

Finding Grace to Stand Firm

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[0:00] 2 Thessalonians 2, verses 13-17. But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers, loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved! Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Amen. I want you to picture in your mind a sailboat, a fairly large sailboat, something you would take out on the ocean or maybe Lake Michigan.

So what do you see? Well, you see the hull. That's the bottom part. And then you see a mast.

[1:25] And you see maybe a piece that's going across and where you can attach different sails to. All of that is above the water. All of that's very important.

One thing you don't see is buried in the hull. It's ballast. It's extra weight that gives the boat stability. You don't see the ballast, but it's one of the most important features of the hull boat because without it, without this extra weight, giving it a lower center of gravity, the boat is very unstable. It would rock back and forth and tip so badly that you really couldn't take it out in the water at all. Stability is everything if you're going to have a sailboat.

Businessmen want stability. As I was listening to the news a while back, I heard that many small businesses weren't creating jobs.

[2:28] And one reason for it was that they were unsure of what the government was going to do with taxes. They didn't know what their tax expense would be.

And since they weren't sure if there was going to be a sudden hike, it was difficult for them to create some sort of business plan where they could account for all their costs.

And so, in essence, they were paralyzed. Obviously, they wanted lower taxes, but anything was better than not knowing.

A good businessman can make money in any sort of economic climate, in all sorts of different circumstances, but without stability, without being able to somehow project and predict the future, well, they're pretty much paralyzed.

The Fed wants to create a stable currency. The UN wants to create stable relationships between countries.

[3:29] Stability is an important part of our life, and that's why the Apostle Paul told us to pray for our leaders that we might live quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and holiness.

It's hard to make progress spiritually when your life is in upheaval. It's hard to get your little sailboat further, closer to heaven, when your world is all in an unstable condition.

What you really need, if you're going to get your little sailboat of your life to heaven, is you need some ballast. You need some weight in your life to hold down your life, to keep it from rocking back and forth so you can make some progress.

And that's what Paul gives us in this short passage here tonight in 2 Thessalonians. Look at verse 15. So then, brothers, stand firm.

Stand fast. That's the exhortation that Paul gives numerous times in his different letters, and that's what he gives us here.

[4:46] This is what Jesus said in Matthew 24. Remember, we read this last week. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. But he who stands firm, that person who

stands firm to the end, he will be saved.

So what does it take to make it to the end? Well, you have to stand firm. You need some ballast. You need stability in your life. And so Paul takes the Lord's words in Matthew 24, and he applies them to the Thessalonians.

And so may God, the Holy Spirit, apply them to our own lives. Verse 17 says, this is what God does for us. May God encourage your hearts and strengthen you or establish you.

And so that's the central message of this passage. It's standing firm. So brothers and sisters, that's what this is about. It's about standing firm. Well, what are we supposed to stand firm on?

Where should we be making our stand? Where should we be stopping at? Well, it's the apostolic teaching, the traditions.

[6:02] Look again at verse 15. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings, the traditions we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

So where are we to make our stand? It's here. It's on the word of God. It's on the apostolic traditions.

It's the truth of Jesus Christ that he handed down to us through the apostles. So who wrote the Bible? Who wrote the Bible?

And there are some young children here. And if you've been catechizing your young children, maybe you've come to this question. Who wrote the Bible? Holy men who were taught by the Holy Spirit.

Holy men who were taught by the Holy Spirit. And that, whether you're young or old, is where you draw the line in the sand.

[7:02] And you say, this is where I'm making my stand. This is where I'm planting my feet. And so it's on the Spirit-inspired, God-breathed, apostolically-handed word of God.

And so Paul calls it the teachings, the traditions. Now, most of us have sort of a bad taste in our mouth when we think about traditions, when we're talking about the Bible.

We don't like that word because Jesus didn't have anything nice to say about the Pharisees and their man-made traditions. And so oftentimes when we hear that word traditions, we automatically have this negative connotation about it.

But there is a different kind of tradition. There's a different teaching. And it's this. It's the apostolic tradition of biblical truth that God gave to Jesus and Jesus gave to his apostles and his apostles by the Spirit wrote down in the word of God.

