

Mr. Valiant-for-Truth

by Ernest C. Reisinger

Being valiant for truth means being a contender for the truth, bound to defend it, and willing to face controversy and opposition.

Duration: 56:52

Scripture: Jeremiah 9:3, Philippians 1:15

Topics: "Truth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of understanding and embracing the doctrines of grace. He addresses young preachers and attendees of a conference who may encounter opposition to these beliefs in their churches and among their friends. The speaker emphasizes the need to memorize and apply 1 Corinthians 4:7, which encourages self-reflection and readiness for spiritual battle. He then draws lessons from John Bunyan's 'Mr. Valiant-for-Truth' to encourage believers to value and defend the truth. The sermon concludes with a vivid picture of Kristianna, a character in Bunyan's work, who sees Mr. Valiant-for-Truth one last time before crossing a metaphorical river.

Transcript

I want us to turn tonight to a passage of scripture. I want to make a few introductory remarks before I read it. And before we do that, before we look to the book of God, let's bow our heads and our hearts and look to the God of the book in a word of prayer.

O gracious God and our Heavenly Father, again tonight we come to Thee because we believe that Thou art, and that Thou art a rewarder of those who diligently seek Thee. Lord, we could not claim diligence, but increase our diligence. But we do seek Thee.

Our presence here is a witness to our own heart that we seek Thee. And tonight we pray that as we seek Thee, Thou will come to us. Thank you for this conference.

Thank you for all the men who labored behind the scenes to make it possible. Thank you for Bob Stein who does the registrar work. Work unnoticed, but much work.

For the men who plan, the men who send out the letters, the people who type them, and all the little things behind the scenes, we thank you Lord for each one. And our Father, we thank you for those who give of their substance to make it possible, and we thank you for those who pray. And as we come now toward

the end, we pray that this blessed experience would enrich our hearts and enrich our lives and help us to serve Thee and bring glory to Thy name and good to Thy church as we pass through this veil of tears.

Hear us for Christ's sake. Amen. I suppose we all come to these conferences, or most of us at least, as lovers of the truth.

I suppose we desire to fellowship in the truth. We come because we desire to be taught the truth. And of course I trust that we want to be dispensers of God's truth, because love of the truth is imperative.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 we learn that men perish because they receive not the love of the truth. Not just because they receive not the truth, but it says because they receive not the love of the truth. We follow, we who are Christians, follow in the line of men, many who have sealed their testimony for the truth with their own blood.

And of course it's the heart's desire and my heart's desire and the heart's desire of others who plan and pray for this conference to encourage every seeker after truth. And we hope this conference, and all of us who took part, we pray that it will be encouragement to those who are seekers after the truth. We learn from the Bible that God is the God of truth.

And we know that faith cometh by hearing the truth. Jesus prayed for our sanctification that we might be sanctified by the truth. In John 17 where he says, Father, sanctify them through thy truth.

Thy word is truth. David states how he hid the truth in his heart to keep him from sin. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

And then I pray that we would be defenders of the truth, that we would be valiant for the truth, dispensers of the truth, by life, by lip, by good literature. And I hope tonight to point out some of the dangers that accompany all those who are zealous for the truth and valiant for the truth. And if I have time, I want to consider some of the perplexing difficulties of applying the truth in love and compassion without compromise.

That is, balancing being valiant for truth and Christian patience and a true Catholic spirit. It's a rare balance. And I have for a text, and I'd like you to turn now in your Bible.

I was going to read this whole chapter and say a few words about it, but I think I'll maybe just give you a little sketch of it and let you do it on your own. My text tonight is found in Jeremiah 9, verse 3. The prophet in this chapter goes on to faithfully reprove sin and threatens God's judgment for sin. And he bitterly laments the sin and points out God's judgment as one who neither rejoices in iniquity nor is glad at calamity.

You can see that in the first verse, how that he does it with tears. Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people. Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them.

And this is the reason. For they all be adulterers and an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like a bow for lies. 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.

And he goes on in these first 11 verses. The prophet expresses his grief for the miseries of both Judah and Jerusalem. And then beginning at the 9th verse to the 16th verse, he justifies God and the greatness of the destruction that's brought upon this people.

