

Isn't that poem right on, as we would say? Will it help you to take care to be speaking the truth in love in a way that those in your home and community know it and see it reflected in your own life? Thinking of this calling of the Christian Church and of every true believer, what Christian will not know and feel himself or herself insufficient for the task? But let that all the more sincerely and repeatedly draw and drive us to Christ to receive from Him in all our needs. God gives no responsibilities to His people for which He will not also equip us, even as we, time and again, humbly and heartily depend on Him. And God graciously promises His blessing on the witness of His people speaking the truth in love.

Here we come also briefly yet to our third main point, about how God indeed, according to His sovereign good pleasure, does crown the witness of His people in their family life in their generations often, and beyond and otherwise as well. You see God the Holy Spirit works and applies salvation and strengthens His people and causes them to grow in grace and go onward in His ways, always through His Word. The Word of God spoken and shared and lived out in truth in love is that which, time and again, according to God's sovereign good pleasure, is food for God's people, nourishing us in His ways, and it is the seed of regeneration also to those still lost in sin. History proves the vast numbers of the saved are those who are raised in the context of God's Word and having the truth spoken at home and at church and at school even, in love. God speaking the truth in love and you and me speaking the truth in love, by God's grace, is the divine means for the increase of God's church and the coming of His kingdom, even all across the globe.

God speaks the truth in love and He calls His people to be about this also, in His name. Will you so live too, by God's grace? I pray no one will ignore and despise and reject even the God Who speaks the truth in love, but rather that we, by God's grace, respond in true faith and repentance and obedience to the God of the Bible, and that we reflect Him to others, you in your small corner, and I in mine, always being about this, "speaking the truth in love." Is this what you will be busy with, truly and increasingly? Amen.

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4



SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

"Speaking the truth in love" - how that is so much needed in our times. This also is what the Apostle calls for in Ephesians 4:15 as the calling and mark of a faithful Christian church and ministry and of every genuine Christian. What should characterize us is that we go about "speaking the truth in love." Is this true in your life?

When Paul talks about speaking the truth, he says that over against promoting error and false teaching in any way at all. In Ephesians 4:14, the Apostle talks about not being as those tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, telling there about getting caught up with and even promoting all kinds of error and heresy. Instead, we are to be about speaking the truth, knowing and upholding the true gospel, the only gospel of Jesus Christ, as revealed to us in the Holy Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, and speaking that truth in love, with love. Let us think about this some more. Without question it is a relevant topic.

Speaking the truth in love - let us first see how really this is what God Himself is all about, beyond any question at all. Over and over in the Bible we can read about God that He is true and right in all His ways. In Deuteronomy 32:4 the Lord is described as the "*God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He*" and Jesus says of Himself in John 14:6, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me.*" And in I John 5:6, we read of the Holy Spirit, "*the Spirit is truth.*" The whole Triune God is the God Who speaks truth always, and in Titus 1:2 we are told the Lord God cannot lie. The Lord our God, "*the only true God*" as He is described in John 17:3 is the God Who always only speaks the truth. How does God speak the truth?

Well, always, He is speaking the truth in love. God is speaking the truth in love when He makes plain not only the righteous judgment of God upon sin, but at the same time proclaims also the Saviour from sin, Jesus Christ, Whom He promised to send even the day of man's fall into sin. All through the Old Testament too, God spoke truth about His righteous wrath against sin and sinners but He did so in love for all the while He was also preparing for the coming of His Son to suffer as Saviour the wrath of God on behalf of sinners. In and with Jesus Christ, who came to this earth not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved [John 3:17], do we not see God speaking the truth in love? Do you understand God

speaking the truth in love when sending His Son, Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save sinners, calling them to come to Him to be saved from sin, not only from among the Jews but among the Gentiles too?

Indeed, on the cross of Calvary especially, with Jesus, the righteous One, hanging there as one cursed and crucified, bearing the wrath of God for sin in the sinner's place, being the Lamb of God Who through His shed blood takes away the sin of the world, do you not see most clearly God speaking the truth in love? Look at Jesus and Him crucified, and behold God speaking the truth about His holiness, His law, His justice, but also the truth about His mercy, His grace, His love. The blood of Jesus shed on the cross tells of God speaking the absolute truth about Himself and about the wages of sin, and doing so in amazing, astounding, infinite love. Do you understand the cross of Jesus as God speaking there the truth in love? If you don't so view Jesus on the cross, you don't really understand the gospel message.