And it's upon these traditions that Paul says, hold on to these. You've received them. They've been handed to you. Now hold on to them. Stand fast here.

[8:22] This is where you stand. And it's so essential. It's so essential to take your stand in the right place.

You've heard of Custer's last stand. Maybe you're not sure what that's about. Colonel George Custer commanded a battalion in the Army 7th Cavalry Regiment.

And he made his stand at the battle. I forget which one it is now. He made his last stand on a hill that was too small for his forces. So he gathered his men.

He backed them up onto this hill and the hill was too small. And the hill in relationship to all the other action that was going on in the battle, it made it impossible for his men to take up adequate, good defensive positions.

And it was a terrible place to make a last stand. But that was the place he chose. And within an hour, Custer and his entire battalion of men were annihilated.

[9:31] He chose the wrong place to make a last stand. Well, we talked about Stonewall Jackson this morning in Sunday school.

You know, his mom didn't give him that name when he came out. He didn't say, oh, you're Stonewall. Stonewall. His name was Thomas. He earned the name Stonewall at the first battle of Bull Run.

The Confederate lines were crumbling under the Union attack. And Jackson made his last stand. And he took his stand on Henry House Hill. And he chose the backside of this rather large hill. And so, he was on the lower part. And as the Union troops came over the top, they rushed right down into the face of his men.

And there was intense pressure. There was intense fire. But he stood firm. And that's when he earned his nickname, Stonewall. He chose the right place to make a last stand.

[10:44] And he held. And it was by his valiant resistance that the Confederate army was actually able to snatch victory out of the jaws of defeat. They won because he took his stand at the right place.

And when he made his stand, he held. He held. If he would have retreated, the whole army would have been lost. But he held. And so, brothers, sisters, Paul says, this is where you have to take your last stand.

This isn't sinking sand. This isn't a bad location. This is the right place. This is the place where you take your last stand. And so, here's what you have to hold no matter what.

You have to hold on to the Word of God. And we can't back up. We don't retreat.

We stand like a stone wall. Despite whatever pressure. And if you do, Jesus says, you will make it to the end.

[11:48] You will get your sailboat to the harbor in heaven. If you take and you make this your last place to stand. So do you see what the Apostle Paul is exhorting all of you to?

He is exhorting you to a passionate love affair with the Word of God. It's a passionate love affair with the Word of God that this is where I'm going to be.

This is what I'm going to love. This is what I'm going to be about. This is what I'm going to hold on to and not let go. It's the Word of God. And so he says, stand here, love this.

And he isn't talking about a mere intellectual assent where you agree to these things intellectually. Mere intellectual assent won't give you the stability that you need in the day of temptation.

And mere intellectual assent won't give you stability when the man of lawlessness shows up and when the rebellion occurs. Mere intellectual assent won't give you stability when the storms of life come crashing against your sailboat.

[13:00] We're not talking about just some lightweight superficial attachment to the Word of God. Paul is talking about an emotional passionate love for the Word of God.

And someone say, you know what? But I know it all. I know it all. It's old hat. I've been a Christian for a long time.

It's like I've been waking up to the same lover for the last 40 years and I'm getting bored. I'm getting bored with the Word of God. There's nothing new it seems.

And I know that in times it can be like that for a Christian. But we need to have the words of Jesus that He taught, that He spoke, that He wrote to the church in Ephesus.

Remember your first love. Remember your first love. Remember the heights, the height from which you have fallen. If you're growing cold and your attachment to the Word of God is becoming merely nominal, well remember what you used to do and do those things.

[14:19] There are mines of glory that you have not dug down into. And there are heights of seeing Jesus Christ that you have not reached. And so remember what you have lost and run after it.

So Paul is exhorting us to this passionate love affair to love God with our minds. To use the abilities of our God-given mind to fire the furnaces of our heart so that when we read the Word of God there's more than just reading it.

There's an attachment. There's a love for it because if that is the kind of love that you have for the Word of God that will give you that kind of gritty determination that it takes to take a stand and to not let go.

So any successful marriage goes through rough spots. But it's the couples that have that gritty determination that makes it through to the end.

