

Valiant for Truth #10

Jer. 9:3 – “... they are not **valiant for the truth** upon the earth ...”

Merely knowing and even living according to truth is not really being valiant. To be valiant means to defend the truth against falsehood, and against the lies around us, and this, not just against atheists and unbelievers in the world, and the lukewarm and resisters in the church, and heretics, but also against the lies and deceitfulness of our own hearts (Jer. 17:9, Ps. 139:23-24).

The Valiant will Reject, and Openly Oppose Evil Doctrines and Practices

1 Tim. 4:1-2 – “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”

The Valiant will Actively Pursue a Right Understanding of Doctrinal Truth

1 Tim. 4:13-16 – “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. ... Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

2 Tim. 2:15 – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

The Valiant will Be Constant in the Fight, Not Catering to What People Want to Hear

2 Tim. 4:2-4 – “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The Valiant will Use Sound Doctrine to Warn, and Possibly to Change the Minds of the Deluded

Tit. 1:9 (one of the qualifications of an elder) – “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

The Valiant See that this is an Actual Spiritual Battle

Eph. 6:12 – “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual darkness in high places.”

Jude 3 – “... it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Examples of men who were Valiant for Truth

- **Enoch, Noah, Moses and others** in Heb. 11
- **Amos 7:10-13** – Amos was threatened by the priest Amaziah and accused to king Jeroboam, being told to go back to Judah and prophesy there. Amos refused and made it even stronger, in verses 14-17.
- **Jeremiah** prophesied his whole life against the corruption in Judah, and predicted their downfall to the Babylonians. He was imprisoned, thrown in a dungeon, threatened, and opposed by false prophets. In 21:9 he was so weary of the constant opposition and rejection that he said “I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” He suffered constantly for his prophesying, and is now known as “the weeping prophet”.
- **Daniel and his three friends** – in the fiery furnace and the lion’s den because they refused to deny God
- **John the Baptist** – lost his life because he dared to object to Herod’s marriage to a sister-in-law
- **Peter and John** were arrested for healing the lame man in the temple (Ac. 3) and their preaching Jesus to the people. They spoke very boldly to the elders of Israel and did not back off at all. In Ac. 4:13 – 22 the

elders could not deny the miracle, so forbade them to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.” (4:19-20)

- **Paul** in Gal. 2:11-14, rebuked Peter publicly for refusing to eat with the Gentile believers, and causing others to follow that example. (Peter does not seem to hold that against Paul – 2 P. 3:15-16)
- **Polycarp** was a disciple of the apostle John, and became the Bishop of Smyrna. As an old man he was betrayed but had warning. He refused to flee, and so was arrested and brought into the arena. The Roman proconsul didn’t want to kill him and so pleaded with him to curse Christ and so earn release. His response was “Eighty-six years I have served Him. He has never done me wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?” *[and more, reading out of Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, pp.22-24]*
- **Athanasius** – A 4th century bishop of Alexandria. Arianism was a heresy that said Christ was a created being and not fully divine. It was condemned by the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, but continued to be a popular view. When people tried to sway Athanasius against his orthodox view of the full divinity of Christ, they said “The whole world is against you.” His reply was “Athanasius against the world.”
- **John Wycliffe** (1330-1384) – An English reformer questioned the authority of the pope, saying that Christ only is the head of the church. He objected to the corruption in the (Catholic) church, denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, and saw the Bible as our sole authority. He translated the Bible into English (before the invention of the printing press). Though he was not martyred, his teachings were formally denounced in 1415, and in 1428 his bones were dug up and burned, and the ashes were thrown into a river.
- **Jan Hus** (aka John Huss, 1370-1415) – A Czech reformer. He also saw the scriptures as our only standard for Christian doctrine. He denounced a papal authorization for the sale of indulgences. In his final trial he refused to disavow John Wycliffe, and refused to recant his other beliefs, and so was burned at the stake. When given a last chance to recant, he said “What error should I renounce, when I know myself guilty of none? For this was the principal end and purpose of my doctrine, that I might teach all men repentance and remission of sins, according to the verity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: wherefore, with a cheerful mind and courage, I am here ready to suffer death.” After the fire was lit, he said “Jesu Christ! The Son of the living God! Have mercy upon me.” *[quote taken from Foxe’s Book of Martyrs]*
- **Martin Luther** (1453 – 1536), a German monk, became disenchanted by the Catholic church and its corruption. He nailed his “95 Theses” to the church door at Wittenburg, describing his objections to various doctrines and activities of the church. He was excommunicated by the pope and his books burned. In response, Luther burned the papal bull (a public decree published by a pope). In a trial at Worms, Germany, he refused to recant or reject his writings, and when pressed for an explicit answer, said