What is most sad and tragic is that all too many around us have no time for nor respect for God's holy Word, telling us the gospel of Jesus Christ, and they do not know nor care that in this book God is speaking the truth in love to us. The result is mankind is left pursuing all kinds of lies and falsehood and error, which are not given in love nor do they promote love but only confusion and sin and hatred before God and man. Don't we see this all around us today in our society and in our world? So many are being tossed about to and fro, not knowing what they believe or who to believe. How true the words of G.K. Chesterton, who said "when people turn away from God and His Word, it is not that they then believe in nothing, but they believe in anything"! Such is our age, tragically so.

But God still now comes to us speaking the truth, the all time absolute gospel truth for all people, and He speaks the truth to us in love. In His Name, as Christian Church, our calling is to proclaim the truth in love, explaining and applying from God's Word about our sin and misery, left to ourselves, and about the only remedy for sin, Jesus Christ the Saviour, and of the necessity of repenting of sin and believing on Him, and calling us to the only way of true godliness and thanksgiving, drawing from Jesus and living by His Spirit and Word. All through the ages, despite the resistance and opposition against His Word, the Lord God has taken care that His Word yet be spoken, and that it be spoken in love and care for sinful mankind. Does this move you and melt your heart as well? That God, even now, through this simple message of His Word, is speaking the truth in love in your ears too, that you might truly know and trust Him as Saviour and Lord and live in a loving relationship with God to His praise and honour? Are you truly listening to His Word and ever grateful for His Word? Every true Christian surely prizes God's Word very much, and daily so even. How is that with you, dear friend?

Here let me move on to my second main point about how speaking the truth in love is not just something God Himself is all about, but it is what

He calls us to be about. Especially as confessing Christians and those so favoured with hearing God's Word freely and repeatedly, we are to be busy with speaking the truth in love in our families, in our communities, within our churches, and to the whole wide world. Speaking the truth to others, beginning with our children, means teaching them clearly what the Bible teaches about our sinful and lost condition by nature. We must make clear to our children the seriousness and hopeless depth and extent of their sin problem, left to themselves. Don't minimize sin to just some wrong things we do sometimes, but teach as the Bible teaches it. Sin and our being sinful is a most serious, solemn, devastating, eternally fatal condition of our heart and life. Indeed, the truth is, except a person be born again and saved with a God-approved salvation that is perfect and just, you cannot be saved. We must speak the truth too that only in and with Jesus can true salvation be found for sinners like us. The Bible teaches Jesus is the only Mediator and only Saviour of sinners, considering Jesus' perfect Person and His perfect life lived on behalf of sinners, and His perfect sin-atonement sacrifice paid in punishment for sin in the sinner's place. Stress the necessity for being saved through Jesus, and coming to Him in repentance of sin and in the way of true faith in Him.

God speaks the truth with love, emphasizing the necessity of salvation from God but in the context of the gospel where God freely offers all that is necessary unto our complete salvation. We need to speak the gospel truth in tender love and care towards others. We misrepresent the God of truth if we don't also proclaim Him as a God of infinite compassion for sinners, with Whom full redemption is found for all in and through Jesus Christ the Saviour and believing on Him! How important also that all who confess to be Christians speak the truth in love to others in a way that also we ourselves reflect and practice what we say. Listen to this poem entitled, "Leading by Example" which very much brings out the importance of modeling what we teach and preach. The poem reads:

I'd rather see a sermon, than hear one any day.
I'd rather one should walk with me, than merely show the way.
The eye's a better pupil, and more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing, but example is always clear.
The best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.
I can say, I'll learn how to do it if you let me see it done;
I can watch your hand in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
Although the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,
I'd rather learn my lesson by observing what you do;
For I may misunderstand you, and the fine advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

Author unknown