And so it's they who are determined to fight for love. They really want to love each other. They don't want to just coexist and cohabit.

[15:33] They don't want to just live in the same house. They want to have a marriage that is good. They want to fight for this love. And it's those kind of people that stand against outside pressure. And they stand against the winds of trouble that beats upon a family.

And it's the same with the word of God. An emotionless cohabiting marriage might stay together when times are good.

But it won't stay together when times are bad. An emotionless marriage with the truth might keep you coming to church when times are good. When your life is just going great, it's not a big deal for you to be here.

For you to say, I'm a Christian. But that kind of love for the word of God will not stand in the day of battle. It won't have the strength, the timbers that it needs to withstand the pressures that are all around it.

It won't give you the stability that you need to live your life. And so Paul says, in the face of everything, hold on.

[16:40] Hold on to the word of God. cultivate this love affair with the word of God where you're holding on to it and you're loving it and you're attached to it. And only that will give you the steel in your bones that you will need to stand against the hurricanes of Satan and the world and your own flesh.

And so this passage is about standing firm on the word of God. But it's important to notice its context. Verse 15 is surrounded by other verses.

And I've already pointed out verse 17 that says that it's God the Father who establishes you, who strengthens you. And so I want to ask, what is the relationship between God the Father strengthening us and our responsibility to stand fast?

trust? So how does His establishing and our holding on, how do those things come together? How do they relate together? And the answer is, it's through faith.

Faith. Faith is the empty hands that I present to God and I say, Lord, I need help. I need strength. Faith justifies me at the beginning, but faith is also a conduit, a pipeline, an aqueduct that God sends his grace and his strength into my life. And it's as I believe that his strength flows to me, and so that I stand firm. So faith carries the weight. Faith carries the ballast for our sailboat.

[18:29] So how does faith give us stability? How does faith keep us on a steady course, holding on to the word of God, when all these winds are beating up against our ship? Well, in verses 13 and 14, you see that it's faith in God's gracious purpose that gives us stability. It's faith in God's gracious purpose that gives us stability. And so as you rest, as you recline, and God's plans and his purpose is for you, that you get strength to hold on to the word of God, to hold on and stay and stand firm.

So look with me at those two verses, 13 and 14. But we are always to thank God for you, brothers, loved by the Lord, because from the beginning, God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So this is all of this. These two verses are about God's gracious purposes for you if you're a believer. And did you notice that it includes that it spans all of time? From the beginning and to the glory that we'll experience with Christ, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it fills in the time in between. And so it begins with the word but. See that? 13, but we ought always to thank God for you. Paul is contrasting two things. He's contrasting the damnation of the wicked and the damnation of the Antichrist and all those who follow him, all this whole world who who sees the truth and doesn't love it. He contrasts them with the Thessalonians. So they believe a lie and they're condemned. And that's the road that many go down. Many wide is the road that leads to destruction. So here is this vast number of people at the end of time, all throughout time. It is all the all these people that they refuse to believe the truth because they don't love the truth.

And so there they are. They're deceived. They're perishing willingly, happily believing a lie. Tell me lies. I love it. And then they're damned for it. And Paul says, but not you, dear Thessalonians, that isn't the way it's going to be for you and not for you, dear brothers and sisters of grace fellowship. It's not for you. Well, why do you differ? Why is why are you on the narrow road when so many other people are on the wide road? Well, Paul traces it back and he traces it back to God and he says, I always ought to thank God for you. Why? Why would I thank God for you? Because it's God's doing.

[21:56] It's his plan. God had other plans for you. So Paul says, I ought to thank God for you. Jesus loved you. Why are you different? Well, you're loved by the Lord. Jesus loved you.

I think it would be good for us to take those four words, love by the Lord, and let them sink in. Taste them. Enjoy them. They're destroyed. And I'm loved.

I'm loved by the only Savior of sinners. And that's grace. What grace has come to my life. Paul isn't done yet. Jesus loves us. God and in God and God's love. He acts for us. He says, God chose you. He chose you. He didn't choose them. He chose you. Have you ever...

You're married to this beautiful woman or this wonderful man. You say, why would you marry me? In your good times, when you're thinking right, that's what's going through your mind.