And in verse 17 to 22, he calls others, he calls these women to bewail the woeful cause of Judah and Jerusalem. He calls the women, he calls on the mourning women and other women who had lost their husbands, verse 21. And then in the 23rd verse to the 26th, we see the great weeping prophet shows them the vanity and the folly of trusting in their own strength, or their own wisdom, or the privileges of their circumstances.

Some people trust in the privilege of their circumstances. Or he shows them the folly of trusting anything but God. Let not the wise men glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty men glory in his might.

Let not the rich men glory in his riches, verse 23. But he that glorieth let him glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

Now among other things that the prophet is grieved about, is that what I called your attention to, among other things, is that they were not valiant for the truth. They were not valiant for the truth. They appeared not in the defense of God's truth, which was delivered to them by the prophets.

They had no courage to stand by an honest cause that has truth on its side, even though it may have been false. They had no courage to stand for an honest cause. And those who will be valiant for truth, those who love the truth, I should say, must be valiant for it, not be daunted by opposition given by those who oppose the truth.

There is an interesting passage in Isaiah 59, and I think I'll read it to you. It talks about truth that has fallen in the land. And I think some of these Old Testament passages, even this whole chapter of chapter 9 and some of these Old Testament passages, are so apropos for the day in which we live, as far as truth and other things also.

Listen to Jeremiah 59, verses 14 and 15. And judgment is turned away backwards, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. And my dear people, I believe we live in a day when truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the Lord saw it, and displeased him that there was no judgment. You see, men will answer not only for their enmity in opposing the truth, but men will answer for their cowardice in defending the truth.

I want to try to cover the areas that I mentioned at the beginning, and I'll tell you how I plan to do it. Boys and girls, those of you who may not be familiar with Pilgrim's Progress, I'm going to introduce you to a wonderful character tonight in John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. And his name is Valiant for Truth.

Valiant for Truth. And I want to turn Bunyan's metaphor over a little bit tonight for some heart lessons. Valiant for Truth was born in a place that Bunyan called Darkland.

And he says, there my mother and father are still. They're in the dark, as far as the truth is concerned. And he found it unsuitable and unprofitable to stay there in Darkland, that is, Valiant for Truth did, and he forsook Darkland.

And in giving his testimony, Valiant for Truth said this. And I want you to notice what caused him to leave. Those of you who don't pass out Pilgrim's Progress, this is a plug for you to use it as an evangelistic tool.

When Valiant for Truth is giving his testimony as to why he left Darkland, this is what he said, and I quote, That which caused me to go on pilgrimage was this. We had one Mr. Tell Truth come into our park, and he told it about what Christian had done, how he had left the city of destruction and headed for the celestial city. And that was Pilgrim's Progress that told him that truth.

That man so told the story of Christian and his travels that my heart fell into burning haste to go after him, nor could my father and mother keep me. So I got from them and came thus far on the story of Pilgrim's Progress. You know, my wife drove here, and I flew, and she brought three fine people with her.

And when I left in the car, I gave them four volumes of Pilgrim's Progress, one for each one. And I said, When you get back to Florida, you've got to have it all read. And they got halfway coming up, and they're going to do the other half going back.

I really think that's a great book for evangelism. And that's how this man told how he got out of Darkland and headed for the celestial city. And one of the great lessons that Bunyan would have us learn from this impressive character, Valiant for Truth, is learned from the terrible fight that Valiant had with three ruffians.

Three ruffians attacked him all at once, and they almost put an end to him. And I want you to hear these lessons, because I have a specific reason for this message tonight. Some of you young preachers, I want you to hear what I have to say.

Some of you people who have come to this conference, and this is their first introduction to the doctrines of grace. And you're going to go back to churches and friends who don't believe this, and I want you to hear what I have to say tonight, because I have a specific purpose. And I hope I, by God's help, accomplish it.

