

DIOCESE OF ILESA
CHURCH OF NIGERIA
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)
CLERGY SCHOOL 2013

THEME: EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

STUDY – 3

TOPIC: SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, WE GROW SPIRITUAL IN CHRIST

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Text: Ephesians 4:15-16

INTRODUCTION

We have come to the concluding part of this year's Clergy School Retreat Bible Study. So far we have covered Ephesians 4:11 – 14. The first day we treated CHRIST'S GIFTS TO HIS CHURCH under two subheadings viz., Means of Equipping the Church Members and THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S GIFTS TO THE CHURCH. Then on the second day, we considered **1.ATTAINING TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH - Eph. 4:13**; 1Cor. 14:20; Col. 1:28; 2:2., And **2.THE BENEFITS OF ATTAINING TO MATURITY IN CHRIST** – Eph. 4:14; Isa 28:9; Mt 11:7; Rom. 16:18; 1Cor. 14:20; 2Cor. 2:17; Heb. 13:9.

Today again we want to continue from where we stopped. We shall be considering two sub-headings as usual. 1. SPEAKING AND GROWING IN THE TRUTH and, 2.BEING FITTED AND HELD TOGETHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

1. **SPEAKING AND GROWING IN THE TRUTH** –Eph.4:15; Zec 8:16; 2Cor. 4:2; Eph. 1:22; 2:21; 4:25; Col 1:18; 1 John 3:18

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: {speaking...: or, being sincere}.

- 1.) The truth is to be spoken--the simple, unvarnished truth. This is the way to avoid error, and this is the way to preserve others from error. In opposition to all trick, and art, and cunning, and fraud, and deception, Christians are to speak the simple truth, and nothing but the truth. Every statement which they make should be unvarnished truth; every promise which they make should be true; every representation which they make of the sentiments of others should be simple truth. Truth is the

representation of things as they are; and there is no virtue that is more valuable in a Christian than the love of simple truth.

Note: 2Cor. 13:8 says, **For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.**

Q.1: From the above statement, what is the TRUTH? John 18:33-37

Q.2: Christians are to speak the simple truth, and nothing but the truth. How applicable is this statement in the Nigerian Christian context? Rom. 1:18; James 3:14.

(2.) The second thing is, that the truth should be spoken in love. There are other ways of speaking truth. It is sometimes spoken in a harsh, crabbed, sour manner, which does nothing but disgust and offend. When we state truth to others, it should be with love to their souls, and with a sincere desire to do them good. When we admonish a brother of his faults, it should not be in a harsh and unfeeling manner, but in love.

Where a minister pronounces the awful truth of God about depravity, death, the judgment, and future woe, it should be in love. It should not be done in a harsh and repulsive manner; it should not be done as if he rejoiced that men were in danger of hell, or as if he would like to pass the final sentence; it should not be with indifference, or in a tone of superiority.

And in like manner, if we go to convince one who is in error, we should approach him in love. We should not dogmatize, or denounce, or deal out anathemas. 1 Cor.16:22

Such things only repel. He has done about half his work in convincing another of error, who has first convinced him that he LOVES him; and if he does not do that, he may argue to the hour of his death, and make no progress in convincing him.

Q.1: Why is it so difficult for some of us to preach and win others to Christ in spite of the fact that the Priests are well trained for the same purpose?

2. BEING FITTED AND HELD TOGETHER. Ephesians 4:16; Col 2:19

“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

The Church is compared with the human body. The idea is, that as the head in the human frame conveys vital influences, rigour, motion, etc., to every part of the body, so Christ is the source of life, and rigour, and energy, and increase, to the church.

The sense is, "The whole human body is admirably arranged for growth and rigour. Every member and joint contributes to its healthful and harmonious action. One part lends rigour and beauty to another, so that the whole is finely proportioned and admirably sustained.

All depend on the head with reference to the most important functions of life, and all derive their rigour from that. So it is in the church. It is as well arranged for growth and rigour as the body is. It is as beautifully organized in its various members and officers as the body is. Everything is designed to be in its proper place, and nothing by the Divine arrangement is wanting, in its organization, to its perfection.

Its officers and its members are, in their places, what the various parts of the body are with reference to the human frame. The church depends on Christ, as the head, to sustain, invigorate, and guide it, as the body is dependant on the head." See this figure/description carried out to greater length in 1Cor. 12:12-26.

Q.1.Read 1Cor. 12:12-26. Discuss the purpose of the gifts in the Body of Christ.

i. Fitly joined together. The body, whose members are properly united so as to produce the most beauty and rigour. Each member is in the best place, and is properly united to the other members. Let any one read Paley's Natural Theology, or any work on anatomy, and he will find innumerable instances of the truth of this remark; not only in the proper adjustment and placing of the members, but in the manner in which it is united to the other parts of the body.

The foot, for instance, is in its proper place--it should not be where the head or the hand is. The eye is in its proper place--it should not be in the knee or the heel, The mouth, the tongue, the teeth, the lungs, the heart, are in their proper places--no other places would answer the purpose so well.

