

Speaking to the soul



Truth

Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy. Proverbs 27:6

We've probably all had moments when friends have said something which made us go: "Ouch!" Perhaps they were giving us a loving warning or strongly disagreeing with our opinion. The pain was real but, when we got over it, we realised they said it because they cared. That doesn't mean

they were necessarily right, of course, but the reason they spoke in the way that they did was because of the friendship.

Superficially, it is nicer to be kissed than wounded, but the writer of Proverbs makes the point that what really matters is where the kiss or wound comes from. If an enemy kisses you, it might feel nice for a moment, but it is a lie. There is no love or commitment behind it, and you are much better off without it. A wound that comes from a sincere friend is infinitely more valuable.

Speaking truth is never an easy matter. We are continually tempted to say the things that other people want to hear and which will make them like us. All our instincts are to tiptoe around saying the things we know they don't want to hear. God's intention is that we should be speakers of truth. In the apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he was concerned for Christian growth. He wanted his Christian friends, and the whole Church, to become stronger. He wrote that as we speak the truth in love, we will grow "in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of the body, the church" (Ephesians 4.15).

Of course, it must never be our intention to wound anyone, but the truth is so precious that we must make sure we don't keep it from our friends, even when it is going to hurt. For the same reason, we must love them when they share words of truth with us.

QUESTION

When were you last wounded by the words of a friend, and what did you learn from that experience?

PRAYER

Lord God, help me always to speak truth that is full of your love. Amen

Photo - Flowers on CNI's doorstep