You know, I appreciate, at fifty-six, some of these lessons, which I wish I'd have learned at twenty-four. And I also wish I could tell you I've learned them all even now, because I find these characters, these three ruffians that I want to tell you about, I find they're still there. And so I don't mean that I've learned all these lessons yet, but I have learned some, both by witnessing it others and from my own heart.

Valiant. His name tells us that he was a contender of the truth. He was bound to defend the truth.

He was thrown into a life of controversy. And the temptations that accompany a life of controversy are tremendous. One old saint said, temptations in the life of controversy are worse than the temptations of whoredom and wine.

Now when I tell you the name of these three ruffians, you'll see what I mean, because there's a great deal in their name. If I just quit after I give you the names of these three characters that fought values for truth, it would be probably sufficient. Bunyan calls them wild head, inconsiderate, and pragmatic.

That was their name. Oh, the wisdom of John Bunyan. What is he saying in these three names? Well, I think he's warning every defender of the truth, the besetting temptation of those who are defenders of the truth, whether it be in religion or other matters.

First, there's a temptation to be wild headed. There's a temptation to be inconsiderate of others who do not hold the truth. Self-conceited.

Intolerably arrogant. Now this bloody battle that Bunyan paints such a beautiful picture of, this bloody battle, and it was a bloody battle indeed, was not fought at the mouth of some dark alley somewhere in the midnight city. This terrible battle was fought, you know where? In valiant own hearts.

You see, Bunyan, valiant, was not one of these smooth, double-tongued, calculating, supposing friends of the truth. He didn't wait until he saw truth walking in golden slippers before he identified himself with it. He was not one of these church politicians.

No, no, not valiant for truth. Let a man lay a finger or wag a tongue against the truth, and he would be sure to have to settle it. His love for the truth was a passion.

And there was such fierceness in his love for the truth that frightened ordinary men, even when they were on his side. Valiant could have died for the truth without a murmur. But he had some hard lessons to learn, as most people who are valiant for the truth.

Hard lessons. And what are the lessons that he learned as he sought to be a friend of the truth? Well, one of the first lessons that he learned in reality, that though he was a friend of the truth, he thought he was a best friend of truth, in reality at times he was a great enemy of the truth. And he had learned to defend the truth, but sometimes in defending it we can do harm to it.

The truth is often heard to say, save me from my enemies and my friends. You know there's an interesting verse in Zechariah, and I call your attention to this because I want to tell you some things that I wanted to add to this message and I didn't, but I'll tell you where you can find it, you preachers. There's a very interesting passage in Zechariah chapter 13 verse 6, and the context of this chapter, it's about the truth.

And the context of the chapter is where the prophet was ashamed of his vision, he was ashamed of his message, and he was ashamed to be identified with some of the people of the truth. And he was so ashamed that he denied it. And you know, sometimes when I've gone places to preach and I hear what some of these young people do with the truth, some of these young preachers, and some of their people tell me what they've done, you know I'm ashamed to be identified with them, I really am.

You know I go to some places and some of these young preachers that just come into the doctrines of grace, they've got a stream of blood that you couldn't swim through. And they've cut off everybody's ears that you can get near. And then somebody said to them, well I've got a familiarized singer, or Al Martin, or reading Ian Murray's Invitation System, or Walt Champion's Today's Gospel, and they have a trail of blood.

Not because they don't love the truth. Well in this chapter, in verse 6, you know after he denied that he was a prophet, he says, I'm not a prophet, I'm a herdsman. I said, I don't know what he thought, I don't know, I don't know.

And so the prophet said, I'm not a prophet, he said, I'm a herdsman. He denied that he was a prophet. And verse 6 says, and one shall say to him, he's a economist, he says, well if you're not, where are you? And then shall he answer, those which I have, I was wounded in the house of my friends.

So sometimes truth suffers at the house of its friends. And that's one of the things Valiant had to learn. By the way, you preachers who have Jonathan Edwards' book on those two volumes that Banner printed, Pastor Chantry some months ago pointed out some very interesting things about spiritual pride.

And that's the danger, that's one of the dangers, this is not part of my message, but I want to tell you about those, it's about page 397 to 404. Jonathan Edwards points out some of the things to be avoided in the promotion of true religion. Errors committed by those who are zealous for the truth.

