

- ***READ II Timothy 4:1-5*** As Timothy continued on in his ministry of preaching the Gospel and teaching the way of the Lord, Paul warns him that more and more people would arise who wouldn't want to hear the truth, but instead they would be more interested in listening to myths and having their ears tickled. It shouldn't shock us when Paul states that people wouldn't take too kindly to being told that they are sinful and in need of a savior. They wouldn't want to hear that they are in need of change so that they can avoid the consequence of their wicked ways. Instead of hearing the truth, they would rather be approved in their sin by swallowing a bunch of lies. In reality, has anything changed today?
- The truth is that things haven't really changed all that much over the past 2,000 years. In fact, we live in a world where this type of approach to truth doesn't apply to only the religious realm, but we live in a culture where all areas of life are ruled by this concept of political correctness. We live culture where political correctness is quite possibly the greatest badge of honor that one can possess. To be politically correct according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary is to *"conform to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated."* While the term specifies activities in the political realm, let's be clear that political correctness touches every part of our lives. It's not just that we should eliminated words or actions that might offend someone's political sensibilities, but we are flat out not suppose to say or do anything that might cause anyone to be offended about anything. No greater sin can be committed in our culture than to offend someone else.
- Now, this seems to cause a problem for us because in Paul's instructions to Timothy, he says that Timothy needs to stand strong to make sure that he reproves, rebukes, and exhorts with great patience and instruction. To so many, these words written by Paul are highly politically incorrect because it is not good to reprove, rebuke, or exhort anyone...because we don't want to offend anyone right? So what is the disciple to do? There are many who have recognized the grave danger and problem that political correctness has put in front of God's people. Dave Miller of Apologetics Press said this. *"The adverse impact of "political correctness" on American culture cannot be overstated. Its sinister influence has been monumental and subversive in the extent to which it has reshaped American values, literally driving the population farther away from its Christian moorings, and redirecting civilization toward hedonism, socialism, atheism, humanism, and a host of other anti-christian philosophies."*
- Each Christian is charged with being dedicated to upholding the truth and reality of this world, sin, and the need for repentance and salvation. We are to be a people who are willing to speak the truth no matter the circumstance and tell others exactly what they need to hear for their soul's sake. It is our duty to call that which God calls sin sin. It is our duty to stand against the evils of our day. We are to speak against the evil of abortion, same-sex unions, racism, sexism, and the like, but what are we to do when in doing so we become politically incorrect? How did we even get to a place where speaking the truth is not just frowned upon but seen as the greatest of sins? This morning we looked at how we got ourselves into this situation with the rejection of truth, distorting of love to mean acceptance, the falsehood that all opposition is hatred, and that the faithful are bullied into silence. This has had to societal and moral decay. What are we to do? Tonight we are going to consider how we can over come as disciples of Jesus.

What are disciples to do?

A. Recognize there is such thing as truth.

1. This is difficult for so many because they forces them to admit that there is a higher being than man, and for them that opens up a whole can of worms of consequence. One such consequence is the reality of the situation that Jeremiah writes of in **Jeremiah 10:23**. *"I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself. Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps."* Jeremiah recognized that men are not capable of directing themselves to a place of goodness and success.
2. The truest blessings that can be found in this life are not a result of the goodness of man and their wisdom, but they are a result of a gracious and good God leading them to such a place. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and I will confirm it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances."* (**Psalms 119: 105,106**) God leads us in the way that we ought to go through His word, and He is able to do so because His word is truth. *"The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting."* (**Psalms 119:160**)

3. The world and our culture might say that there is no such thing as absolute or objective truth, but God has given us that which is true. Truth can be found in His word.

