

# Truth with Love for the Sake of Growth

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 04 August 2013

Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[ 0 : 0 0 ] I would like you to turn in your Bibles this morning to Ephesians chapter 4 and we are going! Ephesians chapter 4 verse 14 and 15. Though we have been in Ephesians for many months, and we have taken the time to get the overview of what this book is about, I think it is always important for us to reframe context. And so this morning before we actually deal with a small part of the text, what I want to do is encourage you to remember that Ephesians is a book written by the Spirit of God given to the Apostle Paul to communicate to the church at Ephesus, and it is a book that deals first of all in chapters 1 through 3 with what God has done in salvation.

And it is perhaps the most complete explanation of the part that God plays in bringing us to Himself and in saving us. The first three chapters explain what Christ has done. The next three chapters, and that's where we are, we're in the second half of our study, the next three chapters deal with what we as Christ's body are to do. And as I've explained, the first thing that God brings to our attention is really the fact that we who are part of His family by virtue of salvation have this overriding responsibility of unity in our faith and our purpose. And actually verses 1 through 16 is given as a careful explanation of how God works in the church to sustain and nurture and strengthen this unity in the body of Christ. I look now, if you will, and turn into your Bible to verse 15, or actually 14, it says, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes, but rather speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head unto Christ. I ask that you join me in prayer as we take the text in hand. Our Father God, this morning as we take Your Word in our hands and as we study it, we have sung a song that is rich in its scriptural premise, that the handling of Your Word is not something that is to be done merely on the basis of our own intellect, but we who are Your children can rely upon Your Spirit to help us both in reading and studying it, but then also in understanding and being enriched by it. And I'm reminded of what the prophet Zechariah said in its bearing on this moment where it said, not by might nor by power, but by spirit, saith the Lord. And this morning, we who are Your children are thankful for the ministry of the indwelling Spirit. He who abides in us cares greatly for our spiritual growth, and He, we ask, would work today that we would understand the

Word more and that we would grow to be more like the Lord Jesus Christ. And we ask this, that You might be honored here among us and in the community that You have placed us, even as You are honored and revered in eternity. And we ask this in Your precious name. Amen. As we look at this passage, I want you to remember that Paul is doing something what a very good teacher does, and he's kind of walking us through the steps of understanding really what is involved in unity and how that unity is maintained and how it was developed and strengthened. And he explains that at the very heart of the unity that we are to have as believers is our relationship not only to Christ, but our relationship to the truth, the Word of God. And at the heart of this relationship to the Word of God is growing and understanding and applying it. Now, I don't know how all of you are at directions, but as we look here in verse 14, Paul begins actually by explaining where we all started at and where the new believer starts at. We rely, in fact, many of us today probably rely on MapQuest or Navi to get us from point A to point B. Do you remember having punched in the coordinates and, well, I don't know how to get there, but I have, and off we go. I remember in an earlier day when neither Navi nor MapQuest was available, for me to get from point A to point B was a very arduous process and not always certain that I would arrive there. What it meant was actually typing out line by line, go this far, turn here, go this far, turn there, etc. And it meant that I would be driving along in the car reading those instructions.

And getting those instructions was pretty important because if I didn't have them, there was a very, very small probability that I would, A, arrive on time or, B, arrive at all. I need directions.

And the thing I like about MapQuest and Navi is that you get started and Navi makes an assumption because it already knows where you are. You understand that, don't you? MapQuest, in order to get directions from point A to point B, what do you always have to put in first? Pardon? You have to put in your location. And since autofill is what it is, when I'm in the office, I'm trying to figure out a detail.

[ 6 : 09 ] I just, you know, I start 4663 and guess what it does? Trebut Road to Columbus, Ohio, blah, blah, blah. And I am already settled. I know where I am, and then I can find out where I need to go.

Well, as we look at this passage, it is dealing with some important details that we need to understand about our spiritual life. And it starts out by, first of all, telling us the nature of the new believer. Look at what it says there in verse 14, so that we may no longer be children. And when Paul makes this statement, he is telling us something about the starting point in the life of the new believer. Every new believer starts out as a spiritual infant. And sadly enough, that new believer can be counted on to do some of the things that are characteristic of a child or an infant.