And one of the areas, he points out three things to be careful of. Undiscerned spiritual pride. And I just passed that along.

Well, these three ruffians, Wild Head, let me say a bit about Wild Head. Wild Head in operation, I've seen him in operation many times. I've seen him with his pen in his hand in operation.

I've sometimes seen him behind pulpits in operation. I've sometimes seen him in private conversation and debate. And I've seen him rush at the character of some saint, just because that saint was not enlightened, whose understanding was not as good as his experience.

And let me tell you something tonight. It's possible for many of your Christian friends to have a genuine Christian experience, but not such a good understanding. When I was a rank Armenian, I believe, if I'm not mistaken, I believe my relationship and my devotion to Christ was as good, if not better than, than it is now.

My understanding has changed a bit. And you must remember that some of your Armenian friends, and some of the friends that have not been privileged to sit under the preaching that you have, some of them, their Christian experience is just as genuine as yours. But they have not been privileged to sit under a ministry like you have, possibly, and therefore their understanding is not as good as their experience.

Wild Head never learned the point, and Wild Head never learned that apart from the Spirit, there will be no development of Christian character. Truth by itself will not develop Christian character. There must be the Spirit.

Mercy and truth must be together, as it was in Jesus, in this awful, confused and divided church world in which we live. We need wisdom, wisdom, gracious wisdom, in applying the truth in love. I mean applying it as to time.

Where is the person that you want to bring the truth? You don't give him John Olin's death of death the first time you see him. It may not even be wise to give him Pastor Chantry's book, the first shot out of the gun. There's people I didn't give it to the first time.

And be sure it may not be wise if you're going to get among Southern Baptists to give them E.M. Murray's, because you know most Protestants have two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. But the Southern Baptists have four. The baptism, the Lord's Supper, the cooperative program, and the altar call.

Now I don't mean you don't give it to them, but there is a time for things, there's a manner in which you do it, and there's a method. And all these are vitally important. And what's the one safeguard at this point? Well the one safeguard I believe is this, not putting asunder what God has put together.

And certainly he has put mercy and truth together. He's put love and truth together. And above all he personified this in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I was going to read you a dozen verses tonight where it's together, but let me give you the references quickly. Psalm 85, 10. Psalm 86, 15.

Psalm 89, 14. Proverbs 14, 22. Proverbs 16, 6. Proverbs 20, 28.

And you'll see in all these passages that God puts mercy and truth together. Kindness and truth together. Love and truth together.

The Apostles said in Seasons 4, speak the truth, but the period is not there. Speak the truth in love. We have it in John 1, 14 and also verse 17.

It says grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Yes, it says he was full of grace and truth. So much for Wild Head.

One of the great safeguards against Wild Head is be sure to put truth and mercy together. Truth and kindness together. Truth and love together.

But what's the second ruffian? It attacked and almost did away with poor young Zion for truth. The second ruffian or rogue that attacked Zion was inconsiderate. Now you must remember these enemies are in his own heart.

These enemies are in his own heart. Inconsiderate never thinks and certainly doesn't pray before he speaks or after he's spoken. He never puts himself in the other man's place.

He has neither head nor heart to put himself in another man's place. When you're talking to people about the truth that we love, if you've listened to them for five years or two years or three years or even at a conference like this, you must remember that your dear friend may have never heard one sermon within the framework of those things that we love and hold dear. My wife and I read Matthew Henry each day.

We were reading, we're in Job now. And the other week we were reading Job 19. It's been a little while longer than that now.

But we were reading Job 19. And Matthew Henry's comment on verses 2 and 5 said this. Those who speak too much seldom think they have said enough.

And when the mouth is open in passion, the ear is shut to reason. Inconsiderate seems to forget that all truth must be revealed. One of the things that inconsiderate people seem to forget is that the truth of God must be revealed by the Spirit of God.

And let me tell you a verse that's helped me and does help me. And I pray that it will help me in the future. And I think it ought to help you in this respect.

