**Lessons from a Lockdown**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 45**

**Ephesians 4:14-16**

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What is the danger in being an immature Christian?
2. In what situations can I practice speaking the truth in love? How am I doing in these situations?
3. What is the connection between speaking the truth in love and becoming mature?
4. How connected am I to other Christians? How many deep and close relationships do I have?
5. Why does growth require every part doing its work? What is my contribution in helping the body grow?

***Insight:***

When we are immature, we are easily influenced by false teachings, wrong beliefs and we become unstable in our convictions. We can be easily fooled and tricked. None of us want to be in this situation, so we need to become mature.

We become mature by speaking the truth in love. How does this work? We need to surround ourselves with people who will speak the truth in love to us. People speaking the truth to us means they tell us who we really are, what we are doing correctly and what we need to change. Most people in the world, even among close friends and family, will hold back speaking the truth to each other. First of all, most people don’t know the truth taught by the Word of God. Second, they are unwilling to risk hurting the other person. Third, they are afraid that if they start doing so, other people will start telling the truth about them. These may be true in the world but none of these should apply in the church. We know the Word. While we do not want to hurt people deliberately, we recognize the importance of being “cut to the heart” for our own good. We do not fear but look forward to people speaking the truth to us.

But we need to speak the truth *in love.* That we are telling the truth does not justify being harsh in the way we say things. To speak in a loving way is to speak in a manner that would be best accepted by the person we are speaking to. We should consider the tone of our voice, our facial expression, the current state of the person we are speaking to and the words we choose to use. Most important of all, we must be motivated by love. Before we speak the truth to someone, we need to check our hearts. Are we speaking to them because we care or because we are irritated or we because we feel we have to?

We primarily put into practice speaking the truth in love in our discipling. We all have a responsibility to help each other become more like Christ. We need *truth* and *love.* Truth comes from the Word. While we need times to just talk and hang out, what we need most is to talk about the Word with each other. At the very least we can share with each other what we are learning in our quiet times. There must also be love in our discipling. We need express how much we care. Aside from words, this is shown by our willingness to invest the time needed for the relationship to grow. How are we doing in our discipling during this pandemic? Are we sharing the Word and giving our time? While it may be more difficult discipling each other using an online platform, we still need to have same heart as if we are speaking in person. When we do this, we help each other grow. Who are we discipling?

Who is speaking the truth in love to you? All of us, regardless of age or leadership position, need people in our lives who will disciple us. As we grow older in the faith we need to actively seek out and develop discipling relationships, as less and less people will naturally disciple us. We need to invite people to disciple us. We need to give them permission to speak the truth to us. Getting the discipling that we need is our responsibility. The mature disciple has deep convictions about this.

Paul says, the church grows “from him” referring to Jesus. Our growth comes from our connection to Jesus. Paul also says that the church is “joined and held together by every supporting ligament.” We also need to stay connected to each other. Thus, in order to grow we need to stay connected to Jesus and to each other. The stronger our connections the better. So we need to work on having close and deep connections in the church. It can’t just be with one person. Even Jesus needed several friends close to him. How many close friends do we have in the church? What are we doing to grow in our relationships with each other?

In order for the church to be built up, every part must do its work. The *pareto principle* (which can be stated that in an organization 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people) should not apply in the church. Every member or 100% of the church must be doing its part because we are a body. Can you imagine a healthy body where 80% of its organs are not working? Even if it is just 20% of the body not working, it is still not healthy. That we do our part is crucial for the health of the church. Are we helping the church stay spiritually healthy?

Let us exit this lockdown more mature by being committed to speaking the truth in love to each other.