perseveres";** thus, after working with this same stubborn, difficult person for 23 years you can still have "hope" - confident expectation that truth will get through and be received by them, you you can hang in there speaking the truth in love for another 23 years if that is what it takes.

### **So What?**

Christian, you are the fullness of Him who fills all in all. You are the ambassador of Christ. You now hold the words of life. You know truth. How can you possibly refrain from speaking? From reasoning, discussing and guiding? Both with those who have no relationship with God and those who do and need to grow! Don't hold back on sharing truth. It is God's plan and God's will for us to courageously speak the truth, in love.

### **Closing Prayer:**

**Speaking the Truth In Love**  
**Ephesians 4:15**

**Reading:** Ezekiel 13:1-12.

**Memory:** Ephesians 4:15

“...s\_t\_t\_i\_l, w\_w\_i\_a\_t\_g\_u\_i\_h\_w\_i\_t\_H,t\_i,C.”

**We must to boldly proclaim truth, in love.**

How God intends for us to speak out.

Ephesians 4:15

**I. Truthfully**

A. We must know the truth.

Deuteronomy 18:20

B. Such truth generates from sincerity.

2 Corinthians 4:2 John 1:47

C. Communicate true understanding.

Colossians 4:4

**II. Courageously.**

A. Not shrinking in fear.

Colossians 4:5 2 Timothy 1:7 Psalms 119:46-47 Romans 8:31 b

B. Such courage generates from faith.

2 Corinthians 4:13

C. Courageously is not belligerently.

**III. Lovingly.**

A. With the other's best interest in heart.

Ephesians 4:15

B. Let love temper and guide your words.

Colossians 4:6

**So What?**

Courageously speak the truth, in love.