

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

This is Amazing Grace, Love so Great, How Great is Your Love, Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me, Living Hope

WELCOME

Do you like to be corrected or told what to do? Why or why not?

WORD

EPHESIANS 4:14-15

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

People are hungry for love and, more often than not, will do anything to get it. As Christians, we know where real love comes from and it is our responsibility to share this truth with others. We have learned that *love is an unconditional commitment towards imperfect people to seek their highest good, which often requires sacrifice, for the glory of God.* Love also involves **speaking the truth in love.**

At the beginning of **Ephesians 4**, Paul implored the church in Ephesus to walk in a manner worthy of their calling. Coming to Jesus is just the first step – the beginning of our journey. As we walk together, we are to grow in maturity. We are to use the gifts God has given us to build up the body of Christ. As a result, we will not remain as children but will grow in truth (**v14**). And as we speak the truth in love, *we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ (v15).*

As Christians, one of our main callings is to speak the truth to each other, but this should be done in love. There are two extremes – being afraid to speak the truth and being harsh in speaking the truth. Both are not God's design for us. Rather, we should grow in both areas – speaking all the truth that we know with all the love that we have.

LOVE SPEAKS

How do we become persons who speak the truth driven by love? In **Matthew 9:36**, Jesus felt compassion when He saw the people *because they were distressed and dispirited, like sheep without a shepherd.* When we see people do we have compassion for them like Jesus? Do we have a burden to speak the truth because people are lost? Do we feel brokenness and a burden when we see them? Or do we just see ourselves and how other people should meet **our needs?**

1 John 3:18 says we should *not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.* Truth is foundational. We speak truth by knowing truth based on God's Word. We speak the truth because it sets people free (**John 8:32**). But love speaks more powerfully when those who are on the receiving end of the truth know and trust the one speaking. When we truly love people, we enter their circle of trust

and allows us to speak the truth to them. Speaking the truth may not be easy, but let us strive to build relationships wherein people want to hear truth from us.

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

We can learn from the Apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 9:22-23**, *I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some...* We are God's instruments to proclaim the truth. If needed, we should adjust our METHODS without changing the TRUTH. We can proclaim the SAME TRUTH in DIFFERENT WAYS. Not all people are like you and me. We may be similar in some ways but we may see things differently. So how will we know what to say? Ravi Zacharias reminds us, *"Before you talk to your friends about God, talk to God about your friends."* Let us ask for God's help to see the external, internal, and spiritual needs of others. Let us try to understand where they are coming from so we can meet them where they are. We can start by asking good questions, listening well, being focused and present when they talk to us, and discerning God's appointed time to speak.

DAVID AND NATHAN

We speak the truth by knowing the truth (God's Word) and there are times when we have to be "hard" about it. When David committed murder (Uriah) and adultery (Bathsheba), God used Nathan to rebuke him (**2 Samuel 12:5, 7, 13**). This made David realize his great sin before God. Likewise, we should speak against sin, even when it is difficult, to draw people closer to God.

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Read **John 4:6-42**

Another example of speaking the truth in love is none other than Jesus Christ in His encounter with a Samaritan woman. In those days, Jews despised the Samaritans because they were "half-breeds" (part Jewish, part Gentile). But Jesus extended love by engaging the Samaritan woman in a conversation that changed her life. We never see Jesus condemn her, but He kept peeling past the defensive layers she had and spoke into an issue that really got her attention.

WORD (cont'd)

In the end, not only did she believe in Him, she led others to Jesus as well.

Love speaks even when it is difficult to say what needs to be told because God promises to help us speak the truth in His name. **Love speaks even when the truth will be difficult to accept** because we know that God is the one who changes hearts, not us. Our job is to do our best to speak the truth; if people reject the truth, they reject God, not us. **Love speaks even when it is difficult to face the consequences** because the consequences of not telling the truth are far greater and has eternal ramifications much bigger than the momentary shame or pain we may feel when we are rejected. Love speaks because *true love is from God and it is an unconditional commitment towards imperfect people to seek*

their highest good, which often requires sacrifice, for the glory of God.

Many people are lost and walk in darkness (**Ephesians 4:17-19**). They are blinded to the truth and only Christ can remove the veil over their hearts. Whenever a person turns to the Lord, that veil is taken away (**2 Corinthians 3:14-16**). We should not treat sin lightly (**Romans 1:18**). People need to repent and return to God (**Acts 3:19**). Only Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (**John 14:6, Romans 6:23**) and we need to tell this truth in love to others. We can only love because God first loved us (**1 John 4:19**) and because we have experienced this unconditional love (**1 John 4:10**), let us become the best instruments we can be to speak the truth in love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Heart Check.** Do you feel compassion and heartbreak when you look at people who are lost? Why or why not?
2. **Setting It Right.** Are you afraid to speak the truth or harsh when speaking the truth? How can you improve in speaking the truth in love?
3. **Living It Out.** Read **Colossians 3:16**. Commit to admonish one another by speaking the truth in love. You may take turns asking how you can improve. Also, share how you will improve in having the “word richly dwell in you” and to have “thankfulness in your heart to God”. End by praying for each other.

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Different strokes for different folks. Go through your Pray, Care, Share List and pray for God to help you understand where they are coming from. Ask for wisdom if you need to adjust your methods. Use the appropriate methodology during opportunities to speak the gospel truth in love this week!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends