

## Speaking The Truth In Love

- Last week's lesson has sparked at least one response that in turn sparked another. A brother commented afterward that he really needed to act on something that has been bothering him for some time; the fact that two conversions we had during the outreach program this past spring haven't been in the assembly for some time since. When he called me on Monday he asked for the sister in question's phone number because he wanted to call her to tell how much we love and miss her and would like to see her again. He then phoned her and left a message. She then, not knowing personally who the certain person was that called her just from his phone number, decided to text me instead to let me know what was going on. She then texted the reason for not being with us for worship, along with other church family gatherings, since a certain incident occurred.

The message she sent was disheartening to say the least. This very sincere sister had been working diligently to get her other family members to come with her so that they too could experience the love she felt from this little congregation. And what a testament that is to this group. In part of the lesson last week one of the statements had to do with "careless remarks". And at one time or another in our lives we've all uttered them. We've all had "foot in mouth" disease or a "slip of the tongue" where the only cure for such is a repentant spirit and further study of the word of God. I know I've made comments and have uttered hurtful remarks that weren't appropriate in the past and still have a struggle from time to time just keeping my big mouth shut. (amen?) Rash comments are often made in such a way that doesn't make the Christian stating them out to be the loving saint that we **all should** be.

The last time this dear sister came she had convinced her youngest daughter, along with her husband, to come with her. Not an easy task as you will soon understand why. She understood where the Bible stands on certain Biblical issues that go against the grain of societal beliefs and practices. But no matter what a person believes or practices they are still considered a child of God. Remember, Satan has no legitimate children. He didn't have a part in the creation. Those of his offspring he kidnapped from God. (Jn 8:44) And no matter how deep in sin a person is, whether they want to believe that or not, they still need the words of Jesus to see them out of the darkness and into the light of His saving grace. This daughter remarked to our sister that she was afraid this group would not accept her because of her lifestyle choices and what she believed that was something she felt she had no choice in. But our dear sister only reassured her all the more, of the love she would feel if only she would be here to experience it.

At that time I had received an e-mail from a local group that was petitioning our representatives to vote against a law that would legalize same-sex marriage in the state of Pennsylvania. I had announced that the petition was on the table in the back and urged as many as would to sign it. And many did. That too is to be considered commendable. Satan is attacking the God instituted family structure and our children are open season. His first assault was on the authority between husband and wife by addressing his covert question to Eve and not to Adam, which in turn is what caused the first sin. And from her text that petition wasn't what bothered this sister since she understood the Biblical stance on this subject. What cut to her heart, according to her text was the fact that, quote "little sly comments were made" which "broke her (daughter's) heart". Thus removing any chance to study with her to maybe help her understand that everything we

do in life begins at what we chose to do before making any decisions that would effectually determine our eternal destiny.

Now I don't know who made what comments that obviously were in response to the request for signatures on a petition addressing the homosexual agenda, but any and "every idle (*Gk.692- lazy, useless*) word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment" (*Mat 12:36*). For a word to be considered "lazy" or "useless" would mean that the person who uttered it just blurted it out without taking the time to think about what they were about to say. And when a Christian, of all people, who utters even the smallest of "sly comments" concerning someone else's sin, they really haven't looked in the mirror at their own. A "slip of the tongue"? "Lazy, useless" words should never be uttered from the mouth of God's children if we hope to "enter into the joy of thy Lord" (*Mat 25:21*).

**1Co 6:9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, **10** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, **shall inherit the kingdom of God.** **11** And **such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

- But there may be those who might say "Whoa, but I've never committed any of those sins!" Well, there's more...

**Gal 5:19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, **20** Idolatry, witchcraft, **hatred**, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, **21** Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, **and such like:** of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things **shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

- And such like would include any and all other sin that goes against the "new commandment" (*Jn 13:34*) that Jesus gave "That ye love one another; as I have loved you". It's not what we say but how we say it that counts.

**1Jn 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

- Would Jesus have made such remarks **without thinking** someone might be listening, who may be offended, that He might have been able to reach with His love? Think about it. What if this was my child? How heartbreaking would this be to me?

**1Jn 2:8** Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: **because the darkness is past** (*or at least should be*), and the true light now shineth. **9** He that saith he is in the light, and hateth (*Gk.3404- to love less*)[*in comparison this when we put "self" ahead of others*] his brother, is in darkness even until now. **10** He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is **none** occasion of stumbling in him. **11** But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

- Such “little sly comments” spoken, whether knowingly or unknowingly, spoken against another’s sins, show a certain arrogance and superiority of one who was once lost him (*or her*) self but should have grown in their faith to the point of knowing where “**out of the abundance of the heart** (*Gk.2588- thoughts, feelings*) **the mouth speaketh**” (*Mat 12:34*). We only say things that we’ve previously thought to say (*unless you have Turret’s syndrome*). But many times words come out that, as soon as they leave our lips, we wish we could, but obviously can’t, retract them. This would be considered another instance where too much “world” and not enough “word” enters into a **Christian’s** inner person and in such cases the saying is so true; “garbage in, garbage out”! Is someone who has been in the **Lord’s** body for five or ten years, maybe more, any more loved or important than a brand spanking new babe in **Christ**? And this is not to say I know who may have said what was said because I really don’t and if any among us feel you may have stated something offensive at that time that’s between you, **God** and this dear sister.

