

## Speaking the Truth in Love Ephesians 4:7-16

### Introduction

Good morning! My name is Brad and I'm one of the pastors here. Also, Happy New Year! It's 2019! It's the time for all things new, for resolutions and goals and vision. So we're kicking off this year with a new rhythm too.

From day one, Antioch has placed great value on covenant membership—after all, our mission statement is built on what we call “intentional gospel relationships”. In fact, let's look at that mission together, which says, “We pursue intentional gospel relationships to display Christ's glory among the nations.” Now, we pursue those relationships in a couple of different ways. One is with people who do not know Jesus, and we are communicating the gospel to them through a genuine relationship. The other is with people who *do* know Jesus, fellow members of the body of Christ.

Because these relationships are literally what makes up a church, we want to do everything we can to help cultivate them. That is why we practice covenant membership. Each year at Antioch we not only guide new people through our membership process, we also ask existing members to renew their membership covenant. This reminds us of what we've committed to one another based on Jesus' commands. In the past we've emphasized membership renewal toward the end of a year, which often landed in the craziness of December. But here's our new rhythm as a church family: January is actually going to be our annual time for membership renewal. And hopefully it will help us start the year in the right direction as a church.

Our sermon series during this time of renewal is titled, “Speaking the Truth in Love,” which is a phrase that's taken directly from Ephesians 4. It's also a phrase that appears on the front page of our membership covenant. Why focus on this one aspect of church membership when there are so many others? Because it's something that we really want to grow in as a church.

For example, over the past year there were multiple times that we as pastors were speaking the truth in love and the person responded, “No one has ever said this to me before.” That would be no problem, except that the Bible doesn't teach that only pastors are to be speaking the truth in love. No, all members of the church are commanded to







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