And it shouldn't be a surprise to us. The idea that just because you are 50 years old when you come to faith, and along with that age is automatic spiritual maturity, is not the case at all. When you come to Christ, you start out as a little baby in terms of your spiritual development and your spiritual behavior. It's very interesting to see how often the Scriptures give to us the idea that new believers are babies. They need to be reminded of that. And over in Galatians chapter 4, verse 19, the apostle writes this regarding the believers there at Galatia. He says, My little children. My little children. Now, how many of you have had people, and here you are as an adult, and I'm not talking to you who are 10 or 12, but I'm talking to you who are 40 plus. Have you ever had anybody talk to you like you're a child? And you probably have bristled a little bit and said, hey, hey, don't talk to me that way. I'm an adult. I can walk and chew gum at the same time. In fact,

I have a driver's license. I don't even get carded anymore. I'm adult. Now, why are you talking to me that way? Paul, when he talks to the church, he says, listen, my little children. And when he said that, he was not being offensive to them. He was just reminding them of the reality that at the start of our spiritual life, we're spiritual infants. Over in 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 2, the apostle says this, as newborn infants long for pure spiritual milk. And one of the things that I understand about new believers is that new believers start out as a result of their conversion with a newfound interest in the Word of God. They're interested in it. They want it. They desire it. They don't have to be pressed and persuaded and cajoled into reading the Scriptures. They want to know. I remember one young man that after he came to Christ, actually, he was not young when he got saved, probably in his 40s. I remember I actually several days after I had the privilege of talking to him about his relationship with Christ, he got together with me again. And I thought, well, it'd be appropriate to explain to him that a new believer should be reading the Scriptures. And when I got started on it, he says, oh, yeah, that's what I've been doing. I didn't know where to start. And so I just kind of launched in Matthew. And he had, in the last several days, worked his way through Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. He said, I guess I should still go on into Acts. And I thought, yeah, that's right. That's not a bad way to go. And here, newborn believer, guess what he was doing? He was in the Word.

[ 9 : 42 ] Peter says, as newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk. Over in 1 John chapter 2, when the apostle John writes to the believers there, he says, my little children, I am writing these things to you so that you do not sin.

And over and over again, when either the apostles or another individual would make comment and speak about the relationship of new believers to this matter of being childish, the statement is not meant to be offensive. It is meant to be just an indicator of the reality of where we start as new believers.

And so when we think about that, we mark the fact in verse 14 that we see at the outset there's a reminder. You start out as a little spiritual baby. Then Paul gives us some identifying marks. Spiritual immaturity is characterized by some of the same behaviors that mark physical or emotional immaturity. And Paul identifies instability as a particular trait of spiritual immaturity. He makes that statement, and then he notes several things that kind of feed on this instability. So let's mark those things. He talks about the reality that we have of being spiritually immature, and then he explains the different characteristics that mark our immaturity. Spiritual immaturity, for one, leads individuals to be shaken by circumstances. Shaken by circumstances. When Paul, there in verse 14, he says this, he says, listen, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

When he says that they're tossed to and fro by waves, he's not talking about the sea. He's not actually saying that new believers are actually moved by the swells and the up and down motion of the ocean. He is not referring to that at all. He is speaking in a poetic language. He's saying, listen, the new believer is someone who is very easily shaken by circumstances. And you stop and think about the characteristic of a new believer, a person who is not well-versed in Scripture and who does not understand the certainty of the care and the love of Christ. As a result, when circumstances strike that individual, they're easily overwhelmed. And over the years, I've watched those who are young in their faith be almost overwhelmed by things such as events that strike them, the loss of a job, disappointment at work, the loss of a loved one, certain circumstances and behavior of other individuals who are professing believers who in their misbehavior and their own spiritual immaturity will cause a younger one to stumble. And that person who is an infant in Christ will look at that person who is a little older professing faith and, wow, I can't believe that. And the misbehavior of an older believer can be devastating to a child, to an immature believer. And sadly enough, individuals can sometimes be completely overwhelmed by the behavior of other individuals. And that being overwhelmed is something that characterizes the child or the one who is spiritually immature.

Spiritual immaturity also, and that's one thing that we find here in this passage, leads people to being very vulnerable to doctrinal deceit. Look at what Paul says there in verse 14.

