

Ephesians #02: Ephesians 6:14a

Ephesians

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Bible Text: Ephesians 6:14
Preached on: Monday, December 13, 2004

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Our text words this afternoon are Ephesians 6:14a.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,

We wish to consider with you the first piece of the Christian soldier's armor, being girt about with truth. In the first place, the foundational importance of truth; second, the final authority for truth; and third, the modern challenge against truth. The Christian soldier girt about with truth: its foundational importance, its final authority, its modern challenge.

A few weeks ago, dear friends, we have seen the necessity of a child of God living in this world a life of fighting and wrestling, a life of warfare against Satan and his demons. We have heard the apostle say we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, against the realms of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, and we have seen that the apostle says because we don't have the might we need against these invisible enemies, we ought to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. The only way we can be strong and be powerful in his might is to be girt with the whole armor of God. As a prisoner himself, Paul, no doubt, has seen many Roman soldiers cloaked with armor from head to toe, and the Spirit has used that impression in his mind to inspiringly pen the picture, the symbolic picture that the Christian soldier must be similarly girt. Were he not so outfitted, the Christian soldier would not be able to stand against all the enemies he confronts without and within.

Now the apostle says today the first piece of armor, the basic piece of armor, the foundational piece of armor is a very small piece but a very essential piece, a piece which ties together the whole of the Christian's armor, that is, the girdle of truth. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." A girdle, you know, at that time was on a male figure a wide belt or a sash, as it were, used to gather up and bind together the long flowing garments that were worn. So when a man sat down and relaxed, he would take off his girdle but the moment he wanted to do something, the first thing he did was gather his clothes together, fix them in position, and bind them with his girdle. If he didn't do that, of course, wherever he would go, whatever he would do, he would trip on his

long flowing robe. He would be stepping on them all the while. So Paul paints for us a very vivid picture with this first piece of armor. He says, as it were, imagine a soldier tripping on his feet with his garments flapping around his legs. If he were not to wear a girdle, he would have to try to hold his garments up with one hand and fight with the other and therefore how essential it is to have a girdle of truth to wrap around him to keep him a firm fixed position so both hands may be freed, a shield in one hand and a sword in the other, to go out at the signal of attack. Other Scripture references speak similarly. You recall Jesus saying to his disciples to be watchful and ready, let your loins be girded about and your lights burning. To be girt with a girdle means to be ready for action.

Now Paul says the only way to be ready for action is to be girt about with truth. He calls the girdle the girdle of truth. What does he mean here, my friends? Well, he means in the very first place to gird up the loins of your mind with truth, that is, objective truth, the word of God as it is must be known, must be understood in some measure to hold together the believer, to give him courage and fixedness and firmness to fight. But secondly, not only must our loins of our mind be girt with truth, he also means to say gird up the loins of your heart with truth for truth must be known not only in our minds, it must also be bound round about our hearts. It must become subjective and personal truth taught to our souls by the Holy Spirit. It must be an experiential girding about. And thirdly, we must be girt about with truth in the practice of our lives. The girdle is not just something to be looked at but it must be worn. It must not be carried loosely in hand but it must be buckled and clasped round about us. It must have its power and its effect day by day in the life of the believer. And so Paul would say, "Girt yourself round about with the girdle of truth in mind, in heart, in practice."

Now in the further pieces of armor, we will see very clearly that we need experiential reality in our lives to carry out the Christian soldiery, and thus we may believe that here Paul's emphasis lies on the word of God as the source of truth, and out of that truth that girds a believer round about, all the other pieces of armor effectively function. Or to say it another way, it is only when our lives and hearts are immersed in Holy Scripture, it is only when we are students of Scripture with both mind and heart, it is only when we are grounded on the word of God, when the word of God is our source of authority, is our compass to lead us over the storms of life, is our fire by which we warm ourselves, and our honey by which we taste the sweetness of that word, is only when the word of God is our centerpiece that holds our lives together that we are truly girt about with truth.