And you ought to write it in your Bible if you have particular trouble along this line. And that's 1 Corinthians 4, 7. And this is what it says. For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou gotten but what thou didst not receive? And if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hast not received it? Who maketh thee to differ from another? Truth, my dear, must be revealed to the heart in Christian growth, just as it must be revealed to the heart in Christian conversion.

And we must remember that in the eyes of other Christians, we differ from them as much as they differ from us. Remember that. In the eyes of other Christians, we differ from them as much as they differ from us.

O may the Spirit help us to see with eyes, and feel with our hearts, and sympathize with their principles, and with their prejudice. I didn't say compromise with their principles, or compromise with them. Sympathize with them.

The Spirit must teach their hearts. Valiant for truth must beware of that ruffian in his own heart called inconsiderate. Don't you think Bunyan was wise? Didn't he have a keen perception of things? Is it any wonder Spurgeon says, pluck old Bunyan anywhere, for out of his veins flowed Bibbuline? That's why, because he had this keen insight.

Well, the third ruffian that attacked Valiant in his pursuit of propagating and defending and contending for the truth was pragmatic. And I'm not sure that I grasp Bunyan's mind on this picture. I'm inclined to believe that that word then has a different meaning than it does now, but I'm not sure.

I'm inclined to think so. But the picture, I think, is this. It's this fellow that's always setting everyone straight on every little point.

I've had people come to me after meetings, and they've missed the whole message. And they call my attention to some little point. And believe it or not, sometimes they're right.

I was wrong in what I said. But it's a great joy to set you straight. There's people listen to message, and they hear one little point off, and they're turned off of everything else.

And they miss a great deal. You see, truth does not stand on points alone, but principles. And the truth does not dwell in the latter.

Truth is not only to set others straight. Truth is not only to set others straight, but it's like charity, it must begin at home. And all that I'm saying is that truth suffers many times at the hands of Mr. Wowhead.

Truth suffers in the hands of Mr. Inconsiderate and Pragmatic Man, who's never satisfied, he's never pleased, he's never thankful for 99% of what you said right. Always setting his superiors straight. And this man, intending to be a friend of the truth, many times he's the enemy of the truth.

I think of that vivid picture when Luther comes out to preach this morning, and they're falling down, breaking the idols, and they're breaking the windows. Luther stood there that morning and says something like that passage I read to you in Zechariah, Lord deliver me from my enemies and my friends. I want you to note well something, that Bunyan by showing and warning us of these enemies, with the end, and don't miss this point, and this is not my point tonight.

Bunyan's purpose was not to discourage us from being valiant for the truth. It is only to point out our enemies as we seek to be valiant for the truth. And the reason we know that he doesn't discourage us, but rather he's meant to encourage us, is clearly seen in the further part of the metaphor.

The fact that Bunyan, let me say it again, the fact that Bunyan is pointing out these enemies that we face in our battle for the truth, is not to discourage us, but to encourage us in our warfare that we might be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The first time that we see valiance in Pilgrim's Progress, he's standing at the

mouth of a place that Bunyan calls Dead Man's Lane. And he's standing there with his sword in his hand, and his face is all covered with blood.

And here are his words, I'll give you his words. He's speaking of wild head, inconsiderate, and rougher. These people have attacked him.

And here's the words of valiance. They have left upon me, as you see, said the bleeding man, some of the marks of their valor, and have also carried away with them some of mine. And I believe, seriously, at least in part, in like manner St. Paul, with some of the blood of Barnabas still on his hands, certainly must have learned something by the time he wrote, Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long this kind.

Charity vaunteth not, envieth not. Charity vaunteth not itself, is not tossed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, seeketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. Charity rejoices in the truth, beareth all things, bleedeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never fails, but where there be prophecies, they shall fail, where there be tongues, they shall seek, where there be knowledge, it shall be vanished away. And certainly Paul must have thought of Barnabas in part when he gave us that. You see the same thing in the epistle of John.

And I suppose that John could not very well write what he wrote in this epistle without thinking of the time when he wanted the Lord to call down fire from heaven and devour some people who were not just in the way. And surely when John wrote these words in the first epistle of John chapter 3, and this, in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil, whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. And some of these people who do not dot eyes with us are our brothers nevertheless.