[13:16] Not only tossed to and fro by the waves, but carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. It would seem that Satan does not invest a great deal of energy in the unbeliever. Now, that doesn't mean that the unbeliever does not endure Satan's mistreatment, but the fact of the matter is, is that much of the heartache that comes into unbelievers' lives is caused simply by the unintended consequences of sin. Do you follow that? When we engage in sin, there's consequences that follow. And we recognize that Satan kind of lets it all devolve, play out.

It is the believer in particular that is being attacked on a regular basis by the enemy, because the enemy wants to unseat or unhinge the believer. And so we need to recognize that Satan is actively engaged in trying to deceive and mislead. And we recognize that he does that not only outside the church, but also inside the church. And he does that in particular through false doctrine and challenges that arise as the result of teaching that is contrary to the Scriptures.

Let me give you a couple examples of doctrinal error that are so prevalent today and readily accepted in many circles. I think for one of some of the televangelists that you can listen to, all you have to do is stay home from church a couple weeks, not recommending it. But when you are deadly sick and can't think of anything better to do, go ahead and turn on some of the channels, and guess what you're going to watch? You're going to watch the hucksters of the world try to sell you on a variety of doctrinal perversions. One, for example, is Joel Osteen. And more than one occasion, individuals who are orthodox and clear in their Bible thinking have challenged Joel to make himself clear on the issues of sin and hell and the reality of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. And he will dodge the question with his wonderful, smooth behavior, but he won't answer it clearly as to what the Scriptures teach. And the thing that is troubling to me is how often I bump into professing believers that have been believers for years, and they will tell me, oh, I just love listening to Joel Osteen.

There is a distinct lack of Scriptural clarity in his teaching, and individuals involved in listening to that have got to recognize that or there's something wrong, childish. Another illustration would be the false teaching of Rob Bell. I don't know if any of you are familiar, perhaps you are, but he is a pastor up in Michigan somewhere. I think it's Grand Rapids. Am I right, Pastor Saul?

Up in the Grand Rapids area, and he has become well-known for denying the reality of hell. Now, wrote a very popular book called Love Wins. Now, that's a nice title, isn't it? Love Wins.

[16:30] Actually, the underlying premise of that book is that, listen, God really loves all of us, and in the end, hell's here on earth, and it's a lot of the difficulties we cause ourselves, that's what's being referred to, and at the end, we all go to heaven, kind of a universalism.

And let me tell you something, if hell is not real, then Jesus was lying when he spoke about it. The one who talks about hell the most in the New Testament is Christ himself.

Furthermore, there is no reason for Christ to have died on the cross as he did, and to present himself as the Savior of the world, and to have his apostles teach that there is no other name wherein men may be saved, if the fact of the matter is, is that we're all going there anyway.

And false teaching is something that infants in Christ are very vulnerable to. False teaching also presupposes or suggests that salvation is something that is earned by our own efforts and good works.

And I got to tell you, that is a very, very popular thought process in the minds of many. All you have to do is go down on Wilson Road, and on the left-hand side, when you're going north, there is a wonderful place made out of marble.

[ 17 : 57 ] How many of you know that wonderful edifice out there? I remember when my mom and dad first moved to Columbus, and we would be driving and go past, and my dad would say, what is that place?

I'd say, that's the Mormon temple. A couple weeks later, what is that place? It's the Mormon temple. It's the place where Mormons gather, and at the heart of Mormon religion is this idea that our good works get us to heaven.

Not only that, but our good works help us to grow to the point that we eventually don't become just like Jesus, we become Jesus. And the progression of deity is woven into Mormon theology.

Do you know what? The majority of people who are snared by the Mormon religion are not rank and crass unbelievers. They are new believers who have not been established in doctrine, and they're very vulnerable during that time of childhood and infancy.

Well, that brings us to the fact of how immaturity is to be handled. And what we find there in verse 15 is the apostle giving to us a picture of how we go about developing spiritual maturity and durability in the lives of those who, once they come to faith, actually start out as new believers and as spiritually immature.

[ 19 : 21 ] So let's look first and secondly at the means and goal of growth. Look at what it says there in verse 15, rather, on the other hand, instead of being children who are easily swayed back and forth, rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ.