So the apostle said let us stand, first of all, by having ourselves girt about with truth both in mind and in heart. In mind because we need to master the truth to face day-by-day realities, but in heart because we need the truth to master us. Shall we really live those realities? Oh, my dear friends, by grace may you master the truth but also may the truth master you. Do you have a grasp of the truth in your mind? Does it guide your lifestyle? But also does it govern you? Does it hold you in its grip? Does it influence your thinking patterns? Does it carve out your whole outlook of life? Are you really girt about? Are the pieces of armor of your life and the details of your life, are they really fixed together in order by the word of truth?

You see here what Paul is saying, he is saying if we aren't fixed, if we aren't held together by the word of truth, if we aren't students of Scripture in the best sense of the word, we are going to be tossed to and fro with all kinds of doctrines, and with all kinds of sources whether it be radio preachers, or shallow books of Christendom, or other forms in which individuals convey truth to us and even try to teach us Christian truth. If we aren't well-versed and well-immersed and don't have our loins girt about with truth, Paul is saying we will become like soldiers with garments flapping about their legs. We will not be put together. We will not have firmness. We will not have readiness. We will not be sober, watchful and ready, but we will be like unsure soldiers, tripping over our feet, tossing to and fro, asking like Pilate, "What is truth?"

Thus Paul begins by teaching us the importance of truth and that's something, of course, that today the world doesn't want to hear about. The word "dogmatic" or "dogma" is a very unpopular word in our day. If you call someone dogmatic, you are, according to today's terminology, making a negative statement about that person. The world doesn't want to hear dogmatic statements. It doesn't want to hear that black is black and white is white. But Paul says if we really be true soldiers in the army of King Jesus, we must know where we stand, we must know what we believe, we must be firm and fit soldiers in truth and the only way, my friends, to be firm in truth is to be immersed in the holy word of God. Thus the apostle says this is foundational to all else.

Do we know the truth? And my dear friends, may I ask you this afternoon: are you girt about with truth intellectually, experientially, practically? Are you seeking grace to live the truth? Is the truth bound upon your hearts? Have you learned something of what Christ said, "If you continue in my word, ye shall be disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"? Isn't that what Paul's saying here? Freedom from Satan and his demons, freedom from the principalities and the powers and the rulers of darkness in high places comes from continuing in God's word and knowing the truth of that word and having that truth bound upon our hearts, and having that truth free us from the powers of the enemy.

The truth shall make you free. That's why John Bunyan, as I told you I believe once before, has Christian reach the word of truth, that Satan is ready to cast his last blow to destroy Christian in the Valley of Humiliation, it is the word of God that saves the life of Christian. My dear friends, when a sinner is about ready to perish experientially, when he loses all his righteousness and is stripped down and is naked and empty, what is it that God uses to set a sinner free? What is it that speaks him out of bondage into liberty? What is it that nourishes him and gives him courage? Well, is it not that greater Joseph who say, "Fear ye not, I will nourish you"? And is it not his nourishing hand through the word of truth, through the precious Holy Scriptures that come home with power and authority to the life of the lost sinner, making him to become as a little child, to be receptive to the truth of God, and it is this truth that breaks through the bands of unbelief and through the powers of darkness, this truth sets him free?

And you know, dear children of God among us, that is a lifelong experience for the believer. Oh, haven't you had times in your life where you thought the truth would set

you free but you came again into bondage and into unbelief? And the fear of man again exceeded the fear of God and you began to groan and wrestle under renewed bondage? And then the Lord came with his word again and all the enemies fled and your soul was set at liberty once more, and you felt the foundational importance of truth. Oh, you see, when you are not girt about with that word of God, what are you but, as it were, a slave in the hands of Satan, with all the other pieces of armor, as it were, flapping in the wind, useless? You can't wage war against sin. But when he comes and he brings his word and his word is fixed in your mind and you can gainsay the archenemy with the very authority of the word of God, and all that is mixed up and all that is foot-catching and all that is loose and disorganized in your life comes together, and the Holy Spirit enables you through his enlightenment to gird yourself about with truth and to slay the archenemy, to cast him off for a time. And therefore Paul says, "Stand. Stand by becoming as little children girt about with truth."

