

The Red Zone

Ephesians 4:11 – 15

I. Intro

- A. Recognize vets (1st group)
- B. **Illustration:** Football red zone – last 20 yards before the goal line and scoring a touchdown; ironically, the hardest part of the field to score from – reason, because the team trying to score many times are their own worst enemy, make dumb play calls, penalties because of not playing the right way, they defeat themselves
- C. Our church is in the red zone and have been for years, and scoring by making a real difference in people’s lives and in community has been held back because we have been our own worst enemy (not making a difference beyond what we believe is possible), we have not made some very smart “play calls” over the years
- D. Message from burden on my heart; love for the people and the church; ambition and passion for this church to experience potential but we’re defeating ourselves by holding back
- E. Penalties: only sing one style of music; we can’t allow certain kinds of instruments to be played; we have to focus ALL our attention on certain group of people; this is MY church and we’re going to do what I want; we have to have worship services on certain days and only at certain times; we have to have Sunday School, VBS, GA’s or RA’s, AWANA
- F. **READ Ephesians 4:11 – 15**
- G. [SLIDE] What we HAVE to do as church is (v. 12, 13, 15) to strive to reach *unity of the faith and of the [greatest possible] knowledge [understanding] of the Son of God*, growing in spiritual maturity measured by the standard that is the *fullness of Christ ... we’re to grow up in every way into Him who is the head [of this body], into [Jesus] Christ (UNDERLINE)*; [SLIDE] be obedient and hold fast to our mission
 - i. “... *actively living in obedience to the Biblical mandates of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19, 20 (the Great Commission) and Acts 1:8.*”
 - ii. [Remind of the non-optional direction of commands]
- H. **Question:** Imagine on a 4 hour flight, end of very long day, all you can think about is getting home; a mom and very delinquent 9 year old sitting next to you on plane, and this brat starts rolling up small pieces of napkin, sticks it in his mouth, and proceeds to project them through a straw at you; try to politely ask the kid to stop with no success, going to have to confront the mom, will you do it? Will this be easy for you or excruciating because you’re afraid how the mother will respond?

- I. It's time church for us to respond even though it may not be easy, may even be excruciating
- J. Two critical ways we need to respond ("play" in this red zone), both ways by *speaking the truth in love* (v. 15)

II. Willing to Change

- A. Decades of 60's and 70's has passed, in the 21st century and church needs to move into the 21st century; doing ministry/reaching our community in the 21st century is different than it was in the 60's & 70's
- B. **Question:** At what point in span of human life does a person completely/totally stop changing? Death
- C. **Question:** At what point in span of the life of a church does it completely/totally stop changing? When it's dead
- D. A tool of Satan to cause church ineffective - stop change
- E. A football team will never make it out of the red zone and score if they keep calling the same play over and over - defense knows what to expect (nothing more frustrating when watching a game); church doing same thing over and over, Satan knows what to expect, eventually, a new play has to be called; time for this church to call some new plays
- F. Jesus Christ was all about change; **READ Mark 11:15 – 17** – Jesus walking into our church and throwing some things out
- G. The "good ol' days" – some things may have worked in the "good ol' days" won't work today; may have been more numbers but that's not what it's about, it's supposed to be about salvations and lives changed and people maturing spiritually and growing up *in every way into* Jesus Christ
- H. Maturing involves change – can't accomplish one without the other
- I. Don't change for pastor, deacons, certain group – change in order to have maximum impact for the honor and glory of our Lord and Savior

III. Have Courage with Humility

- A. Courage to say things need to be said, speak into person's life words that need to be spoken for correction/edification, all done in love and humility; courage to risks and try new things, new "plays"
- B. This too is a critical part of spiritual growth process; think about a young child and the parents too afraid to teach the child to walk because of dangers the child might face – doesn't happen
- C. No doubt, having upfront open/honest conversations are hard; back to fear of being transparent/vulnerable
- D. Paul in his letters said many times to *admonish* one another; Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **(activities should happen in the body)**

i. ***Admonish* (Gr.) - to caution or reprove gently; to put in someone's mind, bring to their attention**

E. **Proverbs 27:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.; **friction, grinding, sparks, sound – not an easy process; not about how tough/harsh the sharpening process is but about the end result – the benefit, value of a sharpening brings**

F. ***Speaking the truth in love* can be a painful, hard thing to do sometimes, is why humility has to be part of the equation**

G. **We need courage to *speak the truth in love* with humility so that we will *grow up in every way into Him* (v. 15)**

H. **Address a scripture verse that we humans always get confused – we hesitate to *speak the truth in love* because of Jesus' words - Matthew 7:1–2 (ESV)**

¹⁶Judge not, that you be not judged.

²For **with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**

i. **We don't speak truth because we know we're all sinners, and we don't want to be seen as hypocritical – expecting someone to do what we say but not what we do**

ii. **What Jesus is saying is, if you have a steady habit of gossiping you don't need to confront another person about gossip**

I. **Out of our areas of strength, we sharpen another person in their weakness, and out of that person's strength they sharpen us in our areas of weakness;**

J. **I as Pastor of this church, and all of us must have courage with humility to speak truth in love**

K. **Today, I hope you've heard/understood that what I say to you my church family I say in love in order to "sharpen" all of us as body of Christ**

L. **[2nd group - Acknowledge the value/need of those born before 1955]**

IV. **Close**

A. **We're in the red zone, we need to change so that Jesus can change us – both as individuals and as the church; so that He can use us to bring about change in our community, state, nation, world**

B. **We're in the red zone, need to *speak the truth in love* to each other with courage and humility (essential in developing *koinonia* relationships)**

C. **If we don't change in here (this body of Christ) then we can't expect change to occur out there - therefore, no scoring**

**D. We're in the red zone, let's do whatever it takes to score for the glory of
God our Savior**