Let me begin by explaining what is involved in speaking the truth in love. And then consider what comes from this work within the body of Christ. Now, that little phrase there, speaking the truth in love, is one that is difficult to actually translate into the Greek or into English from the Greek.

And the reason for that is because Greek has a tendency of putting words together. When you want to make a statement or you want to make a point, one of the things that Greek authors would do is put two words together that maybe wouldn't seem to go together, but they have to be worked to be understood.

And this idea that this word communicates is not just speaking, it is living the truth and then in that context, speaking.

A more accurate translation would be truthing in love. And the idea that the Greek communicates is that of living the truth and then on that basis, acting it out and speaking it out.

[ 20 : 47 ] I think a perfect illustration of that can be found in two different passages that I want you to look at for a moment. One would be over in Hebrews chapter 13, talking about pastoral responsibility in verse 7.

He says, Do you know what it's saying? It's saying, You need to think about those who have taught you the word and give particular attention to the way they live their lives.

In the Scripture, both the teaching and the living of the word cannot be separated into two separate entities. Well, he is a great preacher, but he's a lousy liver.

I'm not talking about liver, the body part, lest some of you are thinking liver and onions. I'm talking about, see, there we go, dietary issues. Liver being one talking about the way you act and live.

Another illustration would be back in Deuteronomy chapter 6, and I want you to turn back there just for a moment and put your eyes on the classic passage about Christian parenting.

[ 22 : 06 ] Beginning there in verse 4, Moses instructs the nation of Israel in speaking particularly to fathers. He says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart. You know what it's saying? First thing, first thing it is said is, listen, God's got something to say to you, and is you are to love Him, and then you are to hold on to His word.

The second thing that we find there in verse 7 is, and you shall teach them diligently to your children. Now listen to me carefully. There's a lot of hand-wringing that goes on today in some

evangelical circles about the high percentage of young people who grow up in the church and then wander away.

Now there are those that do that. I know in my own heart and my life the sorrow that comes with a daughter that has not walked with Christ for some time. But let me tell you something.

The majority of children who walk away from the faith, if you unpeel the onion, what you will find is behind the majority. Our family constructs in which neither dad nor mom knew Christ, really, nor were they living a life that was governed by the word of God.

[ 23 : 38 ] So when they were speaking, they weren't truthing. And do you know what? When kids hear speaking that is not being truthed out in the way people live, guess what kids figure out?

That's phony. That's hypocritical. And I don't want to have anything to do with that kind of hypocrisy. So when a parent is saying one thing and doing another, the child says, I'm out of here just as soon as I legitimately can be.

Paul, speaking to the church, to the body of Christ, he's saying, listen, you've got to be living the truth and in that construct, you have to be teaching the truth as well.

So the point that the Spirit of God drives home here is that those who teach must be living out the truth as they speak it. Those who teach must be living out the truth as they speak it.

Paul, the apostle, when he was speaking of his ministry, one of the points he made, he says, you have watched my manner of life and the doctrine that I've taught to you. Not a mistake then that he makes the statement here in the passage in Ephesians chapter 4 where he says, speaking or living out the truth and speaking it into the lives of those that you are involved in ministering to.

[ 24 : 54 ] Now there's another little piece in this passage that we have a tendency to skip over and I want us to recognize because it is very, very important piece. When Paul says in Ephesians chapter 4 that we are to speak the truth in love, he is speaking to us as a body of believers and he's speaking to those who are part of the bride of Christ and are connected to one another.

This business of speaking the truth in love is a community activity and is not a drive-by shooting. I want to make that carefully clear. This business of speaking the truth in love is a community activity. It is not a drive-by shooting. I do love watching the body at work. And what I mean by that is how the body works together to bring truth into the lives of those who are members of the bride of Christ. Because we rely on the same book, because we love the same Lord, because we care about the same Savior, we have a tendency to say the same things. Do you realize that? I like watching that happen.

In one illustration I'll give you, sometimes individuals will come and talk to me and perhaps they don't like either my temperament or my behavior or the way I comb my hair on that given day.

[ 26 : 11 ] And they think to themselves, I'll go to Pastor Saul. He is much nicer than Pastor Kenoyer. He is more gentle. He is a more reasonable man. And they walk out of Pastor Saul's office and more often than not, here is what they say.

