

The Voice of Godliness

We live in a time where the body of Christ ought to be speaking louder and living godlier than ever before for it to have an impact on this world.

Many ungodly people have come out of their closets such as homosexuals, abortionists, and many more yet many believers who ought to come out have not. The world has the wrong standard of morality and godliness. It is the body of Christ to spearhead this conversation and dialogue rather than sit on the sidelines.

Most believers think that if you will ignore it, it will go away. Others think, "well Rich is doing something about it", while Rich is thinking, "you are doing something about it" and the result is nothing gets done hence no progress, no godly voice, and impact from the body of Christ.

Main Text: Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Darkness needs to be reprovved. One of the ways of doing that is not having fellowship with those works of darkness.

A. Speaking up

There comes a time where silence is sinful. Speaking up should not be limited to only negative.

If we only speak out on the negative, we will wear ourselves out. We need to find that perfect balance. Every time we speak out against the negative, we need to find another positive to speak about. A constant focus on the negative can be toxic.

Speaking up does not mean we become the judge of the world, but rather light amid darkness.

- a) As a minister of the gospel, I have every right to speak about social issues. These are issues that affect the body of Christ and we should not shy away from them.

- i) We need to get to a place where we speak up beyond and outside the 4 walls of the church.
- b) The media and the world have used a phrase of “separation of church and state” to beat the Christians into the four walls of the church. (This phrase is not a part of the constitution of the United States).
- c) **Ministers need to talk about moral and social issues in our society.** This will help Christians understand the Biblical perspective on these issues. We ought to be the leading voice.
 - i) We have been backbenchers on these issues so long and we can’t continue that way.
 - ii) Failure to do so has resulted in an advancement of Christians withdraw from speaking about these issues.

B. Inseparable

- a) Christianity is **not a private conviction that should never be expressed in public.** You can’t separate Christianity and Christian beliefs from the current and social affairs.
 - i) Who you are, what you believe, and how you act in everyday life is inseparable from your faith.
 - ii) **You should not categorize your life into religious beliefs and convictions, and political affiliations.**

C. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart

Leviticus 19:17-18 “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”

- a) Rebuke is the opposite of hate.
- b) If we truly love people, we can’t remain silent. You will be attacked, called all bad names, criticized, and so forth.
- c) **We shouldn’t remain silent because of people’s criticism and persecution from speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).**

- d) Certain things are always wrong, and Christians should speak out against those things.
 - i) I'm not going to stop speaking the truth just because some people don't want to hear it.
 - ii) I'm not going to make my decision listening to the negatives.
- e) Speaking out on these issues will prevent injury and save lives in the long run.
 - i) Speaking the truth is not hate speech.
 - Not speaking the truth is true hate (Leviticus 19: 17-18).

1. Salt and Light of the World

- A. Matthew 5:13-16 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
 - a) There is one thing that is commonly ignored about light. It is seen. It does not speak. Our actions are the light that people see and will draw them to the Lord in us. Then we will open our mouths and share the Lord with them. We need to keep our light shining
 - b) The body of Christ should be the leading voice and example of godliness and all social issues such as infanticide, abortion, homosexuality, pornography, forgiveness, modesty, and so forth.
 - i) We should not be reactive to the world and the standards it sets.
 - c) Christian believers are the best voice for the voiceless unborn babies. We can't be the salt in the world while in our saltshakers.
 - d) We should not be ashamed of speaking up and being the light, because we are the light. A light bulb should not be afraid of shining. That is what it does.

- e) There is a place to shine and there is a time to speak. Some believers are doing great shining but not talking. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
- i) We don't share the gospel and make disciples by just our shining and godly lifestyle; we need to speak or share the Word and truth.

It's best to speak if our light is shining well because people will be receptive to what we have to say.

2. Speak the truth in love

- A. Ephesians 4:11-15 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **But speaking the truth in love**, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (Emphasis mine)
 - a) This is not saying speaking the truth. It says more than that.
 - b) This verse does not tell us to speak the truth.
 - i) The truth needs to be spoken but in love.
 - c) Truth ought to be spoken in love to be well received. When we speak the truth in love, most people will be willing to receive it knowing that it is coming from a heart of love.

1 Peter 3:15-16 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: **and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:** (Emphasis mine)

- a) Always be ready.

3. Hypocritical

- a) It is not hypocritical to speak up against something you once did that was wrong.

- i) It is leadership and maturity to do so. However, as you do, make sure your current life reflects the difference you are verbally trying to achieve.
- b) Many have been paralyzed into never talking about an issue they once struggled with while they watch from the sidelines as it wrecks and plunders other people's lives.
- c) The plan of the enemy is to silence us in those areas while God wants us to help others avoid that pit hole. The truth is some people will listen while others won't.
- d) If something is ungodly, we need to oppose it and speak up against it even though we once struggled with it.
 - i) We should never quietly support something wrong by not saying a word, but rather we should vocally oppose it. Silence in the face of evil is support for it.
 - ii) We need to speak up and model that change throughout our lives. If we do not, nothing will change. People will continue to fall prey to the enemy in those areas while we quietly look on.

4. Don't be ashamed

- A. Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
 - a) There should be no shame in sharing the grace of God and the goodness of God. This is the power of God that brings salvation.

5. Fear of men

- A. One of the reasons many believers do not speak up is because of the fear of men. This fear has led many to compromise and to accept the status quo of the ungodly in our society.
 - a) Psalm 27:10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.
 - b) Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.
 - c) 1 Samuel 13:11 1 Samuel 13:11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not

within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

6. Yes, it is risky.

A. Matthew 14:3-10 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

- a) It is risky to speak up against many of the ungodly things happening in the world today.
- b) However, many in an effort not to speak up, they have destroyed the lives of the next generation.
- c) Example of a pastor who would not preach the truth about homosexuality only to realize through another man of God that because of his fear to address these issues he was harming the children and their relationship with God.
- d) You might go to jail or even killed.

7. Jesus spoke up

A. Contrary to what some have chosen to believe, Jesus was no pushover. Jesus spoke up when He had to—without fear.

a) Paying Taxes

- i) Matthew 22:18-21 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

b) Marriage

- i) Matthew 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, (Genesis 5:2)

c) Sin and hypocrisy

- i) Matthew 23:27-28 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
- ii) Matthew 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?
- iii) John 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

8. Hate Evil

- a) If we truly love our loved ones and friends, we must tell them the truth in love (Lev 19:17-18). We do not just tell them the truth but rather tell them the truth in love.
- b) We can love the sinner without condoning sin or getting on their side of beliefs, values, and morality.
- c) We can't claim to love the Lord if we condone and do not hate evil and sin. We need to hate what He hates.
 - i) Psalm 97:10 "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked."
 - ii) Proverbs 8:13 "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."

➤ We need to hate the act, not the actor!

In conclusion, I want to end with these quotes:

- 1) "Not being heard is no reason for silence." —Victor Hugo
- 2) "Silence in the face of evil is evil itself. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak.
- 3) Not to act is to act." — Dietrich Bonhoeffer (When opposing Hitler during WWII.)

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