



Sermon – July 21, 2019  
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**Verses Covered**

*Ephesians 4:15 - 16*

So the section we're in in Ephesians, been talking about the fact that God places in the church certain people who lead the church. As he says, into a place where the church, and basically we're going to talk about this room, not universal church. But inside this room, the staff and I, our job is to pull all of you in the same direction, toward Christ, unified, not in anything else, except what we believe about this book. And that unity which is kind of in this same caravan, walking toward Jesus so that we experience Him in a way that we measure ourselves, and this is his point, by how full our lives are of Christ. We don't measure it by rules. We don't measure it by money. We don't measure it by success. We don't measure by what kind of job we have. We measure our lives by how full Christ is in our life. Now that is my job and the staff's job. And one of the things he says, one of the translations generally, he says equipping the saints, but really the Greek word means to mend the nets. So the idea is we give you the principles that allow Christ to alter who you are. Now, but where we are today, he's going to talk about your role with each other. Not my role with you. Not the staff's role with you. But what you do with each other in this room. So listen to what he says. Chapter 4 beginning in verse 15. He says:

[<sup>15</sup>but because we speak the truth in love, let us grow into Him in all things](#)

Now let's walk through this. He says, speaking truth in love. So your job inside this room as we're walking toward Christ, obviously if the staff and I are up here, there are going to be people in this group that we don't know that we don't have contact with. So your job is to help them walk correctly in this caravan. And the way you're going to do that is, number one, by speaking truth to them. Now when we say truth, that's not Baptist definition of true. Baptists think they know what they know. I remember, first time I heard E. V. Hill, great black pastor from California. He spoke at the Southern Baptist Convention. He had this distinctive accent. And he got up and he said, "I love you Southern Baptists for who you think you are." That is probably the best description of us I've ever heard. So we're not going to give our opinion to each other. If somebody steps off and begins to dance, we're not going to freak out about that. There's a particular Baptists school in Texas, I won't give a name, whose president attacked the Bible. Nobody said a word. Fired a BSU guy for winning too many people to Christ. That was in the

Baptist Standard and I spoke to him personally. Absolutely true. But when they allowed dancing on campus, the Baptists went crazy. Letters. All sorts of crazy things. We're not going to share our opinion. If it's not black and white, write with clarity inside these pages, we're not going to give it to each other as truth. OK. For example, truth in the Bible is, He's coming back. The truth is how; I don't have any idea. I have my own opinion from putting a lot of scripture together that I think is brilliant and right. But it's still my opinion. So we're not going to give opinions. We're going to give black and white truth. And we're going to do it pretty much in two areas. You're going to help each other because there are really pretty much two ways we struggle. One is we hit a real snag in the road. I read just this week of a father took the life of his daughter on the golf course by accidentally hitting her with a golf ball. I can't even fathom what that would be like. And so here's this guy in the caravan, this has happened to him, he's obviously going to stop, and struggle. And so your job, those wherever he goes to church, if he does, that job is for them to come alongside him and say, "Look, God's got your back. He never wastes pain in our life. I know based on Romans 8 that the Holy Spirit's praying for you right now, even though you can't hear Him. And that somehow something really good is going to come out of this because of His prayer in your life." You're going to edify him. You're going to pull him back with your arm around him and help walk him through this because those of us that are leading don't always know and don't always have the connection. But you do and so you're going to pull him back into the caravan and help him keep walking by what we share with him.