Scripture, my friends, must be our final authority. To be girt about with truth is not only of foundational importance for our minds, for our hearts, and for the practice of our lives, but Scripture must also be the final authority for all our dealings, for all our viewpoints, for all our convictions. And later when Paul deals with the sword and other pieces of armor, we will see the necessity of a subjective realization of God's word of truth but here we must emphasize that the final authority for truth is the objective standard of the Bible. We must recognize that God's "thus saith the Lord" from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 must be our bulwark of defense, and we are not to minimize Scripture as an objective standard by which we rally around to find our source of truth, to find the molding of our opinions, and the guidance of our lives.

And isn't this exactly what is the trouble so much today in modern and shallow Christendom? Even in Protestantism, much of Protestantism has lost that great victim of the Reformation of the original Protestantism, Sola Scriptura, Scripture alone. So today the churches of modern age are losing their authority. They don't have a "thus saith the Lord" to back up their teachings. They don't have a standard of final authority. They don't have a [unintelligible] to the house of God that separates the authority of God and his house from the authority of the world and its entertainment. And do you suppose that that could be exactly why the world today and much of Protestantism is floundering in a quandary of strife with authority? When scholars or laymen or pastors in those churches begin to teach their people that Genesis 1 through 3 may not be historical, that certain books of the Bible may be misplaced or may not be inspired after all, that certain pieces of Scripture contradict others, my friends, you lose the authority of the word of God, you lose the uniqueness and the validity of the calling of the church of God, you lose the standard flag of all truth, "thus saith the Lord," through the written word, the Bible pointing to the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when you lose that authority and the world begins to compete with the church but also the church competes with the world, then you've got to match the world's forms of entertainment and drawing powers to bring people into the church, and so you begin to reduce the sermonic centrality of the church and instead of sermons and instead of prayers you begin to bring in other forms of entertainment into the house of God to

compete with the world, but all the while you are slipping in the authority of the truth of God. And granted, we don't have that problem yet in our churches but, my friends, we are warned by the apostle to be very well-versed in why we believe in the centrality of Scripture, and we have a problem indeed in other areas in which we neglect the centrality of Scripture, particularly for example, the area of the true Christian's experience, we need to always bring that too back to Scripture, everything comes back to the girdle of truth. And so the whole Christendom where rightly lived will come back to the word of God. As Martin Luther said so simply so many years ago, if you can't find your experience back in the word of God, it is satanic and not godly, not inspired by the Holy Spirit. We need, my friends, a critical, crucial standing unequivocally on the holy word of God. And why? Precisely because, the apostle says, of the powers that come against us. Satan has the biggest mind in this universe apart from God and only the power of the word of God than our mere flimsy minds can defeat this archenemy.

And so what damage, what damage has been done in our day in which much of Protestantism has reverted back to where Protestantism has emerged from which was to set up the standard of God's word? When we make human philosophies, human opinions, human feelings, human people to be our sources of authority, we undermine the word of God. Nothing can take the place of this girdle of Holy Scripture. Not even the church. The churches must expound the word of God. The church cannot take the place of the word of God, that was the problem in Protestantism's day when it conflicted with Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholicism said we won't put the divine one into the hands of the people or good books. We'll keep them dependent upon the priests for their interpretations, for the individual believer is not competent enough to form his own opinions based on the word of God. So the church becomes the authority and not Holy Scripture, and so Roman Catholicism came to that horrendous doctrine which said the 66 books of Scripture are inspired only because the church has declared them to be so, and Reformers said God forbid. The 66 books are inspired in themselves, they are living books and the church only recognizes their inspiration. The authority lies in Scripture itself and the truth only moves out of that authority to declare what the word of God says. The church is authoritative, in other words, only in so far as the church is biblical, and thus we don't teach two streams of authority as Roman Catholicism does, Scripture and the church.