B. Have courage to stand upon the truth.

1. When we are presented with the opportunity to put forth that which is truth, we must then take the courage to stand upon God's truth. Obviously, we have determined already that this is not an easy thing to do because of the political correctness that is propagated in our culture, but it must be done nonetheless.
2. There are numerous examples in Scripture of individuals who took a stand on the truth of God's word and will, and they were not afraid to call sin sin or to declare the will of God. Even if the stand called for a public rebuke, these individuals were not afraid.
 - a) In **I Kings 18** we have a great example of a godly individual standing upon the truth regardless of the circumstances and public perception. Elijah engages the false prophets and publicly rebukes and condemns them for their wickedness. We must be willing to do the same.
 - b) After David's sin with Bathsheba in **II Samuel 11**, in **II Samuel 12**, Nathan goes to David to accuse and rebuke him of his great sin. So many would say that Nathan had no right to correct David because it was his life and he could do with it as he wished, but Nathan shows us that it is more important for sin to be revealed than for feelings and reputation to be spared.
 - c) We could look to numerous examples of Jesus where He stood in the midst of the people and rebuked the wicked for their actions. **Matthew 23** certainly comes to mind, along with His overturning of tables in the temple when it was being misused and abused. (**Matthew 21; John 2**)
 - d) Paul would've cared very little for political correctness when he stood up to Peter in front of others and rebuked him for his hypocrisy concerning the Gentiles. (**Galatians 2:11-14**)
 - e) Finally, consider that Paul told Timothy that any elders who were continuing in sin were to be reprimanded in the presence of all. (**I Timothy 5:20**)
3. If the truth demands that someone be warned, rebuked, or exhorted then we must be the type of people who are willing to stand up and say what needs to be said, but let me suggest that we also need to be a people who are considerate of how those things should be said.

C. Speak the truth in the right manner.

1. One of the things that so often dooms us in our efforts to speak the truth is that we don't speak the truth in the right way. As I have heard time and time again in my life from people such as my mom, it isn't always just what we are saying, but it is how it is said. We might be saying all the right things, but if we say it in the wrong manner then our efforts will be fruitless.
2. Consider some teachings from the letters that Paul wrote as to how we ought to speak to one another, especially those with whom we are disagreement with.
 - a) *"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."* (**Ephesians 4:31,32**)
 - b) *"Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."* (**Colossians 4:6**)
 - c) *"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."* (**Colossians 3:12-14**)
3. Notice in all three of these passages that kindness and graciousness are central themes. I notice that so many of these things described in these verses stand in direct opposition to so much of the debate and conversation that is had in this country today. You want to know why so many people are not listening to reason? Let's begin with the fact that our reason is often delivered with bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice. If we would work on delivering the message in a better way then I'm confident that we might make some headway, even in this politically correct culture. And what is mentioned in **Colossians 3:14** can help us with this.

D. **Speak the truth with the proper motives.**

1. Notice that Paul states that beyond all things we need to be a people who are full of love. He even says that love can and will be the glue that holds us all together. When I look out into our society, I don't see a society of people who love one another. Political correctness would claim that love is its greatest goal, but that is just a front for freedom for the wicked to do anything they please. But even we sometimes lose sight of love when we seek to uphold the truth.
2. I fear that sometimes instead of upholding the truth because it is right and good, we seek to throw the truth in the face of others because we want to win the argument. We throw the truth at them because we want to make them feel stupid. We want to throw the truth at them because we want them to look bad. We use the truth with wicked motives, and it only brings us failure.
3. Instead, we must be a people who hold as tightly as we can to what Paul says in **Ephesians 4:15**, that we are a people who are only "speaking the truth in love." The context is referring to us speaking to one another so that the church might grow, but this principle extends far beyond just this group of people. If we want to break down this climate of political correctness, then we must be properly motivated when we deliver the truth. We must seek for the salvation of others and their enlightenment to the truth of this world and the evil that so many find themselves in.

E. **Result: People are changed by our godly influence.**

1. This takes great effort, courage, and self-control. We often want to respond in the way in which we are attacked, but our efforts to stand on the truth, to speak it in the proper way, and to be motivated by love will Lord willing give us the best chances to achieve the desired result.
2. That result that we all ought to be striving for is for others to be changed by our godly example and influence. Our battles in this life are not primarily physical in nature. Very rarely will we be presented with physical confrontation, but instead we will be presented with confrontation of the intellectual and verbal sort. I think of **Ephesians 6**, where Paul details the battle we are fighting. We are fighting the evil influences of Satan and his workers. We are fighting against the wickedness that has engulfed this world and our culture to turn it into what we see today. Our duty is to live godly lives and uphold the truth always to the glory of God so that others might see our good actions and seek to find the better way.

Back in **II Timothy 4**, the Apostle Paul qualifies when Timothy was to be the strong worker for the Lord that he was called to be. He says that he was to be ready in season and out of season. Friends, we are out of season right now in many ways. Our culture doesn't want to hear the truth of their predicament in their sin, but it is our job to stand upon the truth of God and shout it out with love anyways. May God help us and strengthen us with courage to always stand upon His truth come what may. We, as a culture, got ourselves into this mess and it is the job of the faithful to live godly lives and lead others out to the better way of the Lord. ***PRAYER***