Second thing is there are going to be times people are walking where they shouldn't walk and you're going to have to yell at them and go, "Hey! Don't go there. It's going to burn you. It's going to hurt you. It's going to cripple you. Come back." So you're going to speak, and again, it's Biblical truth. You're going to speak truth to each other because those of us on staff do not know everybody. We're not in everybody's life. And so you're going to have to, inside this room, bring truth to each other. The whole reason that we have the life groups in this church is so that you can find a group of people that can absolutely do that in your life. I'm telling you, I don't hate Facebook completely. But the goofiness is some of the stuff I read, you need to be in a group of people who are walking well that can encourage you when you need it and pull you away from danger when you need it. So you're going to speak the truth to each other. And here's what he says: in love. OK. Now we don't always do that. It's embarrassing to admit, but when I was in college, when I was called to preach, there were two or three of us that were called to preach at the same time. One guy's name was David Frasier. He wound up marrying our pastor's daughter. And we were pretty competitive. And so I'd see him, I'd come home from college and he'd be there in Louisiana and I'd see him. And he'd go, "Hey, I preached a couple weeks ago and four people got saved. What about you?" Which, if you know me, set well with me. So having had one semester of Greek and knowing everything about the language after one semester, we go to Sunday school and I would wait for him to say something that was incorrect. I would pounce. And what I said was right, but pretty unholy. Because I was pouncing so I could make him look bad in the class because he made me look bad when I preached. So I am getting him back. So I shared truth, but I don't think God would have said, "You know, you did that lovingly." I did that because in the Greek, I was a *jérk*. That's the Greek word. And if he'd had known Greek, he would have known that. So we want to make sure we share the truth because we love the person we're sharing it with. And not just because we like to share truth. There's a preach, I will not say his name, but he's famous. And another pastor talked to him one day about some issues in his life. He says, "You know I don't need a church to preach to." He said, "All I need is a camera and

being able to preach and give that information out and that can go wherever it goes.” When you only care about throwing information out and you don’t really care about the person, then be quiet and let somebody else in the caravan do the sharing. So we’re going to speak truth to each other. That’s your job. Which you’re going to do because you love the people you’re in the caravan with. You say, “Well, I don’t like them. They graduated from Auburn.” I get that. But you’re going to love them no matter what school they go to. No matter what their political affiliation is. You’re going to love them because they are your brother in Christ whether they differ with you or not. You’re going to speak the, you know how quiet it gets when I say those things? So you’re going to speak truth, Biblical truth, out of love for those you’re in the caravan with.

Now here’s what’s going to happen.

*Speaking truth in love, let us grow into Him in all things, who is the head, Christ,*

So here’s what’s going to happen. As I, as I’m in this caravan, I need encouragement. I’m stepping the wrong place, there’s some things I need to know. As truth is shared with me, now listen, as truth is shared with me, now listen, and I obey that truth, then I grow toward Christ. The obvious thing is if I don’t obey that truth, if I lose a child and I’m struggling and some people come by and say, “Listen, God still loves you. He has your back. He’s going to do something. He’s going to do something, I’m sure there’s some purpose.” And I, and I believe what they tell me from the scripture. And I believe that and I get back in the caravan then I will increase toward Christ. If, though, I come to a place where I say, “I don’t think He loves me and I can’t take this.” And I step away, I don’t increase toward Christ. I don’t grow. Same thing’s true. When we’re assisting each other with truth from the scripture, the only way for me to grow in Christ is to take that truth and pull it into my life. We’ve talked about the fact, right, that intercessory prayer in the Bible is this. That I get in my closet, I have my list that God has sovereignly put in my life to pray about, and I don’t tell God what I think He should do with the list. I sit in the room and I get quiet and I allow the Holy Spirit in me to tell me what to pray for in regard to every item on my list. Now that’s what the Bible teaches. I can know that truth. But if I don’t do that, I’m spiritually lazy and so I have somebody ask me to pray and I just pray what I want and I go on, that truth does not impact my life or anybody else’s. When some of the Pharisees came to Jesus and they said, “You know, Your disciples are pretty unholy. John’s disciples fasted. Your disciples, we’ve never seen them fast.” And Jesus made an interesting statement. He said, “As long as I’m here, they’re not going to fast. But when I leave, they will fast.” When you go to Acts 13 and God spoke to that particular body of people and said, “I want Paul and Barnabas out and they’re going to go to do mission work.” The Bible says they were worshiping the Lord and fasting. I’m not trying to make you feel guilty. It’s not my passion. That is not my heart beat today. But when is the last time that you fasted? That you fasted because there’s somebody on your prayer list you love and you don’t know how to pray for them and you want to know. And so you fasted with the Father to discover exactly how He wants you to pray for that particular person on the list. See I can know that I’m supposed to fast. I can know that I’m supposed to worship. But if I don’t implement those things in my life, then there is no growth toward Christ. So as you and I breathe truth to each other because we love each other, then by definition, the only way that truth is going to impact my life is if I pull it into my life. Not if I know it and ignore it. So it’s imperative.

