



## EPHESIANS 4:11-16

### Community Group Study Guide Week of September 29, 2019

We continued our series “Tough & Tender” this week by looking at the power of words and the importance of being able to both receive and speak the truth in love to one another. The Gospel of John tells us that *“In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... 14 The **Word** became **flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**”* Jesus had a tough mind that could handle hard truths, and a tender heart that could mercifully confront those living in opposition to the truth.

We live in a culture that has become reckless and irresponsible with words. We alter the definition of words we don't like. We soften the description of bad things to normalize evil and sin. We tell flattering lies to peoples' faces, and then maliciously gossip behind their back. We abuse, misuse, and weaponize our words. Instead of using our words to glorify God and minister to others, we use our words to glorify ourselves and harm those who stand in our way. When the Word of God took on flesh, he showed us a better way.

God is love and truth. Jesus came preaching hard truth of repentance, but did so motivated by love for fallen sinners who needed a savior. He was upfront and honest about the bad news that our sin deserves death and damnation, but also about the good news that he can come to redeem any who would repent and put their faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

As disciples of Jesus, we are also called to speak the truth in love. In fact, the Apostle Paul tells the church in Ephesus that the health and strength of the church depends on them being humble and confident enough in Christ to speak the truth in love to one another. As we do, we correct one another's folly and sin, and like iron sharpening iron, we grow up together as one body “into him who is the head, into Christ.”

## DISCUSSION GOALS

### Head

To understand why truth and love are inseparable and that Jesus Christ came full of both truth and grace.

### Heart

To develop tough minds that can handle uncomfortable truths, and soft hearts that can speak the truth in love to ourselves and others.

### Hands

To grow in humility and receive truth spoken in love, and develop the discernment and courage needed to beneficially speak the truth in love to others.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Membership or Baptism:

Contact [admin@mosaicboston.com](mailto:admin@mosaicboston.com) to sign up for our next membership class or learn more about baptism.

### Mosaic JP:

Please keep Mosaic JP and other faithful Boston church plants in your prayers. If your CG would like to serve Mosaic JP together on a Sunday please contact Andy Hoot at [andy@mosaicboston.com](mailto:andy@mosaicboston.com).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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### Read John 1:1-18 & Ephesians 4:11-16

1. Scripture affirms that God's Word is powerful, and that even our words have a profound ability to shape or influence reality. If this is true, what **should** we ideally be using our words to do or accomplish? What are some ways that we, and the world around us, fail to use words as we ought?
2. How would God's character be compromised if He was only truth, or only love? Why does His goodness and holiness require both?
3. How does receiving the truth in love about ourselves equip us to better speak the truth in love to others?
4. In what ways is flattery a destructive counterfeit to encouragement? What are the goals of both? What does true encouragement look like?
5. In what ways is gossip a destructive counterfeit to admonishment, reproof, or correction? What are the goals of both? What does it look like to rebuke someone in a godly way?
6. Jesus had a strong mind that could handle hard truths, and a soft heart that could confront those living in opposition to the truth with mercy and love. Why might it be irrational to say that we love someone if we're not willing to speak hard truths to them? Or if we're not able to do so with gentleness or love?
7. It is a common concern that speaking the truth in love might create immediate conflict with others, but how might it actually lead to greater peace and unity long term?
8. Paul places this teaching in the context of the Church as the body of Christ. How might the understanding that we are all of one body helps to better speak the truth in love to one another?
9. What are some of the dangers that the church will be vulnerable to if we don't speak the truth in love to one another? What are some of pitfalls that Paul wants the Ephesians to avoid?
10. Did anything else stand out to you about the text or sermon this week? Was anything particularly helpful, convicting, or challenging?