**‘Truthing’ in love** dkm May 2021

***Love U U Truth***

***^***

Jesus, the only begotten Son of God came into this world full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6). God is love, and so is his Son, Jesus; ‘this is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us’ (1John 3:16). Jesus is full of grace and truth because God is full of grace and truth. God revealed himself to Moses as ‘merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth’ - or ‘steadfast love and faithfulness’ (Exodus 34:6 NKJV cf. ESV). Being full of these wonderful attributes means they are in perfect balance. In asserting that he is the truth, Jesus did not abandon love. In loving this world he did not abandon truth.

Truth speaks of reality. The truth that is Jesus Christ is truth or reality that we see, or have seen, in this world. His reality extends beyond this world but includes all that we know to be true in the history and science of this world. Jesus never spoke anything but the truth and never spoke or did anything except out of love.

In seeking to imitate Christ, believers will also strive to keep truth and love in balance. ‘Speaking the truth in love’ is what Paul says in Ephesians 4:15; the literal translation is ‘truthing in love’. Much of who or what we are is revealed in what we say and how we say it, but we also express ourselves in non-verbal ways, sometimes in things we don’t say. We confess sins of commission and sins of omission.

Whatever we say or do of course, comes from what is in our heart. The Lord sees into our hearts and he is powerful to cleanse even our thoughts, if we ask him. David writes, ‘You desire truth in the inwards parts’ and then asks, ‘Purge me with hyssop and then I shall be clean’ (Psalm 51:6-7). The Lord desires that we not only know Jesus to be the truth, but that we always act and speak according to the truth. Biblical truth, the truth that is Jesus, is the foundation for living a life that is true. If we accept false teaching, teaching that is contrary to what is written in the Bible, we cannot live a life that is true. All the love in the world will not balance out the lack of truth.

Picture, if you will, two jars on the balance, one of love and one of truth. With Jesus both are full and in perfect balance. The moment we start to emphasise one against the other the balance goes. Paul was aware that Satan and his agents, as in false teachers, want to upset the balance. Some false teachers are libertarians or antinomians, but others are legalists. Paul found such men in the church at Corinth and in many churches. Such men continue to undermine the church today.

We are familiar with the social gospel and its emphasis on ‘love’, but ‘love’ is not true love if it denies the truth. Jesus was familiar with the Pharisees, men who emphasised the truth or the law and cared nothing about love; and he condemned them. There are those in the church today who similarly preach the truth, but do so without love. F. F. Bruce comments: “We hear of some people who ‘are all truth and no love’, but in fact people without love cannot be ‘all truth’. Remember, Jesus was full of both love and truth.

We do not have to abandon love to preach the truth, any more than we have to abandon truth to preach love. Before we preach anything, let us examine our own hearts and take a reading as to the balance we find between love and truth. By looking to Jesus we can reset the balance if we find it is off.