Now if I do that, we come to a verse that is the reason Peter said, “Paul’s writings are hard to understand.” Here’s what he says. Now listen to the rest of it.

<sup>15</sup>by speaking truth in love, let’s increase into Him in all things who is the head, Christ,  
<sup>16</sup>out of Him the entire body is joined together and knitted together though every ligament of support based on the working in measure of each one part, making the growth of the body resulting in a building up of itself in love.

That’s on the test next Sunday morning. Now he’s wordy and he’s verbose, but here’s what he says. You’re the ligament, all of us are a different part of the body. And if the body is going to reach its full capacity in Christ, which by the way, is what we have to have today because the world’s in shambles. I love it because if we show them what it’s like to be whole and healthy and right, and that we experience Jesus Christ and He’s altered our lives, we can show that to the world by absolutely bringing each other, networking with each other, bringing truth to each other’s life. If we can show that to them, we show them something they can’t see outside these walls. Now the only way we do that, he says, if each ligament of support through everyone based on the working in measure of each one part, there isn’t anybody in here that can’t do their part. Because anybody in here that doesn’t do their part damages the caravan. When I was in college, busted my ligaments in my ankle. Was on crutches for a number of weeks, got out of them, the next day was throwing the ball with a guy in the quadrangle, stepped in another hole, same foot, busted them again. So I was about 12 weeks on crutches. Which if you haven’t been on crutches, it’s a great joy. Everything else was affected by that. I was tired, I was fatigued, I couldn’t go as many places, and everything else was fine except that one ankle. Now all I can tell you what this gook says. Every one of you in this room that is a born again believer, has been granted a spiritual gift. You’ve been granted two things. You’ve been granted at least one spiritual gift from the Father. And number two, He has placed in your life lost people to witness to and believers to bless. And if you don’t bless the believers and share with the lost, you miss the point of why you’re still here. Why do you think that He doesn’t just take you home when you get saved? Why does He leave us here in this world that is not the way He made it, that is a complete mess? Why does He leave us here? Because there are two groups around us: people He’s put that we can share Christ with and other people that we bless that are brothers and sisters in Christ. Every single one of us has to use that. We are, I fear, raising up churches of people that are driven to the church to consume, not to give. I love all the things out there. I love Breakaway. I love Navigators. I love Intervarsity. I love all those things, but if they become your church where you’re never really in the caravan, you’re just near the caravan, you miss the point of who and what you are. There’s none of us that can walk this well by ourselves. I need other people in my life. And God has put us there for each other.

So there are really three ways to react to this group of people walking toward Christ. There’s three ways. One is I can be walking with a group and go, “Nah, I don’t want to go here anymore.” And I can turn around and walk away. Now the Bible says in 1 John if I stay away it’s because I was never really part of the group. But there are two ways now I can work in the group. One is I can stay in the group. Those that are out here that I have a chance to share about Christ I do. Those I can bless I do inside this group. And I listen to their blessing on my life and we walk with each other understanding more and more each day who Christ really is in our life. Or I can be way out here aside from the group, kind of parallel to it and I’m walking along. I’m not engaged in crazy sin, I’m trying to do what I’m supposed to, and I’m walking along parallel to this group. But

because I'm out here, I don't have people that can warn me of the danger that's coming and I don't have the ability to bless the people that God put me in the life of to bless. So you have three possibilities in this room. You can leave today and never come back. Walk away from Christ. It's probably because you didn't know Him. That's viable, possible. You can be in here and walk parallel to us and be a great guy and a great lady, but never impact the body of Christ and never really be impacted by the body of Christ. You can mix it up with the rest of us who don't have it totally together and so we need each other, we encourage each other, and we protect each other, and we bless each other until the day our Lord takes us home. That is the best way to live.

Let's pray.

Father, if there's anybody on the fringe, bring them home. There's anybody here that's never met You, let them know this morning they don't know You and surrender to the call of Your Spirit. Father, You make the difference this morning as only You can. In Jesus name.