

Sunday, June 05, 2005

Speak the Truth in Love

By Nick Bibile

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

V 14) Let us continue in verse by verse on Ephesians chapter 14. Verse 15 begins with the word 'but' which is the continuation of verse 14 as it is important to understand the context. Verse 14 speaks that we should not be deceived by false teachers then Apostle Paul continues but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Today we are living in a society where truth and love does not go together. Let me explain. In today's society it is unloving to criticize someone. It is unloving to tell someone that they are living in sin. It is unloving to tell someone the wrath of God, the judgment of God against sin. It is unloving even to talk of sin.

The reason for this is that the majority of the churches have embraced the ways of the world, using the methods of the world to evangelize. Instead of being holy many of the churches are unholy in their worldliness.

Rick Warren's Purpose driven Life book is soaring up in sales 15 million copies already sold, even well-known evangelical leaders such as Billy Graham, Bruce Wilkinson, Max Lucado, and Lee Strobel gave glowing endorsements. It is spreading like wildfire even in other countries including the Philippines. This book is being used in seminars, bible-study groups, and Sunday school classes. It is also often given as a gift to birthday celebrants, newly weds, new graduates. This book in my opinion is very tempted to the flesh as Rick Warren speaks God as a friend as he goes on to say "Like a proud parent, God especially enjoys watching you use the talents and abilities he has given you" (Warren: page 74). He also says, "You only bring him enjoyment by being you" (Warren: page 75). "God even enjoys watching you sleep!" (Warren: page 75). He has discovered six secrets to being "a best friend of God" (Warren: page 87)

But you will never hear about God's wrath against sin from Warren. You will never hear the warnings in the Bible about God's coming judgment. You will not learn about God's holiness from Warren. Rick Warren and seeker-sensitive churches tend to minimize the gospel message as they soften sin, wrath of God, holiness of God, judgment of God and repentance. They make the audience feel comfortable, enjoyable and entertaining in their sermons instead of conviction of sin.

This is what I mean, God is presented as a loving God who winks at sins, gives bear hugs to all but just do your best within your human ability and God will smile at you. This is not the loving God of the Bible. The subject of truth is God and his truth, the word of God is the truth and it is opposition to our truth, feelings and the emotions of man. The most loving thing you can do is to tell the truth what is in the Bible in an uncompromised manner, telling the truth without watering it down, telling the truth without adding to the word of God, telling the truth without sugar coating the word of God and telling the truth without softening sin. The true Christians and especially the pastor should preach the truth with all sincerity and honestly before God, this is true Christian love. Exposing the truth against false teachers is true Christian love. Jesus was God's incarnate love and he did tell the truth when he came against false teachers as he told the scribes and Pharisees, "woe to you, hypocrites, white washed tombs, serpents brood of vipers!"

Exposing sin is true Christian love. Remember there was sexual immorality in the Corinthian church that a member of that church was having immorality with his father's wife but the church was not doing anything about it. This is the problem with the church today, they do not want to rebuke anyone who is in sin, as some say it's not good to rebuke as it's not very loving. But Apostle Paul was very angry in his spirit and he rebuked the church in Corinth. (1 Cor 5:1-5)

Jesus was angry in his spirit when he saw the people has made the temple of God into a market place as he overturned the tables drove them out of the temple as he said, "It is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." (Mat 21:13)

Apostle Paul rebuked Peter face to face because Peter's hypocrisy, he used to eat with the Gentiles but in the presence of Jews, he withdrew and separated himself from the Gentiles and was with the Jews. Paul loved Peter as Peter was his brother in Christ and the most loving thing to do is to rebuke him.

Pr 27:5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.

When King David sinned against God by committing adultery with Bathsheba, the prophet Samuel rebuked him to the face and said you are the man. God loved David that's why he told Samuel to rebuke him; we know the story as David was truly convicted of sin and how he cried unto God of his sin.

Truth and love cannot be separated. Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. (1 Cor 13:6)

Do you understand the true concept of speaking the truth in love? Expose sin, rebuke, correct, encourage do not tolerate sin, worldliness, need to confront them? If you don't sin will take control in the church and sin will spread like a cancer and very soon the entire body will be infected, sin can attract the worldly people to the church and the number of the people does not matter it is the inward of man his relationship with the Lord that matters.

If you do expose sin in truth and correct their wrong ways what is the result? Either they will leave the church due to their pride; if they do leave it could be that they are not saved in the first place. If they humbly realize by the grace of God of the danger of sin and take the corrections seriously they will grow up to be like our Lord Christ Jesus. See what I mean in verse 15.

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Christian growth comes by abiding in the truth and this is always in opposition to our flesh. Our flesh wants to do what it feels like doing, spend most of the time watching movies, enjoying this world, living in an unholy lifestyle, not separated unto God. Then you can answer your own question why am I not growing in the Lord? Because you are compromising the word of God. You love the things of the world and you spend so much time on earthly things as your mind is focused on earthly things, your heart and soul is rooted on this earth. Just like the seeker sensitive churches who will not speak of sin, many don't even bother to read and meditate the word of God. If you see someone very close to you who is coming to church and yet living in the flesh instead and who wants to enjoy this world the loving thing to do is to rebuke that person. Then that person will grow in the Lord. If

you don't rebuke there will be no growth of that person and you too will be accountable for not telling the truth.

Jas 1:21 wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Joh 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Just like an infant need pure milk for physical growth the only food that a believer will grow is on the pure, un-polluted word of God.

1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

There is a promise for Christian growth that is to be not worldly minded but be Christ minded.

2Co 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The character of your Christian growth first is vertically as you see in scripture' "may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." The growth is connected to the head of the church that is Christ.

Your Christian growth comes from Christ and not from your education of the world but only from Christ. Remember the Pharisees saw the boldness of Peter and John although they were uneducated poor fishermen they noticed that they were with Jesus.

Ac 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Many people work hard and spend their money on all kinds of worldly things; all their treasures are on worldly things. Some hide their treasures so it cannot be stolen, where is your hidden treasure?

Col 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

What is your greatest threat to spiritual growth? Is it your comforts of life? Is it your TV? Is it your car, home? Is it your job? Is it your husband, wife, children? Is it your flesh, the world?

Your blessings for the flesh will not profit your soul only the spiritual blessings will profit your soul. How many get envied when their friend or their relative who is an unbeliever has a beautiful home, with swimming pool, Jacuzzi with a big garden. They look at the unbelievers who have a lot of wealth and say they possess a lot of things, why God is not blessing me? Why is it that I am poor and I don't have these things? Listen to what Jesus said:

Luke 12:15 Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.

Covetousness means, envious eagerness to possess material things, extreme desire and a hunger for these worldly things.

People make plans for the future so they can save money to retire and live a pleasurable lay back life as their thoughts are on this earth. But Jesus said.

Luke 12:20 Fool! This night your soul will be required of you.

But oh for the Christian, the man of God the woman of God, the child of God how we should hunger after the things of the Lord, and keep our mind and heart focus on our precious Savior and Lord. The world can give excitement, pleasures and comforts to the flesh but the only comfort the Christians have is that we don't belong to ourselves but belong to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it was his precious blood that satisfied all my sins and delivered me from the pit of hell, from the power of the devil and now I live not according to my will but to my Lord's will.

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

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