The church, too, must be subjected to Holy Scripture and, my friends, we are in great danger of forgetting this great truth. You know, when we saw Friday evening persecuted Christendom and the price that would sometimes be paid to just have a copy of Holy Scripture, oh, how good that is for us to realize the danger of taking Scripture for granted. We have the most valuable gift in all the world and we have the word of God that points us to the unspeakable gift of the Christ of God and, my friends, we need to live, we need to have this be our authority, we need to live by the word of God. And maybe we don't have many in our circles and hopefully none who say the word of God is uninspired, and we don't have people wrestling, although it may be closer than you think. We don't have people wrestling with certain parts of Scripture whether they be inspired or not, still we may very well have the problem that we don't put into practice the authority of God's word and so we walk around and we say to one another, "What do you think of So-and-

so?" Or, "What do you think of that message?" But we view it as coming from a man and we go and ask ourselves, "What do you think of the truth of God?" Whatever happens, you see, whatever it proposes, everything, you see, that is scriptural ground.

Now that doesn't mean that you can take every little detail alike and you can bring it to the Bible and find a direct answer, but the principles of Scripture will give you guidance in every area of life, and when you don't do that, you will go in one of two directions, you will go in the direction of modern Christendom which strips Scripture of Scripture and of its own authority and removes the "thus saith the Lord" out of Scripture itself and treats Scripture as a document of literary intelligence and of human penning, or you will go to the other side like the Pharisees and you will believe in all 66 books of the Bible but you will never get the drift of what they are saying, and you will never understand their principles, and you will build law upon law and precept upon precept, and you will begin to make laws about things that Scripture never intended to make laws, you'll begin to teach as Jesus said so clearly the doctrines of men and not the doctrines of God.

You know, legalism and modernism have in common the stripping of the authority of the word of God. Legalism doesn't ask what saith the Lord. Legalism asks what saith tradition. Legalism asks what saith my father and my grandfather, or that God-fearing great grandfather. It doesn't say what saith the Lord. So you build law upon law upon law and you make burdens so heavy to be borne that no man can bear them, not even the people that believe them, and that's just what Jesus said against the Pharisees. He says, "You make burdens so heavy to be borne that you point men the way but you don't walk therein yourselves." Why? "Because you make impossible situations of legalism." But the authority of the word of God demands a conservative walk, yes, indeed, but it demands something far more, not less, far more than Phariseism demands. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, he shall in no wise enter therein." Oh, my friends, sometimes we get the notion of godliness all mixed up and we think that godliness is a do this, do not this system, and we forget that godliness is living according to Holy Scripture.

So my friends, I ask you what is your authority day by day in your lives? What guides you and leads you? What forms your opinions and your ideas? What forms your judgments of things and of others? Are your loins girt about with the authority, the final authority of truth, the holy word of God? Do you see how important this is? The objective standard is very important. If you don't have the objective standard, what do you have? Well, you have feelings, human feelings being the standard, human feelings make the decisions. Human feelings will then become authoritative in the church of God and then you see the church of God resemble the world very closely. What's authoritative in the world? What's authoritative in the world is human feeling, and if the bulk of the people have human feeling for a cause, that cause is declared to be truth.

What better example can we give than the example of Judge Bork right now. There is one thing that will defeat Judge Bork if he's defeated and that is human feeling. Not truth. The truth of the way our governmental system is set up from all appearances, from all investigations conducted, that man ought to be nominated to the Supreme Court because

ideology is not to be the standard. That's what the law says, the authority of our Constitution. But what happens today? Human feeling comes into the court of authority and human feeling if it amasses a majority gets its way, and injustice is done and replaced by human opinion. But the same thing has begun in the church. The same thing can be done in the name of orthodoxy. Human feeling. "I just don't feel good about this or that." And you ask the person why and they don't know why. They have nothing to say from the word of God.

