

“Speaking the truth in love.” Galatians chapter 4 verse 15

I suppose it's only to be expected that the idea of truth should be something of a battleground. After all, there are many competing claims to truth, never more so than today, and the way we go about promoting our various truths seriously needs addressing. And we need to start with the simple lesson, “you don't need to hate everyone who disagrees with you.” Is it not obvious that there are going to be many people who think and see things differently from us?

Today, people seem to live and act by the principal that being right gives them the right to hold in contempt others who have different views, and to demand that because what they believe is true they can demand their way. That's really just another way of saying that if everyone was exactly like me and believed exactly what I believed then everything would be ok.

Of course, the Christian faith, like all religions, has a giant truth claim. It encompasses the very creation of the universe, all of humanity, all of human morality, God himself and how people are to come to him and live before him. It includes all of human history, from the beginning until the end. There is nothing that the Christian faith doesn't have a position on. No wonder people find it tiresome sometimes. And I wouldn't be honest if I didn't admit that there have been many times in history when Christian truth has been presented in exactly the demanding, hateful and even violent and cruel manner I've described above.

But that is a complete contradiction to the way the bible recommends that we should share our truth. We are told that we ought always to be ready to share the reason for our hope, but to do it courteously and gently. And Paul, leading up to today's verse, encourages the Ephesian Christians to grow in the spiritual gifts that God has given them to minister his love, truth and power to one another, each one playing his or her part, thereby growing to maturity in Christ. “Then,” he says, “we will no longer be infants, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit (fake news anyone?)”

Then he tells them to speak the truth in love, growing up into Christ and building one another up. It seems the truth of God is supposed to be used for the best good of others to encourage and build them up, rather than to attack, judge and crush them.

Prayer

Father, thank you for your truth. Thank you that your truth is vested in a person, your Son Jesus Christ. All too often we use the truth as a weapon to berate others with and to attempt to conform them to our way of thinking. Please help us to minister your truth with love and gentleness to that those we share it with will be encouraged to grow towards and in you. In Jesus name, amen.

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