You said the same thing Pastor Kenoyer did. It is a real mystery. How does that happen? Well, we love the same Lord.

We read the same book. We care about the same outcomes. And I have watched individuals who have made their way from Pastor Kenoyer to Pastor Saul, and they think that they're going to have a little conversation in the lobby with one of the more mature saints.

And they come up there and they want to commiserate and fuss and fret. And guess what happens? They hear same, same. And it actually gets pretty frustrating because what happens is people, as they bump recurrently into the truth, they make a decision either to listen to the truth that comes from the Word of God or to vacate the premises.

They will grow or they will go if we are consistent in speaking the truth in love. Does that make sense? Oh, you said the same thing that Pastor Saul did.

[ 27 : 24 ] That's a real conundrum to me. I don't know how that happened. But Pastor Saul and I read the same book, love the same Lord, and guess what? When we come face to face with an issue, at the end of the day, we're going to reconcile that issue with the same counsel because it comes from the Word of God.

I want you to recognize, in practical terms, speaking the truth in love seldom takes place in nomadic relationships. Now, what do I mean by nomadic relationships?

While I know that there certainly is more than one reason for the pervasive, shallow, and unstable faith of many today, I am persuaded that one of the elements is a lack of commitment to lasting

relationships in the body of Christ.

Lobby loving isn't the same as getting in another person's faith and staying with it as you work through the challenges of what's going on in a person's life. And I've got to tell you, when I think about this nomadic issue of relationship, one of the things that I can confess, and I trust that you are praying often, that God will provide us a man to serve as a pastor teacher and a pastor over our family youth ministry.

One of the things that has alarmed me is as we have talked and interviewed a number of different candidates, I am struck by how many are moving from church to church over a period.

[ 28 : 50 ] In some cases, I've talked to several who have been less than eight months in one church and are being led by God to think about another one. Now, that doesn't cut it for me. I'm in favor of sticking it out and making it work.

If we're going to speak the truth in love, we have to stay and make it happen. I think about the words of Mark Dever as he summarized, what does pastoral ministry boil down to?

He said, preach and pray, love and stay. That brings us to the critical issue of having genuine love as the nature and motive of what we do when we help each other.

Love cannot be divorced from truth, but genuine love tells the truth. And genuine love tells the truth lovingly. Now, does that mean that in every case, people will always understand at that moment that you were telling them the truth lovingly?

And the answer is, not always. Not always. But what this passage is identifying is those who are speaking the truth are responsible for handling it with love.

[ 30 : 03 ] I want you to turn your Bible to a passage that really clarifies this issue very clearly. Turn back, if you will. You're in Ephesians, but go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

By the way, context is king. Context always amplifies and helps us understand the passage. In chapter 12, Paul is talking about spiritual gifts.

And the reason he was talking about spiritual gifts in the church at Corinth is because people were having spitting matches about who was most important. Oh, yeah? Watch me.

You know, and spiritual gifts had become kind of a source of arrogance and dispute and argumentation in the body of Christ. So in chapter 12, he explains spiritual gifts. And in chapter 13, he talks about how spiritual gifts are to be used.

And he says there in verse 1, If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

[ 31 : 07 ] How many of you have ever listened to someone who's just beating on a cymbal or gong endlessly, repetitiously, and seemingly without any objective other than annoying you?

Do you follow that? It gets pretty tiring. Hey, when your car alarm goes off in the neighborhood, how many of you just sleep through it or say, Get out there and solve the problem?

Paul says this. He says, Listen, if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels and do not have love, I am an irritation. If I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and have all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but have not love, I am nothing.

If I give away all that I have and if I deliver, my body be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. You know, we're obligated to stay together.

We really are. And we're obligated to be loving with each other and truthful with each other. And Paul says that's the characteristic of the body of Christ as it ministers to one another.

[ 32 : 25 ] So let's ask ourselves the question, where does this kind of love come from? Does it come from the fact that we just kind of learn to associate with people who are really a lot like us and like the same things?

Are you listening? No. The probability of everybody liking the same things and getting along because of that is zero. This kind of love really comes from God being at work in us.

Turn over in your Bible, if you would, to 1 John 4, verse 7. 1 John 4, verse 7. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

How do I know someone is a genuine believer? How do I know? Well, they know John 3, 16. Duh. They show up in church. No. Here's what it says. It says, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and God and knows God.

