

WHEN TRUTH HURTS

Joe Slater

Though not a Biblical proverb, the Scriptures certainly support the saying: “The truth hurts!” Like most proverbs, it doesn’t always apply. Sometimes the truth is pleasant or even relieving. Think how Jacob must have felt when he learned the truth that his beloved son Joseph was not dead! But truth can be agonizingly painful at times. When that is the case, what can we do?

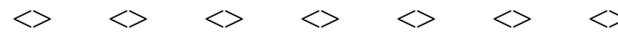
First, we could water down the truth to ease the pain. Many of Israel’s prophets watered down the truth. Faithful prophets were calling God’s people to repentance, threatening them with destruction unless they returned to God. The false prophets, however, were saying, “*Peace, peace,*” when there was no peace (Jeremiah 6:14). Truth was terribly uncomfortable. Proclaimers of truth were profoundly unpopular. So it is today. Shall we join up with the false prophets, then? May it never be! Let us endure the pain rather than condemn ourselves to eternal pain.

Second, when the truth hurts, we could become angry with the messengers. Upon hearing the truth from Stephen, the Sanhedrin members “*were cut to the heart*” (Acts 7:54a). This word literally means to be sawn in half. Stephen had just verbally sawn those men’s hearts in two! Ouch, that hurts! Unfortunately, rather than admitting their guilt and reversing course, those self-willed officers became furious. Like enraged animals, they “*gnashed at (Stephen) with their teeth*” (7:54b). Finally, “*they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him*” (7:57, 58a). Though they silenced Stephen, the truth remained. They killed the messenger, but could not kill the truth.

By contrast, when 3000 people felt the pain of truth in Acts 2, they asked what to do to be saved. Peter had convicted them of murdering their own Messiah. “*Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart*” (Acts 2:37). This is a different word for “cut” than in Acts 7; here it means to be pricked or pierced. We might say Peter had stabbed them in the heart with the truth. Ouch again! But this time the reaction was completely different. They were sad, not mad. They sought relief, not revenge. When Peter told them how to receive remission of sins, they promptly complied with the terms he revealed.

Which will you choose? Will you water down the truth to give false comfort to yourself and others? Will you lash out in anger against the truth and its messengers? Or will you believe and obey the word of the Lord?

Sometimes the truth hurts. But remember, the truth will make you free (John 8:32).



Winner Or Loser?

✧ When a loser makes a mistake, he says, “It wasn’t my fault.” When a winner makes a mistake, he says, “I was wrong.”

✧ A loser says, “I’m not as bad as a lot of other people.” A winner says, “I’m not as good as I ought to be.”

✧ A loser tries to tear down those who are superior to him. A winner learns from those who are superior to him.

✧ A loser makes promises. A winner makes commitments.

You Preach First

The first sermon preached each Sunday is not by the minister of the gospel, but by you.

You preach a message about the importance of the Scriptures when you bring your Bible.

You preach a message of good cheer when you say, “Good morning!” to those you meet when you park your car and when you are in the hallway and classroom.

You preach a message of hope and joy when you sing enthusiastically during the song service.

You preach a message about the power of prayer when you fervently inter into our times of prayer together.

You preach a message about respect for God, His word, and His servant when you listen attentively while the preacher is speaking.

You preach a message about faith when you give your offering.

You preach a message of love when you smile, say hello, and introduce yourself to visitors.

Many messages are preached before the minister stands up to bring his message. If your message is positive and consistent, then the message given from the pulpit will be much better received.

Come each Sunday prepared to preach your sermons!

--via Sayre, OK