
Words of Truth

“I Am Not Listening Because You Aren’t Speaking In Love”

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The congregation in Ephesus began when Paul corrected the once acceptable, but then and now incomplete teaching of John (Acts 19:1-5). He then laid his hands upon those new babes in Christ to give them the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6-7). This was their being sealed, the earnest of their redemption (Ephesians 1:13-14). As we know, until the word of God was fully revealed, the Apostles gave saints the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5-24). The Holy Spirit then gave those saints certain spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:1-13:13).

I said all of that because the context I am about to refer to requires us to understand what was briefly stated above. So, here is where our study is going to come from: *“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love”* (Ephesians 4:7-16).

The statement made in verse fifteen above, concerning “speaking the truth in love”, is what most people refer to when they complain about an offensive statement in teaching. When you read that Scripture, in context, you cannot possibly reason that the Lord is saying words need to be spoken in such a way that they come across “lovingly” (as most would define such). The contextual point was contrasting those who are deceptive with those whom speak the truth as an act of love (Proverbs 12:17 and Zechariah 8:16-17). Contrary to common understanding, speaking the truth in love is not a delivery tactic. It is a motivational principle. You speak the truth to someone because you love that person (Proverbs 27:5-6 and Revelation 3:19). Later in the context, Paul wrote: *“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every*

man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Ephesians 4:25). Truth cannot be sacrificed on the false altar of compassion or political correctness. That message then would no longer be the truth. Yet, people will oft excuse their disobedience by blaming the “harshness” of the messenger.

Truth Does Not Become Void Because Someone Doesn't Like How It's Presented

Someone says: “Hey idiot, it's raining outside.” If it is actually raining, does the usage of the word “idiot” all of a sudden mean that the weather is dry and sunny? Someone says: “Hey you dumb, foolish, smelly, ugly, moron; your tire is flat.” If the tire on your vehicle is actually flat, does how someone said that cause air to enter your tire and whatever is wrong with it to make it flat all of a sudden fixed? Now, if you can't see the above - you are brutish [stupid] (Psalms 92:6)!

The fact is, truth and the right way to teach it is often offensive (Matthew 16:21-23, Matthew 17:16-20, Matthew 23:1-33, Mark 8:14-21, Luke 24:13-27, John 2:13-17, Acts 13:4-13, Galatians 3:1-3, etc.). Sadly, teaching the truth often causes people to be offended and to react negatively to the messenger of the truth (I Kings 18:17-18, I Kings 21:20, I Kings 22:1-38, II Chronicles 24:20-21, II Chronicles 36:14-16, Proverbs 15:12, Jeremiah 20:8, John 3:19-21, John 7:7, John 8:30-59, Acts 5:25-42, Acts 7:51-58, etc.). Paul asked the churches of Galatia: “*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth*” (Galatians 4:16)?

Those whom teach the truth must be bold, sharp, and even sometimes outright hateful (Psalms 119:104, Psalms 119:128, Psalms 139:21-22, Romans 12:9, Ephesians 5:11, Ephesians 6:19-20, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:15, and Revelation 2:6). Those whom speak the truth must rebuke the erring and reject them if they do not repent (Matthew 7:1-6, Romans 16:17-18, II Thessalonians 3:6, II Thessalonians 3:14-15, and Titus 3:9-11).

When Jesus was told that His teaching was offensive, He did not care (Matthew 15:1-14). When you read that account, He made no attempt to go and apologize to those offended. He didn't send someone to do damage control. He simply spoke the truth and left it at that. We are told that Christ is our perfect, sinless example (I Peter 2:21-22). Will you follow His lead or will you allow someone to convince you otherwise?

Conclusion

A true statement is not made false just because the motives behind that statement are not pure (Philippians 1:12-18). If it is the word of God, rightly divided (II Timothy 2:14-18), it is the truth (John 17:17). Even when you do not like how something is said, you'd better make sure that is not your excuse to reject it. For, if you have rejected the truth of our Lord, there will be Hell to pay for it (John 12:48 and II Thessalonians 1:7-9).