Coronavirus Social Distancing Daily Devotion #47

Speaking Truth in Love

***Ephesians 4:15 (NASB)****“…but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.”*

There are times when the truth must be spoken. But all too many times the truth is spoken without love. Or love is expressed but the truth is not told. People are often out of balance with these two subjects. Admittedly, it is difficult to tell the truth to people because we don’t want to hurt their feelings, and we especially don’t want to cause a rift between us. So often love overtakes what needs to be said or done to share the truth.

For example, when someone we love needs to hear about God’s love for them, often the approach is to share the sacrifices of God and all that He has done to save us, even quoting John 3:16. And certainly those are critical things that should be done when witnessing about God. But there is also the necessity to share with people the dire consequences of living life without knowing God. People need to know they owe a debt to God and if that debt is not paid, they will spend eternity in hell. But that sounds so harsh. That sounds like it would turn people away instead of drawing them in. But the truth is, that is reality. It is the truth of God’s Word. So to love people and not tell them the truth is only partially helping them. And it is just as true that the truth can be cold and heartless if it is not sprinkled with genuine love.

Even in the church, there are times when we must express our love for each other by sharing the truth. We are told by God that we are to hold one another accountable for our actions and reactions toward one another. One of the main reasons for preaching is to exhort, encourage and even rebuke when there are things we do or say that are out of line with God’s Word. (2 Timothy 4:2) But always this is to be done in love.

There may be people in your life right now with whom you need to share your love and the truth. I’m quite sure there are times in your day when people get under your skin so to speak. They become irritations. And those irritations can come out in the most ridiculous ways. You may be eating dinner with someone and they are crunching loudly because of the food they are eating or the way they swallow their liquids. As you allow this to build up, you explode. And in your eruption, the truth comes out alright, but not in love or lovingly.

Don’t be afraid to share the truth with people. And don’t be afraid to encourage others to make changes in the way they live life. Of course you can’t do anything about the way a person chews their food or drinks liquid. But you can graciously and lovingly share truth with them before frustrations get the best of you. Far too many relationships have been lost because there was not enough love to share the truth and to receive the truth. It is one thing to be able to share the truth but quite another to be able to receive the truth. Both must happen.

In the context of Paul’s letter to Timothy, he is referring to sharing the Gospel. But this verse can be used as instruction for us in many ways. Mainly if we are to love one another in the way God wants for us, we must be willing to share the truth with people but be willing to hear the truth as well. It is easy to be lopsided. Many people don’t mind dishing it out but not taking it in.

Beloved, soon we will be coming together again as a church. In these days, it is critical we examine our hearts considering all of God’s truth. And for us to be the church Jesus wants us to be, we must be willing to receive the truth as much as we must be willing to give the truth. No matter what it is, the truth is the truth. Let’s make sure we are giving the truth in loving, heart compassionate ways and receiving it the same way.