My dear brothers, these things James said ought not so to be. We need to have our lives, our opinions, our experiences, all of us, all our armor needs to be girt about with the truth of the word of God. What saith the Lord should be our authority. And only in this way, you see, can we stand a modern challenge upon truth. You know what that modern challenge is, I trust? The challenge of neo-orthodoxy. Neo-orthodoxy says this word of God is not the word of God in itself, it only becomes the word of God when the Holy Spirit speaks it to my heart, but if the Spirit doesn't speak it, it's a dead letter. It's not a living book. Now that may sound very close to the truth but, my friends, that is a very dangerous error because where does that place the fault? That places the fault in the book not speaking to us where the real fault is not in the book, the fault is in our hearts. The Bible is a living book. The Bible is a living standard of authority. The Bible is no dead letter but we are dead to the Bible by nature and we need the Holy Spirit to quicken our hearts to make us receptive to the word of God.

And thus we reject whole-heartedly the view of neo-orthodoxy which makes my experience ultimately authoritative because, you see, if the Bible is a dead letter until it speaks to my heart and then becomes the word of God, it only becomes the word of God inside of my heart. So what happens inside of my heart becomes the authority and that brings us into terrible subjectivism and, oh, my friends, the Reformers taught us differently and Scripture itself teaches us differently, Scripture tells us that all of Scripture is alive, all of Scripture is inspired. Inspired, the word inspired means to be breathed by the Holy Ghost, the Scriptures are brought to life, the very breath of the word of God. Scripture is alive and we need to be girt about with this great truth of Scripture, and you know, when Scripture then becomes our authority, my friends, then we don't have to reason or challenge the higher critics of our day who have taught the notion of biblical higher criticism and began to separate Scripture from Scripture to tell us what is inspired and what is not inspired. No, then we feel in our hearts the consummation of the church's confession that this word of God is the word of God from Genesis to Revelation, for we know by the powers of this word that this word is the very word of God.

So we uphold against the modern challenge upon truth what our forefathers have written in the Belgic Confession, we receive all these books, that is, the 66 books of Scripture, and these only as holy and canonical for the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith, believing without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the church receives and approves them as such, but most especially because the Holy Ghost witnesses it in our hearts that they are from God whereof they carry the evidences in themselves, that the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled. You see, the evidences are themselves. They are authoritative. They are

living books but we need the Spirit to witness it also to our hearts so that it becomes alive in our dead hearts. And God knows that we have need today of many true believers to stand up for his word and to show with their lives, with their experience, and with their beliefs, in the marketplace, in factories and offices, in the homes, thy word is truth. And Jesus says, oh, how desperately this society, this congregation offered you as an individual, need to be girt about with truth.

Let us sing first before a few words of application. Psalter 60, stanzas 1, 3 and 4,

"To Thee I lift my soul,
In Thee my trust repose;
My God, O put me not to shame
Before triumphant foes."

Psalter 60, stanzas 1, 3 and 4.

"To Thee I lift my soul,
In Thee my trust repose;
My God, O put me not to shame
Before triumphant foes.

Show me Thy paths, O Lord,
Teach me Thy perfect way,
O guide me in Thy truth divine,
And lead me day by day.

For Thou art God that dost
To me salvation send,
And patiently through all the day
Upon Thee I attend."

God's word is not merely contained in the Bible as neo-orthodoxy says in our day, God's word has not nearly become the word of God when it comes alive in our heart as Karl Barth has said and has so many followers of neo-orthodoxy saying in one way or another in our day, but the Bible is the word of God. All of Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine and reproof and instruction in righteousness. And that word "all" in the Greek language, my friends, means every single Scripture. Every letter of every word.

