

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

Early in my ministry someone asked me “What's more important, truth or love?” It made me think. Both are important of course, but do we have to choose between them or are they mutually dependent?

There are those to whom the truth is the most important thing. If something is true then it is to be said or done, regardless of the effect it might have on others. The obvious result is judgmentalism and legalism, the truth used as a weapon or a means of control. It may be the truth, but on its own it can do a lot of harm.

There are those to whom love is the most important thing. Nothing must be said or done to offend or upset anyone, even when people clearly need some timely advice. The obvious result is indulgence and permissiveness. “Love is all you need” sang the Beatles, and we all know with hindsight how that turned out.

But Paul says that a big part of growing into Christ is speaking the truth in love. This means helping one another on our journey in faith, learning to trust one another enough to speak uncomfortable truths when necessary. We all admit to not being perfect, and sometimes we need others gently to point out to us what some of those imperfections are.

So we need the truth, but like everything else it is to be ministered in loving ways. Love tells us that we cannot justify saying anything simply because it is the truth, and it also tells us that we cannot always justify staying silent, either.

Neither truth nor love is more important. They are two sides of the same coin.

Prayer

Father, please forgive me for the times when I have used the truth as a weapon to beat people with, or a means of control to manipulate and dominate, and please forgive me for when I have allowed a misguided sense of love to keep me silent and passive when I should have spoken or acted. Please help me to minister your saving and healing truth in genuine, authentic love. In Jesus' name, amen.

All these devotionals can be found on our website inghamitechurch.org on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.