

## ***When the Truth Hurts***

Speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) means speaking out of concern for the well-being of the hearer, speaking truth that is needed by the hearer.

When Paul confronted Cephas at Antioch, he could have spoken “truth” by talking about observing the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week; speaking “the truth in love” demanded that he charge Cephas with hypocrisy, and say to him before them all, “If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (Galatians 2:14). Did those words make Cephas feel good? If they made him feel bad, does that mean Paul should not have spoken them?

When Peter faced Simon the sorcerer, he could have spoken “truth” by discoursing with Simon concerning the organization of the church; but to speak “the truth in love” he must say to Simon, “Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity? (Acts & 20-23). Did those words make Simon feel good? Since apparently they made him feel bad (verse 24), does that mean Peter should not have said them?

Nobody who is thinking right enjoys rebuking. There is no pleasure in doing that which will hurt right now, no matter how much good it may do, down the way. Though it makes them feel bad, spiritual men and women administer rebuke where necessary because of concern for the one who is in error and thus needs to be rebuked. They, out of love for the one in error, speak the needed words of truth.

Nobody enjoys being rebuked. Pain is caused by words of rebuke, no matter how gently the words may be spoken. The temptation is strong to resent such, to regard the words as growing out of a malicious, rather than a concerned spirit. One who is being rebuked needs to understand that he/she has a responsibility, as one being “taught in the word,” to respond affirmatively to the truth presented, to “communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things” (Galatians 6:6). Too many seemingly have the idea that, when they are rebuked or admonished, all the responsibility is with the rebuker, to “do it right” — but Galatians 6:6 teaches that the rebuked one’s responsibility is to carefully consider his life in the light of the teaching being presented.

May God help us all to always speak “the truth in love” (though the speaking makes us sad) that perchance a soul may be restored (James 5:19; Galatians 6:1-10).

May God help us all to be receptive when we are rebuked; though it makes our heart heavy, and tears come into our eyes; for surely such an one is not “become your enemy, by telling you the truth” (Galatians 4:16),

**- by Patrick Farish**

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## ***A Fifty-Year Old Decision***

“People do not accidentally attend worship without missing one worship service for twenty years. They must have planned to always attend. Soon after I obeyed the gospel in the fall of 1909, I read of an old brother who had not missed going to worship a single Sunday in 41 years. That story caused me to resolve and to purpose in my heart that I would never miss the worship on a single Lord’s Day as long as I lived, if possible to attend. I have missed four Sundays in over fifty years, and then it was because of illness.

Once I made that decision, the question has not come up as to whether I would attend church services or not. In fact, I did not decide last Lord’s Day to go to worship, not the Sunday before. That decision was made more than fifty years ago.

It is a sin for any member of the church to miss the worship unless he is unable to attend. The very nature of our religion is such that those who feel this is a burden need to be converted.”

**- by Gus Nichols**

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## ***Misbehaving Team Members***

It is a common news story involving big-time sports stars: late at night, in a questionable location, with disreputable companions, they are engaged in unseemly activities. The matter is publicized widely throughout the media, and another “black eye” results for professional athletes.

It sure seems that these individuals ought to think more seriously and behave more respectably. After all:

1. Their related teams have paid huge sums of money to bring them on board.
2. They have an incredible ability to influence others. In fact, they are often referred to as “role models.”
3. And, any misconduct on their part reflects badly on their team and co-players.

All things considered, it just doesn’t make sense for them to act in such irresponsible ways. They need to THINK!

There is a parallel to this situation that strikes much closer to home than one might imagine. It is this: a church member gets involved in a questionable activity, with unwholesome companions, and in a compromising situation. The matter is ultimately revealed, and another “black eye” results for the local congregation.

It sure seems that these Christians ought to think more soberly and conduct themselves more carefully, because:

- A. They were redeemed with the purchase price of Jesus’ own precious blood. (*“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God . . .” 1 Corinthians 6:20*)
- B. They have a strong influence – for good or bad – on others. (*“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16*)
- C. What they do reflects on the Lord and His church. (*“. . . by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” 2 Peter 2:2*)

With all these things in mind, it doesn’t make sense for a member of the Lord’s body to act in sinful ways. THINK!

**- by Greg Gwin**