

Valiant for Truth #7

Jer. 9:3 – “And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not **valiant for the truth** upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.”

In previous lessons we saw Christ as the Word (the eternal Logos), as Creator, as Life, as the True Light, and Truth, and that we are guided by the Holy Spirit into truth; also that we are to both love and seek the truth.

Must be Sanctified (set apart to God) by the Truth

Truth is one of the things that distinguishes us from the world, and from our earlier living in ignorance.

Eph. 4:17 – “... that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

1 P. 1:14-16 – “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” To be holy means to be “set apart”, or sanctified.

The NT says that we are saints (already), by virtue of God’s calling and our new birth, whereby we have become new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Rid yourselves of the Catholic notion that sainthood is a class of “super Christians” that are officially recognized after death, and which then become intermediaries between us and God. If you are praying to a “saint”, you are calling on another god!

1 Cor. 1:2 – “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, **to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints**, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

The KJV puts “to be” in italics because it is not in the Greek, but might suggest to some that we are called so that we would later become saints (in heaven?). The NASB and a few others clarify by saying that we are “saints by calling. That is, we are the “called” saints. Our sainthood (sanctification) is the result of God’s calling of us. The very fact that he has given us an effectual calling sets us apart from the world.

Although the NT shows us to be sanctified at the new birth, it is apparent that we should experience a continual sanctification as we proceed through this Christian life. The longer we know Christ and walk in obedience to him, and seek the truth, the more we become set apart from the world, and to Christ.

1 Thess. 4:3-4 – “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”

1 Thess. 5:23 – “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ...”

How is this “continuing sanctification” done? Through the Word of truth:

Jn. 17:17 – “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

Jn. 17:19 – “... that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

Eph. 5:25-26 – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”

There are other verses that say we are sanctified by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit. God’s calling is what “targets” us for sanctification, Jesus’ blood is what enables it, and it is the word of God with the illumination of the Spirit that continually separates us more and more from this world. We are still here on earth, but our desires and motivations are increasingly heavenward.

Must Live the Truth

Just knowing the truth is not enough. We must live the truth, and line our lives up with it. Many of Paul’s letters, like Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians have a great deal of theological content, telling us about God, Christ, Redemption, the Blood, etc. But they all go on to include long sections devoted to practical Christian living. Knowing the facts and realities of our redemption is vital, but cannot be separated from the way we

actually live. What good would it be to “believe all the right things”, but to continue living like dogs? What we believe must work itself out in practical holiness, love, and mercy.

We need to have a balance between doctrinal teaching, and practical advice for everyday living “in the trenches”. It may be significant that in those epistles of Paul, he gives the doctrinal teaching first, and then the practical. Apart from a right doctrinal foundation, we have no real basis for practical living, beyond advice like “try to live better”. It is not mere knowledge, but the real experiencing of the doctrinal side of Christianity that enables us to live godly and holy lives. The Bible gives us both sides, and when we study, meditate upon, and obey the Word, we will find both the desire and the ability to live holy lives to God’s glory.

Eph. 6:14 – “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness”

Must hold fast to the truth

Merely knowing the truth means nothing if we do not stick with it, even through difficulties.

Jesus himself spoke much about the need for endurance:

Mk. 4 – (parable of the sower and seed). Jesus mentions two kinds of short-term believers – the “stony ground” and the “thorny ground” hearers. They hear and respond to the gospel, but do not persevere in the Christian life, either because of persecution or the cares of this life and deceitfulness of riches.

Luke 9:62 – “... No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Luke 12:8-9 – “... Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”

Mt. 24:13 – “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Hebrews also says a great deal about holding fast:

Heb. 2:1 – “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

Heb. 3:6 – “... whose house are we, **IF** we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (emphasis added)

Heb. 3:12-14 – “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, **IF** we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” (emphasis added)

Heb. 10:23 – “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)”

Heb. 10:35-36 – “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience [*endurance*], that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”

In the book of Revelation, the letters to the seven churches have many references to holding fast, either as commendations or warnings.

Rev. 2:10 – “...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Rev. 2:13 – “...thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith ...”

Rev. 3:8, 10 – “... for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. ... Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.”