[ 33 : 38 ] So, well, I'm doing pretty good at that because there are about four or five people that I really do love in this church. Is that what's being talked about? What's the answer?

Shake your head back and forth like this. Don't go up and down. No, that's not what I'm talking about. It's not talking about the fact that there are some people here that you can tolerate. In fact, actually, there are some that you actually love.

It's talking about loving those who are part of the bride of Christ because they're part of your family. A little thing I've learned long ago is that when I was having problems loving certain individuals, in my youthfulness, I used to think, Well, if God would take them out of my life, it'd be better.

Here's what I've learned. That kind of immature behavior or attitude has always meant that God has not only kept that person in my life, but He's brought others in to companion with that person. And when God has taken an occasional irritant away, guess what He's done? He's immediately replaced it with someone more like the other one.

[ 34 : 41 ] Remember? Yeah, I will use this illustration. Remember Jesus talks about the man cleaning out his house, getting rid of a demon? And the demon leaves, but what happens?

He goes back and brings seven friends. I've had that happen. You know, it's like, Lord, I really don't like this guy. And then he leaves. Oh, praise the Lord. I can love everybody now. And then seven like him arrive.

You know, it's like, ah! Okay, let's go to work on the love part. Look at verse 11. 1 John 4, verse 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

I have recognized that there are individuals that tweak my love quotient. Do you follow? Well, they are challenges that God uses to help me see whether or not my love is authentic.

And avoiding those challenges is not the path of spiritual growth. Dealing with those challenges is the test. So let me ask you a question.

[ 35 : 54 ] How can you say you love Christ and not be engaged in his bride and caring for his sheep? Do you understand that question?

Oh, yes, I love Jesus. But I am distantly removed from being actively involved in the bride of Christ and nurturing the well-being of people that Jesus loves.

And I really do love when I don't have anything at all to do with them. So what does the activity of living and speaking the truth in love really aim to produce in the life of the believer?

Let's look at this passage as we close. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 15. It says, Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

The aim of speaking the truth in love in the church is so that the body of Christ will be like Christ.

[ 36 : 56 ] Do you follow that? So that those who start out immature will grow in grace and be more like him. And by the way, who is to be involved in speaking the truth in love?

Well, for one thing, pastors ought to do that. Isn't that right? But pastors in doing that should really be involved in what else? Thinking about the passage of the context here, it says that a pastor, a shepherd teacher, is involved in the ministry of equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry. Who should do most of the truthing in love in this congregation? The body should. And I'll tell you, one of the things that I have been blessed to watch over and over again is how this body generally takes care of one another in speaking the truth in love.

Over and over again, I've watched as I'll hear a little drifting of things going on or comments being made that I know, and I've not been directly party.

Sometimes I'm walking by and I hear blah, blah, blah, and I think, hmm, maybe I should stop and step in. And I think, no, no, no. A healthy body generally heals itself.

[ 38 : 13 ] Do you follow that? A healthy body generally heals itself. And I have watched over and over again where other members in the body have come alongside and said, you know what, I heard what you said.

Where did that come from? I remember thinking that way. But God's Word has been helping me to deal with that attitude and that problem, and I watch a healthy body take care of its internal problems.

Why? That's the way God plans it. He plans for the Word of God to be used by the people of God to help immature saints grow more like Christ.

Why like Christ? Two reasons. And I want you to sit right where you are and ask yourself the question, so where am I at on the journey of being like Jesus?

Is that a fair question? How am I doing? Why is being like Christ so important? Think with me. God so loved the world that He sent, who?

[ 39 : 27 ] His only begotten Son into the world that the world through Him might be saved. Where is Jesus now? He's here with us, and He is in us.

And you who are His children are appointed by His grace to be His left-behind representative.

Agreed?

And do I want to do His work? Yes. Am I willing to grow in that area? Yes. And so get in my space. Help me. Tell me the truth. Do it lovingly.

And as a result of that, the body of Christ grows up into the fullness of Jesus, who is the one who is supremely worthy of all glory and grace, because He alone is the Savior of the world.

And you and I have been called by Him to be His left-behind examples. Let's close in prayer.

[ 40 : 30 ]