All of Scripture is authoritative and Peter tells us in that second great text, 2 Peter 1:21, approves divine inspiration, he tells us that holy men of God were moved, were borne along as they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the words, the very word of God. And in the Greek language, that word to be borne along, to be moved along is the word *phenoreo* and *phenoreo* has the very profound meaning, it has the meaning that the writer of Scripture was carried like a cork on the waves, and that all his experiences and all his background the Holy Spirit decided to use to carry him and to guide him to write word-

for-word the very mind of the Spirit. Not like a typewriter, indifferently, but the individual writer was very involved, he was borne along like a cork on the water, he was formed and moving in all his past experiences to be the exact writer of Holy Scripture that God wanted him to be, and so when he came to write, he wrote the very word of God. And so God used human instruments to carry his inspired word, and that word is now our authority. And by that word, my friends, even though we will not ever be unerringly inspired in the sense the Bible writers were, but that word ought also now to carry us along like corks on the water and on the waves of life, and we, too, need to be formed in faith and molded by the Holy Spirit, we, too, need to be borne along by the power of the authority of the word of God.

So I ask you, my friends, are you girt about with truth in this way? When you come to a storm in your daily life and the waves become high, do you resist the waves or do you float over the waves by immersing yourself in what the Lord says? You see, when the believer is in his right place, he is subject to the word of God; when he is in his right place, when temptation and trial may come, he learns to seek the Lord's will, he longs to discover God's will, he seeks to be a student of Scripture, and he longs for the application of Scripture that he may do what the Lord tells him to do. And if there is a hallmark of a true believer, it is certainly that hallmark that he longs to do the will of God. He longs to obey the word of God. He longs to live that word. He longs to float as a cork upon the waters of the word, to be formed and shaped and molded, to be borne along by the Holy Spirit, to be formed to an everlasting shore. When the corks of God's grace shall float into the sands of his everlasting communion and shall stand on the shores of everlasting bliss and see that although all the ways of life, God has guided, God has formed, God has led his child to come to the sands of everlasting glory to stand on the beachhead of the great throng in eternity to sing praises to the God of grace as oceans of love lie behind them and his fountains of mercies lie before them.

Oh, my dear friends, are you girt about with truth? Have you learned to love the truth? Have there been times in your life where you have searched the word of God and you have found an answer contrary to flesh and blood? Have there been times where you have found that answer, the authority of the word of God has given you the strength to say no to Satan? Times where you have been spared much sin because the authority of the word of God spoke to your heart thus saith the Lord? Or are you just carrying the Bible around with you in its wrapping and not in its substance? Do you read the Bible, my friends, day by day? But does it not guide your lifestyle? Does it not determine your decisions? Must it be said of you that you are carrying the Bible in one hand and the world in the other and that when it comes to the real test and the tire hits the pavement, you choose the world and not Scripture?

Oh, my dear friends, Satan comes with the Bible in his hand too. He believes in the Bible too. We saw that some weeks ago, even the devils believe and tremble, but the Bible has to be lived. The Bible has to be lived. Are you living Holy Scripture? Are you by grace students of Scripture? And if we are students of Scripture, my friends, we are studying Scripture. We are longing to know it more and more. We are praying for light in Scripture and we are seeking for the answers to our troubles and our needs in the pages of

Scripture. We are seeking to do as we have read to you from Proverbs 3, bind the truth about thy neck. "I give wisdom and understanding to wise men only through the channels of his truth."

Are you molding or trying to form Scripture according to your pleasures or is Scripture forming and molding you? It's one or the other. By nature we try to interpret Scripture, we try to twist Scripture to our own liking but the church and the individual believer must proceed on a doth saith the Lord. We must not make our decisions upon whims and fancies or things that we think are good or are not good because of what people might say, but we must go by what saith the Lord. And that's true, child of God, in the experience of your heart too. I am still afraid, my friends, that there are children of God, well-meaning children of God who are very elementary at best in their knowledge of Scripture and stumble over many things that they ought not be stumbling over, and have many misconceptions of their own experiences because they are not well-versed in the principles of holy Scripture.

