

WE STAND COURAGEOUSLY.

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The Apostle Paul said that he was a fool for Christ's sake. Regardless of how the world views Christians or speaks about them, all believers in the Lord Jesus take a stand for Him and for His glory. Little time remains for the speaking and urging of the gospel. Either we will die or Christ will return. Either way, we will not remain here forever. For the time that God has graciously given to His people, we should press it upon our souls to remember ways in which we must stand -- stand *courageously*. This essay will provide 6 ways that we must stand courageously.

1. We stand on Scripture.

As believers, we have the Word of God as our ultimate authority. God has revealed Himself and spoken clearly in the written Word. So evangelical Christians believe that the Bible is the perfect authority, it is infallible, inerrant, unfailing, and inspired. It is truly the ultimate authority. No other authority can ever trump the authority of God as He has revealed Himself through the Word. For this reason, the Bible is our sufficient authority. The Bible does not omit necessary matters for the Christian's life and godliness. As children of God walk through this world and endeavor to honor Christ in all things, he must remember that the Scriptures provide Him with the sufficient and God-given truth so that He can be adequate, equipped for every good work. Furthermore, as believers stand on Scripture, the hearts of regenerated saints receive comfort from this written Word. The Bible is powerful enough to comfort the soul and penetrating enough to expose sin. It provides strength, grace, power and joy in Christian living. So, then, the foundation of all things for the believer is the conviction that the Bible is sufficient. Therefore, we stand firmly and unarguably on the written revelation of God, the Bible.

2. We stand with Christ.

Like a compass whose needle always points north, so the Bible always points toward Christ. Every book and every chapter of Holy Scripture ultimately leads the soul to the need for, the sufficiency of, and the eternal blessings found in this Christ. For this reason, every Christian stands with Christ. Christ is the believer's guide as He tenderly and faithfully exposes the believer's heart to His truth in the Bible. The Lord Jesus is the Christian's goal for every child of God seeks to live for God's glory and to enjoy God as God enjoys Himself. The child of God must stand courageously affirming unequivocally that Christ is our God. Not just a prophet, or a teacher, or a man, or a god; but Jesus Christ exists fully as the everlasting God co-eternal and co-existent with the Father and the Spirit. Those saved from eternal wrath must stand courageously and stand courageously with Christ as Lord, Savior, King, and coming Judge.

3. We stand under God.

We submit ourselves happily and unconditionally to the blessed and almighty God of the Bible. He is the sovereign King over all things. And children of God can serve Christ as ambassadors for God as though God were making an appeal to sinners through the mouthpiece of His people. In obeying God and following Him unreservedly, believers cannot move away from, or shy away from, declaring Him as the one and only God. No other god exists. God alone rules as reigning King. He has shown Himself and proved Himself to be the Almighty God incessantly through all of history. His works and deeds declare His glory and elicit His praise! By the grace of this God, He has condescended to man so as to reveal Himself understandably and sufficiently to humans so that He can be known, adored,

worshiped, and proclaimed. Thus, we as Christians stand under God; not over God or next to God or in front of God. But we cheerfully submit to Him and happily bow to His supreme authority.

4. We stand for sinners.

Christians gather corporately on Sundays for edification and teaching from the Word of God and scatter to do the work of the Lord in proclaiming the gospel to the lost during the week. Thus, Christians gladly stand for sinners. We stand on corners for sinners. We stand in open plazas to preach the gospel of salvation. We have courageous and unflinching passions for sinners to see the enormity of their sin and run to the only Refuge who can heal their sin-sick souls, namely, Jesus Christ. Thus, we long for sinners to see their sin. Thus, we approach them and proclaim what God's Word clearly says regarding humanity, our hearts, and our wicked deeds and the condemnation that all sinners deserve. We are earnest for sinners to feel the nearness of eternity and the burden of getting right with God immediately. We have a great desire for sinners to escape divine wrath. No sinner shall ever escape everlasting punishment unless he is hidden in the sheltering haven of Christ's sufficient righteousness by faith alone. Indeed, this gospel is so great and so urgent that we stand boldly and stand proclaiming the gospel even if threats come and persecution erupts. We will suffer and die proclaiming life to sinners in desperate need of deliverance from coming wrath.

5. We stand to proclaim.

Christians must love their neighbors. This is what Christ calls every follower of His to do. We must love God with all that we are and love our neighbors so much that we will risk being mocked and ridiculed for the sake of loving them enough in caring for their eternal souls that we biblically and compassionately speak of Christ as the only hope for them in their lost condition. We will not shy away from speaking the full truth of the Word of God. Believers who have received the new birth will not shrink back from declaring the truth -- the whole truth -- of God's Word. Whatever culture may define, or re-define, an issue to be, the Bible is the Christian's ultimate authority and we do not cower away from speaking what God has unequivocally declared in the Word of God. Thus, we stand to proclaim objective, unchanging, authoritative, divine truth in a culture that even, tragically, wonders if there is *truth* in our day. In telling of God and of His great deeds, the people of God will not fade away. Hostile men may kill Christians and attempt to quench the growth of Christianity but it cannot happen for opponents have come and critiques have gone but the Word of God has still remained strong and unmoved through the ages. Believers in the Lord Jesus love Christ and love the lost so much that we cannot quiet ourselves from speaking of our great God and Savior. We have been so captivated by Christ's love, won by His atonement, and gripped by His beauty that we cannot be silent!

6. We stand till death.

At the conclusion of Paul's life, he declared that he had fought the good fight and he had finished the course. This is the way that all true believers long to finish their lives. We all want to finish well. We want to stand strong and courageously till Christ graduates us to glory. Nothing can hinder us. Nothing can make us flinch. We will not cower away, shy away, back down, be forced to silence. We can and we must remain submissive to our glorious Bridegroom who died for us when he told us to go and make disciples of all nations. So when the hostile hound believers, we must remember that we'll preach Him for He was hounded by rebels and yet He remained vigilant and focused. Though we may be harassed and ridiculed, even mistreated and misrepresented, we must preach Christ and Him crucified -- and bear a little of His sufferings. Even if treacherous opponents hate us and loving family members disown us, we will love them dearly and compassionately speak of Christ to them and prayerfully intercede in prayer for God to save them. When threats come, roadblocks stand in the way, and opponents abound, we will tell of the great tidings of salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even if the hostilities rise to such extremes that we die for our faith, we will not deny Christ nor will we shut up for His glory. Come to kill us and we'll die speaking much of Him!