

high calling that is too little respected and valued in our times, sadly so. Thinking of this calling, which parent will not also know and feel himself or herself insufficient for the task? But let that all the more sincerely and repeatedly draw and drive you to Christ and His Word, to receive from Him in all your needs, also in the great responsibility with parenting.

This also brings me briefly yet to our third main point about how God gives His blessing on us speaking the truth in love, indeed, down through the ages. 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. So speaking the truth in love, and so leading our children and families, and so living in the congregation and in the community too, God promises for His own Name's sake His blessing upon that in His sovereign grace. The Word spoken and shared and lived out in truth, in love, is that which time and again, by God's grace, 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 number 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 I speaking the truth in love by God's grace, with God's blessing, is what will lead to the increase of God's church and the coming of His kingdom, even all across the globe.

Speaking the truth in love - this is what God Triune does, and this is what God calls you and I to do, especially also in the family context. Is it what you do as mothers and fathers in the home, speaking the truth in love? Isn't this something so very needful in our times?

"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!" [Jeremiah 22:29]

Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

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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...this is what the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:15 calls Christians to do in all their relationships. What does that mean, however, to speak truth, and to speak truth in love? I thought this would be a fitting topic to think about also on this Sunday known in western society as Mother's Day. Oh, that all mothers and fathers would be in their homes and families as parents who speak the truth in love.

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 sleight [trickery] of men", and he warns thus about getting caught up with and even promoting, all kinds of error and heresy. Instead, we are to speak 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.

In other words, the whole Word of God and all it teaches about God and man, sin and salvation, repentance, faith, and obedience before God, about His church, heaven and hell, and more, all needs to be taught by us to the up and coming generation. This only gospel of Jesus Christ must be taught and proclaimed in a truthful and loving manner, in a right way and a kind way. Speaking the truth in love - is this what you do and want to do more and more? As parents especially, will you so raise your children, with God's help, always and again taking care with them to be speaking the truth in love?

Speaking the truth in love - this is the exhortation and how we should listen, for it is what God Himself does, what He truly calls for from us, and what He richly blesses in our lives down through the generations.

Speaking the truth in love - notice first of all how really this is what God Himself does, 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" and in John 14:6 Jesus says of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father but by Me." 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?

Isn't it so that always the Lord speaks 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 times 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 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, and calling all to come unto Him to be saved, 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 see 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 God 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.

We can say the whole Bible is God speaking the truth in love. It is God's urgent message of truth regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment, but it is all given and bound in passionate love in and through Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour. The Bible is about what Paul says in Romans 6:23, how the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, and even so it tells of God Triune speaking truth in love, yes, in a most earnest, gracious, simple, repeated, and varied manner. How important therefore that God's Word be central in our homes and that as moms and dads we raise our children in the way of God's Word, pointing them to its gospel teaching and leading them in worship in a church where God's Word of truth is taught and preached in love according to God's will. Parents, are you so leading your children, speaking the truth in love?

Saying that also brings us to our next point where we think about how speaking the truth in love is not just something God Himself does, but it is what He calls us to do, yes, especially as parents in the raising of our children. Speak the truth to the children in love means teaching 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 our sin problem, left to ourselves. Don't minimize sin to some wrong things we do sometimes but teach as the Bible teaches, that sin and the sinful condition in which we and our children are born ever since the Fall of man is

a most serious, solemn, devastating, eternally fatal condition of our heart and life, and that except we be born again and saved with a God-approved salvation that is perfect and just, we cannot be saved. We need to teach this truth as reality. We need to speak the truth too that only in and with Jesus can true salvation be found because of His 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 and holy, thankful obedience before Him in submission to all God's Ten Commandments and all His Word. Don't teach that simply church membership saves a person or that baptism can be equated with regeneration or that doing some good works once in a while or being generally a good citizen will save us. No, but make clear our acceptance with God is only always through Jesus Christ the Saviour, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Him alone! Speak the truth with love about sin, salvation, and true God-honouring obedience before Him.

God speaks the truth with love and we need to speak the truth with love as parents with our children. Don't err with in love not speaking the truth, for that is not love then, and don't err in speaking the truth, but not in love, for that is misrepresenting the truth then.

Here let us think more particularly what it means to speak God's truth in love. Won't it mean teaching faithfully, regularly, and repeatedly, hopefully and prayerfully, earnestly and gently, kindly and consistently and encouragingly, always and again speaking the truth, God's Word and way, in humble and hearty and helpful love and loving-kindness? We need to allow also for questions and for development over the years. How important that we speak the truth in love in a way that also we ourselves reflect and practice what we say. Listen to this poem entitled "Leading by Example" which brings out this point clearly.

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

Isn't that poem right on? Will it help you to take care to be speaking the truth in love in a way that your children know it and see it too? Isn't this especially our great calling and responsibility as parents? Parenting is a very