**1Jn 3:18** My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed (*Gk.2041- an act*) and in truth. **19** And hereby we know that we are **of the truth**, and shall **assure** our hearts before Him.

*“Our consciences are often restless and troubled in view of past guilt; but, in thus furnishing the evidence of true piety by love to others, we shall pacify an accusing mind, and conciliate our own hearts, and persuade or convince ourselves that we are truly the children of God.”*  
Albert Barnes

- Love is not just a word or an expression. It is an act! And it goes hand in hand with truth. Like Aunt Jemima pancakes with her syrup or like pork does with beans. Love along with truth make us “unto God a sweet savor of Christ” (*2 Cor 2:15*). The one without the other we end up being the end product that the pork and beans produce. We wouldn’t be that “sweet savor of Christ” now would we? And coupled with the truth love becomes a very powerful act that can change the course of history. If it isn’t, than the cross of **Christ** had nothing to do with anything concerning the fate of all mankind from the creation until now and until **He** returns because **that one act of love** revealed the **true nature** of **God’s** love for mankind.

**Zec 14:8** And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

- The only element that could and can remove that barrier, known as sin, that separates man from his **Maker** is that precious blood of the **purest Sacrifice** that could ever exist. And only **God** could have provided it through revealing **His** existence and the plan to save us through **His** word and **His** Son.

**Heb 1:1** God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **2** Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *His* Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; **3** Who being the brightness of *His* glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; **4** Being made (*Gk.1096- to become*) so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent (*Gk.1313- surpassing*) name (*Gk.3686- authority*) than they.

Lightfoot translates Heb 1:4; "*having become as much superior to angels as the name He has obtained is more excellent than theirs.*"

Php 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name (*Gk.3683*) which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Nothing should come in the way of the nurturing that a new born babe in Christ needs. Our words included. And even where we stand politically. No political affiliation should come between our fellowship, because no man-organized party can claim to be righteous and in the same breath be telling the truth! Because none is! "Oh, but aren't we to speak the truth at all times?" Yes! But **not without love!** "But I thought that petition you asked us to sign was commendable"! Yes, but not on the basis of some political bent. Only on where we are to stand when it comes to doctrinal truth. We should all be involved in the political process for the purpose of voting those best qualified to make the moral decisions we espouse, but **not** to the point of being **offensive** toward others that don't agree with us. We will always offend someone when speaking truth but should never be offensive while doing it! And there should be no involvement in any outside activity that would take away the majority of our time and focus in serving our Lord.

Joh 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed.

- We are all to be involved in the nurturing process. But what would become of those who hinder their maturing into well-grounded and faithful believers?

Mar 9:42 And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones **that believe in Me** (*speaking of a new believer*), it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

*"Whosoever shall grieve any true Christians, though they be of the weakest, shall oppose their entrance into the ways of God, or discourage and obstruct their progress in those ways, shall either restrain them from doing good, or draw them in to commit sin, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea: his punishment will be very great, and the death and ruin of his soul more terrible than such a death and ruin of his body would be."* Matthew Henry

- How many among us were prepared to understand "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" the very **moment** we first experienced the new birth? Do we feed steak to a baby or do we give them milk? We nurture these newborn babes with what they can handle as they "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (*2 Pet 3:18*).
- We have a good thing going. And I'm sure the Lord has to be pleased when even one heart is touched by the message of salvation.

Heb 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

- But it takes the work of more than one or even a few individuals. We all are to be involved in influencing and edifying each other and **especially** those who are new to the faith among us. Because all who are involved, in whatever way our talents permit, will receive a reward when we do all things in the spirit of truth and love.

1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

- Let's not be a discouragement to the work through "idle words" because we are one when we labor together. And all who take part in the work of the Lord, that do so to His glory, will receive the inheritance promised by Him.

#1. Haven't you heard?

#2. Don't you believe?

Rom 10:14 How then shall they call on Him **in Whom they have not believed?** and how shall they believe in Him **of Whom they have not heard?** and how shall they hear without a preacher?

#3. Haven't you repented?

Luk 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

#4. Haven't you confessed Jesus as the Christ?

Mat 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father Who is in Heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven.

#5. Haven't your sins been washed away?

Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

#6. If you've done all these things, haven't you remained faithful?

*(even when not in the assembly)*

Joh 15:10 If ye **keep** My commandments, ye shall **abide** in My love; **even as** I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

#7. Aren't you growing?

Eph 4:15 But **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up into Him in all things, Who is the Head, *even* Christ:

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