# GNITN
# #375
# Speaking The Truth In Love

**You Had One Job**

We've all seen social media posts showing people or persons who failed at the one job they had to accomplish. From spelling errors when painting roads, to mislabeling obvious things at grocery stores or products mass produced with mistakes no one caught and they just sold them anyway. Then there are the construction fails when things are done that make no sense just because a worker tried to make something work without taking the time to do it correctly or they were just plain lazy. With the rise of the Internet and cell phones with cameras, no mistake is left unseen. Even as I write this I am concerned I'll make a typo and never hear the end of it from everyone who sees it. The point is that there are things that are so simple that they shouldn't be missed and there are things that are so critical that even lives can be lost if not discovered. In a study by Johns Hopkins, medical diagnostic errors cause more harm than surgical or medication overdoses. Here is what an article from *Johns Hopkins Medicine* tells us:

*In reviewing 25 years of U.S. malpractice claim payouts, Johns Hopkins researchers found that diagnostic errors — not surgical mistakes or medication overdoses — accounted for the largest fraction of claims, the most severe patient harm, and the highest total of penalty payouts. Diagnosis-related payments amounted to $38.8 billion between 1986 and 2010, they found.*

*"This is more evidence that diagnostic errors could easily be the biggest patient safety and medical malpractice problem in the United States," says David E. Newman-Toker M.D., Ph.D., an associate professor of neurology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and leader of the study published online in BMJ Quality and Safety. "There's a lot more harm associated with diagnostic errors than we imagined."*

Just in case you want to know, diagnostic mistakes are defined this way:

*Diagnostic error can be defined as a diagnosis that is missed, wrong or delayed, as detected by some subsequent definitive test or finding. The ensuing harm results from the delay or failure to treat a condition present when the working diagnosis was wrong or unknown, or from treatment provided for a condition not actually present.*

It is one thing to suffer because you were given the wrong treatment or medicine due to human error. It is something altogether worse when people intentionally harm others.

**The Tylenol Murders**

I'm old enough to recall a series of deaths in the Chicago area back in 1982 that even now are unsolved. Here is a brief synopsis of what happened from a report found in *Today*:

*Seven people between the ages of 12 and 35 years old died in 1982 after ingesting extra-strength Tylenol capsules that were found to have been laced with cyanide, a deadly chemical.*

*The pills were sold at stores in suburban Chicago, and bottles of Tylenol were immediately pulled from shelves to be tested by health departments for the presence of cyanide.*

*Local police departments and state's attorneys offices have been trying to crack the case for 40 years.*

Even though the authorities still have all the evidence, the case is still being worked on:

*Three of the deaths occurred in Arlington Heights, where police told NBC Chicago last year that they still have the pills, bottles and boxes as evidence.*
*"We still receive tips that are being evaluated and investigated. We also are still — we're looking at emerging forensic technology," Sgt. Joe Murphy told NBC Chicago last year.*
*The Illinois State Police told NBC News the investigation remains ongoing.*
The only suspect, James Lewis, was never charged and denied he was the one who tampered with the pills to his dying breath. The one good thing to come out of the case was that companies changed how they packaged medicine, something that is a widespread standard to this day:
*The panic stemming from the Tylenol murders resulted in a permanent change in the packaging of medicine.*
*Tamper-resistant pill containers were introduced with packaging that allows consumers to notice if a bottle of pills or medication has been opened or altered.*
*"Our highest responsibility has always been the health and safety of our consumers," Johnson & Johnson said in a statement to NBC News. "While this tragic incident remains unsolved, this event resulted in important industry improvements to patient safety measures including the creation of tamper-resistant packaging."*

**Christians Have One Job**

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* ***(Matt 28:18-20, NASB)***

I know using the Tylenol murder case is an extreme example of someone who intentionally caused harm by his actions, but I just wanted to raise the level of awareness for what I consider to be actions taken by Christians who are harming the chances of unsaved people wanting to become Christians. Am I over-hyping this? I'll take my chances because I have seen firsthand how believers behaving badly can cause people to sour on accepting Jesus. While acting in ways that are antithetical to the Bible is an easy example, the one that vexes me the most now is all of the infighting with believers over doctrinal pet peeves that they see as, in some cases, demonic and damning believers to hell. I'm not exaggerating this point, either. Rather than spend their time on social media trying to show people Jesus, they put their efforts into meticulously documenting how their particular view on prophecy or even salvation is the only correct one and anyone else's not just wrong, but heretically wrong. They say that they will listen to a scriptural argument but dismiss those arguments by saying that the verses don't mean what the person says they mean. It is difficult to watch well-meaning believers slice and dice their fellow followers of Christ to verbal death out in the public arena for all to see and continue to think they have the Biblical high ground as they do it.