For this is the message that we heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother, and wherefore slew he him, because his own work for evil, and his brother righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we've passed from death unto life, and one of the reasons we know is this.

We know we've passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. And you read it on over to verse 19.

We hereby we do know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. He's talking about love. And in the fourth chapter, verses 7 to 12, you see exactly the same thing.

You see, I think that's key to this metaphor. You say, well where did I get the key to the metaphor? Well, basically from Alexander White, but other than that, there's another place I got it. You see, the key to this metaphor, why it bore witness was my spirit.

The key does not hang on the outside doorpost of my spirit, but rather it hangs on the inside wall of my place of repentance. And you can take that as a confession or what you will, but my motive is not to give you a confession. My motive is to speak to young men and young women about these three principles that I'm trying to hold up tonight, to spare you some of the mistakes that some of us have made.

How many times have you trespassed against humility? How many times have you trespassed against love? In unadvised sermons or conversations or wild, whirling words, yes, and without even shame or remorse or self-condemnation. My dear, none of these passages that I pointed out, either St. Paul or St. John or Bunyan, were ever written without remorse or self-contempt. And may I add that they are never read or understood without a little of the same feeling.

Now let me take you further in Bunyan's metaphor to encourage you. And I'm bringing you toward the end of the metaphor now. And this is where we see Mr. Great Heart, and he's speaking to Valiant for Truth.

And I quote, Then said Mr. Great Heart to Valiant for Truth, Thou hast worthily behaved thyself, let me see thy sword. And Valiant showed him his sword. And when he had taken it in his hand, he looked thereupon awhile, and the guide said, Ah, it is a right Jerusalem blade.

It is so, said Valiant, let a man have one of these blades in his hand, and with a hand to wield it, and skill to use it, that he may venture upon angels with it. It's edge will never blunt, it will cut flesh and bones and soul and spirit and all. And what Bunyan is quoting practically is Hebrews 4.12 where it says, The word of God is quick and sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing the soul, the spirit, the joy, to the merit of the thoughts and the intent of the hearts and so on.

Ah, my dear friend, it is a wonderful blade to have in our hands. The sword. This sword was not forged in earthly fire, or it was not whitted on an earthly which stone.

The best of all, when soldiers of Jesus Christ have this sword gird about them, he is able to go against himself, within, and against his worst enemy. That's why it has two edges. We can go against ourselves with it, as well as our enemies.

And as Bunyan's metaphor, as in Bunyan's metaphor, his own wild-headedness, pride of heart. This sword is meant to go against that pride that's in our own heart. This sword is meant to cut that, to cut our own wild-headedness.

And then great heart went on to God said, Thou hast done well. Thou hast resisted unto blood, striving against sin. That's why we know these men were within.

Bunyan's talking about him striving against sin, unto blood, and that's that picture of Thou fighting with these enemies. It's his own heart. Thou hast resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Thou shalt abide with us. Come, go in and go out with us, for we are thy companions, said Mr. Great Heart. And my dear friends, this Jerusalem blade does have two edges.

It's like an Arabian, it should be like the Arabian warriors. You know, they shine their swords. The Arabian warriors shine their swords to such a shining point, that that's what they use for a mirror.

To dress for battle. They use their swords as a mirror to dress for battle. And my friend, if you use a sword as a mirror for yourself, you will be dressed for the battle against all the enemies of the truth.

Well, the last lesson from Bunyan's Mr. Valiant for Truth. And this shows that Bunyan wants to encourage us, not to discourage us to point out these enemies, but to encourage us to be valiant for the truth. The last encouragement, as I see, is in the last picture.

And I pray that it will encourage all of us, not only to be lovers of the truth, but also to be valiant for the truth. It's a picture drawn toward the end. And it's a picture of, a vivid picture of Christiana.

You know, it's a picture indeed, because it is the last time that she sees Valiant for Truth, before she crosses the river that has no bridge. But before I show you that picture, just let me review the first time she saw him. I'm going to tell you about the last time she saw him, just before she crosses the river that has no bridge.