And my dear children of God, you would be better lights on the hill, you would be better salt of the earth were you knowing more of what Scripture has to say to you, and that's why our forefathers, not the Roman Catholics, they discouraged it, but our forefathers, the Reformers and Puritans, spoke again and again and again to their congregations, I could give you a thousand quotations, "Read the word of God. Live the word of God. Love the word of God and read those books that can make you wise to salvation." Oh, saturate yourself with the truths of God and you will find in due season you see in greater rest and measure in mind, but above all we pray that it may be in heart by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, you will be more formed and molded like corks on the water to be obedient and submissive to the understanding of the word of God.

Are you girt about with truth? Do you sift your experiences through this word of truth? You know, sometimes we come very close to neo-orthodoxy, to [unintelligible], and very close to Quakerism, when with our experiences we lay the Bible to one side and we act like our experiences are more and above and beyond what the word of God says. That's what the Quakers believe. They use the Bible until they get the inner light, and when they get the inner light, they set Scripture aside. No, my friends, the Holy Spirit works through Scripture. Experiences come through the word of God. And when you have an experience that is not consistent with the truth of Scripture, you better question your experience and not the truth of Scripture for Scripture is the final authority.

We must be girt about with truth and we must then, of course, know the experience of that truth, of good truth, of scriptural truth, and experiential truth in our hearts. And what is that experience? Well, that experience is three things: coming to know my sin and misery, that's scriptural. Becoming a lost sinner before a holy God, that's the first thing that's scriptural. And the Lord works in our heart, he scripturally teaches us that we are without him in the world, that we are lost, we are children of the first Adam. We need to be delivered by the second Adam. And that the second thing that is scriptural, therefore, is the great emphasis of all the Scripture, the great bulk of Scripture is teaching us we need to be washed and cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to come

to know this Savior, that the only source of salvation. And a third thing that's scriptural is we need to learn to live lives of gratitude and thankfulness for so great a deliverance.

When our godly forebears put down all the experiential truths and we need to know in our hearts they didn't put down fancy things, my friends, they put down these three great things in our Heidelberg Catechism: misery, deliverance and gratitude. These are the things we must listen for when we hear your experiences, and these are the things that echo and re-echo the truth of Holy Scripture.

My dear friends, do you know being girt about with the truth of your misery, and of deliverance outside of yourself, and of a lifestyle of gratitude? Are you girt about with truth? The plain truth of Holy Scripture? The truth that the Reformers say right here is truth? The mystics came later and they said, "No, the truth is buried underneath the truth. You have to get behind the truth to get to the truth." The Refomers said, "No, this is the truth." Jesus said, "No Thy word is truth." Jesus didn't say, "Thy word behind the word is truth." He said, "Thy word is truth," 66 books of Scripture is truth.

Now some people have mistakenly said we need truth behind the truth. What they really mean by that is they mean that that truth has to be applied to our heart, but we don't need truth behind the truth of Scripture, you can't get behind the truth of Scripture because Scripture is truth. But truth must be applied. The plain truth must be powerfully applied. My dear friends, are you lovers and liverers of the holy word of God? Are you girt about with truth? Amen.

Greatest God, bless what we have heard and that may have served to eliminate several misconceptions in the minds of people, and that it may enhance appreciation for thy holy word as well as dependency upon thy Holy Spirit to apply thy word. O God, how desperately we need that light of that Spirit for by nature we have the living word of God before us, but our eyes are blinded to see its great great truth. But O Lord, open our blind soul's eyes that the scales from our eyes in Pauline fashion, and let us see thy word as it is on the pages of Holy Scripture that thy word which is alive in itself become alive also in our hearts. Let us be gift about with truth. We ask all these things in Christ's name and for his sake alone. Amen.