“Since your most serene majesty and your highnesses require of me a simple, clear, and direct answer, I will give one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the council, because it is clear that they have fallen into error and even into inconsistency with themselves. If, then, I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture, or by cogent reasons, if I am not satisfied by the very text I have cited, and if my judgment is not in this way brought into subjection to God's word, I neither can nor will retract anything; for it cannot be either safe or honest for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”

This was in opposition to both civil and ecclesiastical authority (emperor and pope). He left the hearing, and on his return to Wittenburg, was abducted and hidden away in Wartburg for his own protection. While there he translated the Bible into German so the common people could read it. He was not martyred, but was the major means God used for the Reformation in Germany, and its spreading to the surrounding countries of Europe. He was the beginning of the Lutheran church, and while his views on Jews and Anabaptists were reprehensible, he was very notable for his valor for truth against papism.

- **William Tyndale**, an Englishman, was influenced by Martin Luther, and believed that the Bible alone should be our guide for doctrine and Christian practice, and should be available in the everyday language, not just Latin. *[Here read from pp. 141-142, Foxe’s Book of Martyrs]* He translated the NT into English in 1525, and it ultimately had a large influence on the King James translation of 1611.

From www.ligonier.org, “he fell into a heated argument with a Catholic clergyman, the latter asserting, ‘We had better be without God’s laws than the pope’s.’ Tyndale boldly responded: ‘I defy the pope and all his laws.’ He then added these famous words: ‘If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough, shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost.’ “

He was betrayed by an undercover agent posing as a friend, condemned for “heresy”, then strangled and burned in 1536. His last words were, “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes”.

- **Anabaptists** (from 1525) – The Lutheran and Calvinist churches had left Catholicism and its most obnoxious beliefs, but continued to hold to infant baptism. Some then realized that the Bible nowhere teaches or gives examples of infant baptism, so they started being baptized as adults, based on a confession of faith in Christ. This resulted in tremendous persecutions throughout Europe, as they were killed both by Catholics and by Protestants. It has been reported that more Anabaptists were killed in the 16th century than in all the persecutions of the early church. Simon Menno became the real leader of the movement, and this resulted (eventually) in the churches of Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards, Hutterites, Beachy Amish, etc.
- **John Bunyan** (1628-1688) – a Puritan preacher (a tinker by trade), imprisoned from 1660-1672 for being an unlicensed preacher (“nonconformist” churches were not part of the Church of England). Though released, he was imprisoned again for a time. During his imprisonment he began writing his “Pilgrim’s Progress” book, published in 1678, and since in 200 languages, never being out of print!

It is notable how many of the things we take for granted today (freedom to meet as Christians, having ready access to Bibles in our own language, baptism of believers, not being in a state church, etc.) are the very things for which people in earlier days were tortured, burned at the stake, drowned, dispossessed, driven out of towns and countries, etc. Although we in the USA are relatively unaffected by these persecutions, it is still common in other parts of the world, and many Christians are still being killed.

Quotes from Foxe’s Book of Martyrs are from the Whitaker House paperback edition, copyright 1981.

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