But the first time she saw him, it was at that scene, right after he'd been in this awful battle with these three men, wild head, inconsiderate, and pragmatic. But as the blood, and I think she washed it off, if I remember correctly, as the blood was washed from this mean old man's head and his face and his hands, she saw beneath these bloody wounds a true and a brave, gracious-hearted soldier of the cross, dear old Christiana. You see, what she saw was what we all should know, that the heart is the man.

Many of these Valiant for Truths have made many mistakes, and many of us have many scars from our mistakes. But she saw beneath that heart, as we should all see, that the heart is the man. And she lived long enough to know that.

And in spite of all the scars that were on him and the blood on his face, it was his love for the truth that got him into this bloody battle in the first place. It was his love for the truth. And she could never forget how, when she was introduced to Valiant, his exclamation and how he embraced her as he would his own mother.

When he burst out, the first time she met him, he burst out, and the book said, with his eyes full of blood. And this is what he said, Why, this is Christian's wife. What? And going on pilgrimage too? It gladdened my heart, said Valiant.

Good man, he was speaking of Christian, good man, how joyful will he be when he shall see Christiana and her children entering after her at the gate into the celestial city. You see, Valiant was not too busy. Valiant was not too busy to salute an old woman on the way.

And she could see in him that manly beauty of a young soldier. It gladdened her heart to hear him as it did his heart to see her on the way. And now their parting.

That was the first. Now I want to show you their parting. Which shows, and this shows the place that Bunyan put on being Valiant for truth.

He showed it by what he did at the end and at the river that has no bridge. At the river when the deaf noticed the post, he called it, came for her. That's the deaf call to take her home to glory.

We see the widow, now about to cross the river. The post had come, and she's now about to cross the river. You know what she does? She sets all of her companions aside, even Mr. Greyhorn, the guide.

You know who she left her children with? She left her children under Valiant's sword and shield. And her words to Valiant are these. And as she turned to him before she crosses the river, she said, I would also

entreat you to have an eye to my children.

She put everyone else aside. She said to Valiant for truth, I would also entreat thee. She had said things to others, but she said, I would entreat thee to have an eye to my children.

You see Bunyan's putting a premium on being Valiant for the truth. He's just pointing out some of the areas. And being Valiant for truth and Christian charity and unity is the difficult part.

How do we get along with Christians who differ with us, who hold different views about the atoned, about the application of the atoned? J.C. Rowe would not dot I's with all of us. Richard Baxter wouldn't. Richard Baxter didn't agree with John Owen on every point.

Luther and Calvin. And I'm not saying this in any way to discourage anyone from sound, full or doctrinal understanding as expressed in the five points of Calvinism. My point is not that at all to discourage that.

My point is only to deal with an attitude and a disposition of those who hold them to others, not with an idea, not to speak to people about it or preach. If it's blessed you, preach it, it will bless others. And we cannot lend sympathy to error.

We cannot countenance it. Because if we do, we'll betray our Lord and we'll betray the book. That's not what I'm talking about.

And I hope you get it. There are times, and many times, we must put a fresh boat on the door for truth. And all the times we must be aware of some of these people who fly this flag of peace and friendship and look too kindly on error, especially if it's committed by some clever guy, some clever fellow.

They want to put approval on it. I'm not talking about that. I think the best way to promote whippers, I think the best way to promote unity is to promote truth.

So don't misunderstand it. We will not be a friend of the truth by yielding to each other's errors. And we won't be a friend of the truth by yielding to the errors that we don't agree with.

But it's our attitude toward that. Keep our priorities in order. I think there are some truths where we cannot bend or countenance in any form or fashion.

But there are other truths where reasonable men differ. And I think we ought to have a different attitude toward the men themselves, not to what they hold. Our attitudes, our actions, our words about those Christians who differ with us, I believe should be somewhat of what Paul expressed in Philippians.

I think this is a good attitude to have, I believe. I don't think I'm resting this text to read it in the context of what I'm trying to say. Philippians chapter 1, verse 15 to 18.