The brain is in its proper place---anywhere else in the body, it would be subject to compressions and injuries which would soon destroy life. And these parts are as admirably united to the other parts of the body as they axe admirably located. Let any one examine, for instance, the tendons, nerves, muscles, and bones, by which the foot is secured to the body, and by which easy and graceful motion is obtained, and he will be satisfied of the wisdom by which the body is "joined together." How far the knowledge of the apostle extended on this point we have not the means of ascertaining; but all the investigations of anatomists only serve to give increased beauty and force to the general terms which he uses here. All that he says here of the human frame is strictly accurate, and is such language as may be used by an anatomist now.

ii. And compacted. Tindal renders this, "knit together in every joint." The word properly means, to make to come together; to join or knit together. It means here that the different parts of the body are united and sustained in this manner.

iii. By that which every joint supplieth. Literally, "through every joint of supply;" that is, which affords or ministers mutual aid. The word joint here means anything which binds, fastens, secures; and does not refer to the joint in the sense in which we commonly use it, as denoting the articulation of the limbs, or the joining of two or more bones; but rather that which unites or fastens together the different parts of the frame--the blood-vessels, cords, tendons, and muscles.

The meaning is, that every such means of connecting one part of the body with another ministers nourishment, and that thus the body is sustained. One part is dependant on another; one part derives nourishment from another; and thus all become mutually useful as contributing to the support and harmony of the whole. Thus it furnishes an illustration of the connexion in the members of the church, and of the aid which one can render to another.

iv. According to the effectual working. "According to the energy in the measure of each one part." Tindal, "According to the operation as every part has its measure." The meaning is, that each part contributes to the production of the whole result, or labours for this. This is in proportion to the "measure" of each" part; that is, in proportion to its power, every part labours to produce the great result, No one is idle; none is useless. But none are overtaxed or overworked. The support demanded and furnished by every part is in exact proportion to its strength. This is a beautiful account of the anatomy of the human frame.

- (1.) Nothing is useless. Every part contributes to the general result-- the health, and beauty, and rigour of the system. Not a muscle is useless; not a nerve, not an artery, not a vein. All are employed, and all have an important place, and all contribute something to the health and beauty of the whole.

So numerous are the blood-vessels, that you cannot perforate the skin anywhere without piercing one; so numerous are the pores of the skin, that a gram of sand will cover thousands of them; so minute the ramifications of the nerves, that wherever the point of a needle penetrates, we feel it; and so numerous the absorbents, that millions of them are employed in taking up the chyme of the

food, and conveying it to the veins. And yet all are employed--all are useful--all minister life and strength to the whole.

- (2.) None are overtaxed. They all work according to the "measure" of their strength. Nothing is required of the minutest nerve or blood-vessel which it is not fitted to perform, and it will work on for years without exhaustion or decay. So of the church. There is no member so obscure and feeble that he may not contribute something to the welfare of the whole; and no one is required to labour beyond his strength in order to secure the great object.

Each one in his place, and labouring as he should there, will contribute to the general strength and welfare; out of his place--like nerves and arteries out of their place, and crossing and recrossing others--he will only embarrass the whole, and disarrange the harmony of the system.

Maketh increase of the body. The body grows in this manner.

Unto the edifying of itself. To building itself up--that is, it grows up to a complete stature.

In love. In mutual harmony. This refers to the body. The meaning is, that it seems to be made on the principle of love. There is no jar, no collision, no disturbance of one part with another. A great number of parts, composed of different substances, and with different functions-- bones, and nerves, and muscles, and blood-vessels--are united in one, and live together without collision; and so it should be in the church. Learn hence,

(1.) that no member of the church need be useless, any more than a minute nerve or blood-vessel in the body need be useless. No matter how obscure the individual may be, he may contribute to the harmony and rigour of the whole.

(2.) Every member of the church should contribute something to the prosperity of the whole. He should no more be idle and unemployed than a nerve or a blood-vessel should be in the human system. What would be the effect if the minutest nerves and arteries of the body should refuse so perform their office? Languor, disease, and death. So it is in the church. The obscurest member may do something to destroy the healthful action of the church, and to make its piety languish and die.

Q.2: What would be the effect if the minutest nerves and arteries of the body should refuse so perform their office? How applicable is it to the Church? John 15:1 - 10

(3.) There should be union in the church. It is made up of materials which differ much from each other, as the body is made up of bones, and nerves, and muscles. Yet, in the body these are united; and so it should be in the church. There need be no more jarring in the church than in the body; and a jar in the church produces the same effect as would be produced in the body if the nerves and muscles should resist the action of each other, or as if one should be out of its place, and impede the healthful functions of the other.

(4.) Every member in the church should keep his place, just as every bone, and nerve, and muscle in the human frame should. Every member of the body should be in its right position; the heart, the lungs, the eye, the tongue, should occupy their right place; and every nerve in the system should be laid down just where it is designed to be. If so, all is well. If not so, all is deformity, or disorder; just as it often is in the church.

Q.1: In view of the above statement, relate it to the jostling of power and position by both political and religious leaders in our Country today.

CONCLUSION

Christians are to speak the simple truth and nothing but the truth. Every statement which they make should be unvarnished truth; every promise which they make should be true; every representation which they make of the sentiments of others should be simple truth. Truth is the representation of things as they are; and there is no virtue that is more valuable in a Christian than the love of simple truth.

Again, that no member of the church need be useless, any more than a minute nerve or blood-vessel in the body need be useless. No matter how obscure the individual may be, he may contribute to the harmony and rigour of the whole.

PRAYER: Extemporal