**A Few Examples: Billy Graham**

Without naming names, I will give you a few current examples of this skirmishing that are showing up on my social media platforms over the last few months. A current one is that Billy Graham was a heretic and even a rapist. I struggle to see why this even needs to be a part of public discussion when the proof I've read so far is picking apart all the statements of Graham and then taking them out of context to fit a certain narrative, but when one decides they are a "truth teller" and boast of how their job is to ferret out all false teachers, it isn't that we don't

need to beware of false teachers, but it is how we should be doing it that is the point. Billy Graham is no longer with us. Spending time using him as a theological punching bag isn't going to expand the kingdom nor is belittling those who think he's a sinner saved by grace but did a great deal of good for the Kingdom of God. Personally, I've researched some of these accusations and found them to be specious or just downright wrong. I see nothing to be gained by making Graham into your case du jour of heresy. And I see a lot of downside in arguing with other believers whose only crime is to disagree with your view on things.

**A Few Examples: The Rapture**

I'm seeing an endless amount of bashing on this topic and I understand that there is room for disagreement on it. The debates started all the way back at the earliest moments of Christianity and it continues to this day. I get it. And I have listened to a great deal of pros and cons on it from esteemed Bible teachers, some in person, but most from afar. However the level of animus being thrown at Rapture adherents is growing at an exponential rate. Social media is the main avenue because one can espouse an opinion in seconds that can go viral in a matter of minutes and those who agree with said opinion can share it to their media platforms and before long, an army of detractors can begin their war against fellow brothers and sisters in Christ simply because they don't think the Rapture is even in the Bible or the timing is not what they agree with as well. I could give anyone who is intellectually honest a strong defense for the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church, but most of these rabid, Rapture detractors have already made their minds up and nothing will change their minds. No amount of Bible verses will sway them as they will simply say that they don't mean what you think they mean. It is an effort in futility to try and defend your view with these folks and as for me, I refrain from engaging in sparring on the topic with them. However the larger issue is how they frame the faith of those they disagree with. As with Billy Graham and now with the Rapture, if you support either now, you are a heretic and will most likely go into the lake of fire for taking the mark of the beast. If you think I'm joking on that, I'm not.

**Losing The Battle And The War**

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*
*2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;*
*3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.* ***(Ps 133:1-3, KJV)***

Esteemed leaders of the faith have disagreed with each other before. These men were not perfect We would be remiss if we characterized them in any other way. Their boldness in speaking out was not always in kind and diplomatic terms. *Wycliffe* was brutal in his criticisms of anyone who disagreed with him and this made him more than a little bitter in not getting higher leadership posts. *Luther* was terribly antisemitic and railed against the Jews. Others after them would stake out positions that they didn't need to if the goal was to expand the Kingdom of God. They fought and bickered with their contemporaries over doctrinal stances that are still debated today, stances that ultimately made unity impossible. If you want a perfect revival you would need perfect leaders and that actually hinders the main point of turning from one's wicked ways. Turning demands acceptance of the fact that we are indeed imperfect and in need of a savior. Oddly enough, *Luther* died from an illness he got by traveling in the January cold weather as he

endeavored to reconcile two brother's in Christ. Revival would eventually warm the one who was instrumental in its beginnings.

**Unity Is Precious**

Unity must not only be sought but must be preserved. By insisting that everyone believe like you believe or they are not a Christian you damage the Body of Christ, you also make those on the outside to not want to have anything to do with Christians or Christianity. They hear that God is love but the reckless infighting shows them we are not anything like Him. They see enough bickering in their own lives to not want to be a part of yet another unhealthy group. What they need to see is not people who blindly believe everything at face value, but people who can have disagreements and work it out. They aren't seeking perfection, they are seeking healthy relationships with love at its base and love in its workings. Peter and Paul disagreed. They worked it out. If we disagree on things, let's keep it between us and not air the proverbial dirty laundry for all to see initially. If a doctrine needs to be disputed, let it be disputed and not the people themselves. God judges the heart and He is the only one who can do it correctly and with love. I encourage all those who consider themselves to be truth tellers to adhere to this sage advice from the Bible:

*Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.* ***(Eph 4:15, NLT)***

If you want to boast about speaking the truth, fine. But before you speak that truth, stop and carefully craft your words with love. Truth without love is harsh and hurtful. Love without truth changes little by itself. I like how author *Carol Mayhall* in her book *"Words That Hurt, Words That Heal: Speaking The Truth In Love"* explains it:

*The "love" referred to in this verse is agape love, a self-sacrificial love that works for the benefit of the loved one. We speak truth in order to build up. Several verses later Paul writes, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29). Our words should be beneficial to the hearers of those words. We should speak truth in love.*