Notice his attitude. Knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel, what then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice. Yea, and will rejoice.

I suppose when I'm preaching on evangelism or trying to set before people the difference between Arminian evangelism and historic, biblical evangelism, I suppose after the meeting one of the questions I've been asked more than any other time, what about Billy Graham? That's a favorite question. And I think it's important how you answer that question. I don't know how you answer it, but I'll leave him alone.

I don't believe anybody gets saved by error. But with all these people, there's always, and if anybody gets sucked in amongst all that, not putting a blanket approval on his methods, but I don't go around banging him, especially with unsaved people. I might talk to you privately about some views about it, and I might spend some time with you in detail, but I say I would not think.

I got some friends that's unsaved that call me up on the phone, that I've witnessed too in a long time, and says, turn on your television, Billy Graham's on. I say, thank you. How is it, a pretty good sermon? Yeah, turn it on.

I'm not going to tell him, turn it off. I don't say a word. You can do as you like.

You do as you like. It's a very perplexing situation that we live in in our day. And I believe God has been gracious to many of us.

I believe those of you here, those of you who sit in sound Presbyterian churches, Reformed Baptist churches, are a privileged people. I believe those of you who God in his providence has passed many banner books across your path, you've been privileged. It's been a providence of God, and you ought to give thanks.

But you know, there's some of your friends who never saw a banner book. There's some of your friends who never heard a sermon. They ain't never heard one sermon yet from a true Calvinistic foundation.

Well, I want to encourage you to be valiant for the truth. I trust that you find yourself tonight a lover of the truth. We're here tonight from many different backgrounds, different churches, different stages of doctrinal understanding.

And the question should be kept in our mind that I pointed out in the message. It doesn't matter where you are along the line. If you'll remember that verse that I pointed out, it'll be a great help to you.

And the verse is this, 1 Corinthians 4.7. You ought to memorize that verse. You people who have especially trouble with a polemic spirit, too polemic, you ought to memorize the verse. You ought to ask yourself that question.

Who is it that made me differ from another? Oh, tonight, dear heart, some of you have never fallen before the truth as it is in Jesus. May I encourage you all tonight, Christian or non-Christian, to be a seeker after the truth. May I encourage you to be a lover of the truth.

May I encourage you to be a defender of the truth. And if this is the last time I ever address this Baptist conference, I trust that I would be remembered by encouraging people to be defenders of the truth. To be seekers after the truth.

To be dispensers of the truth by light, by lips, and by good, sound literature. And be mindful of these enemies that I've pointed. Be mindful.

I speak to you after at least 15 or 20 years in that particular struggle. And I was 10 years a Christian at least before I ever heard. And I know how bitter I fought the truths of grace.

So bitter was I that I couldn't eat at a table with my own brother if we were going to talk about religion. May God have mercy on me for as angry as I got at the truth. And tonight I speak to you on behalf of that truth that I was so bitter against.

And therefore when I look at a man who doesn't hold these truths, I say, there I am, but for the grace of God. And because I was a drunk and I see a drunk, I can say in my heart, there I go, but for the grace of God. When I see somebody who doesn't understand the truth, if he's a Christian, I can say, there I am.

When old John brought some of Aaron Dean's books to me, and I wanted to burn them and throw them out. You tell him next time you see him if you see him before I do. Some of you come to this conference.

This is the first time you've been in a conference like this. Some of you young preachers have got some encouragement. Some of you are going back to those places where this is not preached.

What you've heard this week that's kind of preachy. Even the doctrinal foundation of it is not held. Some of you are going back to friends.

I pray that you'll be valiant, but I also pray that you'd watch those enemies that are within, wild headedness, inconsiderate, and pragmatic. May God, our Heavenly Father, who is truth himself, and Jesus Christ who was truth personified, and the Holy Ghost who is the spirit of truth, be our portion to be lovers of it. Defenders of it.

Propagators of it. But to do it with the enemies that accompany people who are zealous for it.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29997.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-c-reisinger/mr-valiant-for-truth/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net