

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“Speaking The Truth In Love” Pt. 2

by Brian Meade

We discussed last week about the attitude and disposition that a child of God must have to be effective in communicating truth to others. According to Ephesians 4:15, we are to be known for “speaking the truth in love.” It should characterize our speech to those who are lost or in error.



One of the main challenges to speaking the truth in love is learning to control our emotions while talking to others about matters of disagreement.

Sometimes, because someone has been taught error for so long, it is difficult for them to see the truth and will not easily give up their long held erroneous beliefs. That’s when we really need to be very patient and loving in attempt to win them over to the truth.

It may be very difficult to convince them to see past the popular doctrines of “faith-alone” or “Once in grace always in grace” or Calvinism in its various forms that are so prevalent in the world today — but all our efforts will definitely be worth it in the Day of Judgment!

Notice what Paul told the young evangelist Timothy, *“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”* (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

The Bible recommends for all Christians to watch *how* they talk to those whom we are trying to teach truth to. Notice what Paul says, along this line, in Colossians 4:3-6, *“praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”*

Jesus even taught His disciples be harmless in the way we interact with those who are around us. Jesus said in Matthew 10:16, *“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”* We need both of those characteristics to be effective (1) the shrewd, wise actions of someone who knows how to present truth in the best way possible to those who need it. (2) And the harmless, innocent nature of a meek and gentle spirit who really cares about those who are lost.

Paul told the Ephesians to wear God’s armor to do battle, *“and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”* (Ephesians 6:19-20)

We must learn to have love and boldness in our speech— a balance of both will help us win many souls to the Lord. Being bold & courageous is needed to say the truth to someone who is lost; and yet, boldness does not exclude love— it needs it!

Also, as we contend “for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3), we must learn not to be so contentious that we are always looking for a fight— even among brethren dwelling in unity. A good soldier knows when to fight, and when to stop fighting and enjoy the peace (as it doesn’t last too long, the devil is always busy!). To be overly contentious doesn’t help the cause we are fighting for...

And finally, there are times and situations where we are called upon to speak truth in love. We looked at last week concerning sinful behavior, but there are also other times we need stand up for Jesus!

The Church.

The Bible teaches us in Matthew 16:18, *“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”* The church that Jesus built is recorded in the Scriptures, sanctioned by God, and is what all men should seek to be apart of its citizenship.

One of the things that we try to get those involved in denominationalism to see is that what mere men establish themselves can NEVER be the same that Lord Himself established in 33 AD. We preach that men and women should want plain and simple Christianity, without the machinery and complications of man-made systems of faith they have devised themselves. God’s plan is simple: be Christians only and only Christians. Learn to respect the authority of the Bible as God’s authority and NOT man’s.

But how many times have we got into discussions with other people about these principles, and they very dogmatically stress denominational views of the church regardless of what the Bible teaches? It can very frustrating, especially when so much is at stake on whether we follow Christ’s doctrine or men’s!

It becomes very challenging to speak the truth in love as we have such pointed differences of views concerning the church. It can test our patience as we lovingly speak of Jesus’ only church. Men may say, ‘It doesn’t matter what name is on the sign out front,’ but it really does! No one would ever put Satan’s name or Jezebel’s name on the sign for the church, and rightfully so! But more than that, we are commanded to do all things in Jesus’ name and authority, *“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”* Also, we are to *“speak as the oracles of God.”* (1 Peter 4:11)

Can we honestly say that the name Lutheran, or Baptist, or Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, or Jehovah’s Witnesses are in the Bible, and speak with Christ’s authority? But there are more than just the name problem that disqualifies them as Christ’s church—there are serious doctrinal issues as well. It is the very reason you have so MANY churches in the first place. It is because of peculiar doctrines taught by denominationalism that men are hopelessly divided into separate groups. *“Faith only, Premillennialism, Once saved, always saved...”*

This goes against God’s plan that we be one, as Jesus prayed for unity in John 17:20-21, *“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*

For us to truly be one, we must be one in doctrine and faith. This means that we have no right to divide the body of Christ into separate belief systems. No one can honestly say denominationalism is in answer to Jesus’ prayer for unity in the faith. Denominationalism itself means division!

And when men started rallying around men, Paul asked them the pointed questions about such division, *“For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 1:11-12) This is how sectarianism gets started, when men separate and divide in a party spirit around others.

This is precisely what men did in the reformation age, when men rallied around John Wesley, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Smythe—men who started separate movements, and not around Christ alone. Paul told them then, and we still need his inspired words of 1 Corinthians 1:13, *“Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”*

One fact from Paul’s questions—the body of Christ should NOT be divided! And the cure for division is found in 1 Corinthians 1:10, *“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

When we stop trying to be different in doctrine, and holding our opinions and feelings about truth such as baptism, church work, and worship. In short, we must agree on what God has spoken in His word.

And when people hear these arguments against denominations, they can become argumentative and defensive as they try to defend creeds and unauthorized practices. It is sad, but it is often that men will fight for things not found in Scriptures, and discount plain Scriptures to do so!

In these times of strong disagreement, Let us keep calm and keep our composure... knowing that the Lord faced those same types of men while here on the earth.

And remember to keep speaking the truth in love.

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Bobbi Howell (cancer), Rai Ann Pruitt, Lee Busby, And Danny Cottrell starts treatments for cancer (Dan's Dad).

Our Spring Gospel Meeting with Billy Randolph will begin Sunday, April 19th—24th. Monday the Friday (20—24) starting time is 7:00 PM Nightly.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Tim Harris Sr.
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: "The Outer & Inner Man Pt. 1"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service: Brian Meade
1 Corinthians (Mike Willis)
Lesson 1, Page 8, Question #1

Announcements: Sam Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Dan Cottrell
1 John 5:3-5
Song Leader: Lee Busby
Lord's Supper: Fred Johnson
Assisting: Nathan Meade & Brian Meade
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: "Overcoming Our Fears By Our Faith"
Closing Prayer: Doug George

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

March 18th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Brian Meade
The Book of Psalms (Randy Blackaby)
Page #, Question #
Invitation: Paul Busby
Song Leader: Dan Cottrell
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade