

From the Pulpit of Keith Miller
Meadowbrooke Church
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Stand Firm with the Belt of Truth

Ephesians 6:14a

Introduction:

October 31st marks the 507th anniversary of the protestant reformation when a Catholic monk by the name of Martin Luther wrote ninety-five complaints concerning the Roman Catholic Church and nailed those complaints to the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg in 1517. Little did Luther know that his complaints would be taken down, translated into multiple language, and mass produced through the newly invented printing press.

It was because of what Martin Luther was reading and studying in his Bible that he wrote his complaints for the purpose of debating and dialoging over what he believed were inconsistencies with the teachings of the church compared to what the Bible actually taught. Eventually, on April 17, 1521, Luther would have to appear before the Diet of Worms to give account for the vast number of texts, treatises, letters, and tracts calling into question the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

It was at the Diet of Worms Luther was given the option to recant and repent, and if he did so, he would be welcomed back into the Church. If Luther refused, he would be branded a heretic and burned at the stake. Luther requested an adjournment to pray and formulate an appropriate response. The meeting was reconvened the next day on April 18th and it was on that day that Luther delivered a speech that would forever affect the Church. Luther was only permitted to give a short and simple answer whether he would retract his teachings or stand by them; here is the most well-known part of his answer before the Diet of Worms:

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.

Luther was not burned at the stake over his answer but understood that his answer could have resulted in his death. What did happen was he had to go into hiding and change his name and appearance for a while, for his own safety. Luther delivered his great speech because there was a truth greater and more important than his own safety, for what he was most concerned about was not what the Pope declared to be true, but what God's word said and how everything else compared to what the Word of God said.

We live in a different time compared to the day Luther lived! However, if you are a Christian, you a part of a community known as the church of Jesus Christ, and therefore are a people of one book, and that book is the Bible which contains within its pages the truth of how it is we are to live.

When Paul wrote his epistle to the Ephesians, he did so while in prison. Before the apostle was the presence of a roman soldier, and it was with the armor a soldier of Rome wore that Paul would become all too familiar.

What is the Belt of Truth?

Paul lists six pieces that belong to the armor of God, seven parts if you include Paul's statement on prayer in 6:18-19 and that there is no power apart from a dependance upon God in prayer. The first piece of armor that he begins with is a belt.

The belt was an important part of a Roman soldier's armor, not because it made it look better, but because it served two primary purposes: it was used to tuck in and keep the soldier's garments from tripping him up, and it was used to hold the sheath for one's sword. It is worth noting that the belt also served to display a soldier's military status and rank. The belt went underneath the armor, while remaining visible so that it was obvious he was ready to fight.

As the warrior's belt was critical for his readiness in battle, truth is essential to the Christian life. If we are going to stand in the might of the Lord, if we are going to be able to stand firm against the devil's schemes, and if we are going to have any hope in resisting on the evil day, truth is essential to the Christian life. It is the nature of our God and the character of His Word:

“Teach me Your way, Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name.” (Ps. 86:11)

“God is not a man, that He would lie, nor a son of man, that He would change His mind; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19)

“The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and just is He.” (Deut. 32:4)

Truth is not only essential to the Christian life; it is the center of the Christian faith! Think about it, God's fullest and most perfect expression of His faithfulness and character is in His Son, Jesus: **“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power”** (Heb. 1:1–3a). If you are a Christian, you follow Him who said: **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me”** (John 14:6b).

Think about what Paul is saying in Ephesians 6:10-14; the only way you will be able to resist the father of lies (the devil) is by putting on the full armor of God, beginning with the belt of truth! But, dear Christian, what is the belt of truth?

I want you to think about the significance of where the belt is placed. It is the first part of the armor that is put on and it is the one piece that is tightest and closest to your person. I do not believe I am reading too much into this when I say that I believe the belt of truth is more than just the Word of God (although it certainly is that), it is also our new identity now that we are in Christ! We who were once dead in our sins are now alive with Jesus (2:4-5), and now He is head over His church which we are now a part of (1:22). We are now His body (1:23), Jesus is our peace (2:17-18), we are His temple (2:21), because Jesus now dwells in our hearts through faith (3:17).

Through Christ, we are one body, sealed by one Spirit, called in one hope by one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all... (4:4-7). Our identity is now in Jesus, which means that He is our truth! This is why, more than any other book in the entire Bible is the phrase “in Christ” repeated more than thirty times to describe where it is the Christian finds his/her identity than in the epistle to the Ephesians!

Listen, to put on the belt of truth is to do what we read in Romans 13:14, “**Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**” To put on the belt of truth is to identify with the Jesus who said: “**Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple**” (Luke 14:27). If you are a Christian, His truth is now your truth.

Why is the Belt of Truth Important?

To put on the belt of truth is to be so identified with Jesus that you are freed up to, “**walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called**” (Eph. 4:1). To put on the belt of truth is to stand on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles with Jesus Christ as your eye-opening, mind-captivating, and life-shaping cornerstone (2:19-20). To put on the belt of truth is to walk in love, “**just as Christ loved you and gave Himself up for us, and offering and sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma**” (5:1-2). To put on the belt of truth is to subject yourself under the cleaning water of God’s word (5:26). To put on the belt of truth is to identify with the Lordship of Jesus by doing what He says (see Luke 6:46).

We seem to live at a time in society when “my truth” trumps all other truths. Since the days of Martin Luther, we have moved closer and closer to redefining truth with every form of media invented to give us more knowledge and make the world more accessible to us. Now, do not misunderstand me, God gave us a brain to grow in our understanding and the different forms of media has made available to us some really great things, but it has also been used to pervert knowledge and truth.

Think for a moment of how the different forms of media have changed our lives. The printing press paved the way for the enlightenment and modernity when truth was measured by reason. The worldwide web paved the way for postmodernity beginning in the 60s until our present day with the conviction that reason and the human intellect is no longer the arbiter of truth, but also includes the emotions and intuition as the arbitrators of truth to the point when we now have our own truth. Now, with the invention of AI, we are entering a new era and the way our society measures truth and morality, like modernity and postmodernity, will never be the same.

Our world is changing so rapidly and so profoundly, but there is one thing that has not changed and cannot change, and that is this simple fact: all truth is God's truth. Truth belongs to our Creator and the lies belong to the devil. Our identity is in Jesus who is, according to the Bible: **"...the same yesterday and today, and forever"** (Heb. 13:8).

Our world is changing, but not so with our God! He remains infinitely good, infinitely just, infinitely holy, infinitely wise, and is equally a God of love and mercy in infinite measure! He alone, in our ever-changing world, remains always true, always honorable, always right, always pure, always lovely, always commendable, always excellent, and always praiseworthy (see Phil. 4:8). The God who chose you before dirt was invented, He who redeemed you with His blood, and the One who has sealed you for the day of redemption **DOES NOT CHANGE!**

"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, the sons of Jacob, have not come to an end." (Mal. 3:6)

"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." (Jas. 1:17)

"God is not a man, that He would lie, nor a son of man, that He would change His mind; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19)

So, if the One who is truth does not change, how is it and why is it that some in the church feel the need to mold and shape what the Bible teaches to what our ever-changing world defines as true? So here is the rub. If you are a Christian (or thinking about becoming a Christian), you follow Jesus who said: **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me"** (John 14:6b). As Lord over your life, He will make demands upon your life for His glory and your good, to put the belt of truth on is to walk in light of your identity as a Christ-follower. You cannot and you will not **"walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"** (4:1), if you are not putting on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 13:14).

Because Jesus is the cornerstone of His church and the apostles and prophets are Her foundation, we, as His church, are **"a pillar and support of the truth"** (1 Tim. 3:14-15) in a world that does not know the Truth, because it does not know Jesus. Sam Storms said of our enemy: "Satan will always flourish in the midst of theological ignorance."