[23:20] Why would you want to marry me? Why would you choose me? And when we're thinking rightly about our Christian life, we have to say the same thing.

You chose me. You chose me. This goes so well with Romans 9. He bears with great patience with the objects of his wrath.

He does this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy. Even us. Even us. I'm an object of mercy and there's so many objects of wrath.

Why would he choose me? He didn't have to choose any. And there was nothing in me, there was nothing in any of you to recommend you to God. And yet God, in his gracious purpose for your life, chooses you.

But he chose you. And the word is not the normal New Testament word to talk about election. It means something like, he chose you for himself.

[24:23] It involves taking ownership of something. It's not really used in the New Testament very often at all. This choosing is where God brings you to himself.

It's talking about ownership and possession. You're to be his very own special possession. His special treasure. Psalm 4 says, the Lord sets the godly apart for himself.

There's all these massive people. And God is choosing these people. And they belong to him.

They're in special possession. And so brothers and sisters, we need to realize what the context of this verse is.

This word about choosing an election is, it's not meant to tickle our Calvinist ears and say, ooh. It's meant to comfort us.

And to give us the grace that we need to stand firm. I can stand firm because God has chosen me. That's what Paul is saying.

[25:30] So God has chosen you for his very own. So do you think he's going to let you fall? No, not at all. If he chose you to belong to him, he's going to make you stand.

And so, the argument doesn't go, so do whatever you want. The argument goes, so stand fast. So then, brothers, stand firm. Jesus has loved you.

The Father has taken you. And he's chosen you to be saved. Not to be condemned. Not to be deluded. Not to go on blind. Not to wander and fall into the abyss of hell.

He's pulled you back. He's called you for his own. He's called you to see the truth. To be rescued from this present evil age. And so stand firm. You're to live differently because of these things.

He's chosen you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit. What Paul is saying is, from the very beginning, God had this plan arranged.

[26:31] You were loved. You were chosen. And in time, you would be called and set apart by the Spirit's work in your life. In God's time, the Spirit would come upon you.

And He would sanctify you. When the Spirit comes upon us, we're set apart to God. He makes us His own.

And so in God's perfect time, He would wash you. He would give you a new life. He would present you as a newborn baby to Jesus Christ. To God the Father.

And it would happen as you believed. And that was God's purpose for you. That was what was going on from the very beginning in God's mind. He was thinking about you.

He had plans for you. He had plans to prosper you. He had plans to save you. And it would be through the Spirit's work. And it would be through your holding out empty hands and saying, I need you.

[27:34] And as you did that, you'd be saved. That was His plan. But a plan and a plan carried out are two different things. You know that, don't you?

You plan a vacation. And if you're me, you have your vacation plans. And then they don't work out. And you do something else. Plan and a plan carried out are two different things.

And it's the same thing with God. God has a plan from the very beginning. But a plan and a plan carried out are two different things. And so in God's time, because God doesn't have His plans forwarded, in His time, His plan starts to unfold.

And it unfolds in your life, in your history. It comes into reality. And that's what you see in verse 14. He called you to this through our gospel that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So what was purposed, what was planned, it now becomes reality. He called you. So think about what that meant for the Thessalonians.

[28 : 47] Think about what that meant for them. They didn't grow up in Christian homes. They grew up in paganism.

They worshipped gods. And they had all sorts of temples. Some of them were in Judaism. They were all sold as slaves into sin.

And they were willingly, happily sinning. That's the life they were living. They were oblivious to God. They were oblivious to Jesus Christ.

They were guilty. They were blind. They were lost. They were confused. It was that. But then Paul came and preached the gospel to them.

And 1 Thessalonians says it didn't come with just word alone. It didn't come like a word of man. It came with the power of God. God called them. And he reached out with sovereign hands.

[29 : 44] And he pulled the wandering children home. And he pulled the wandering children home. But think about it again. What had to happen for Paul to make it all the way to Thessalonica?

So that he could preach the gospel to them. So that God could reach out with sovereign hands and call them. Well, you remember, Paul was preaching throughout Asia Minor.

So we're in the middle of Acts. He's preaching throughout Asia Minor. That's Turkey. And he wants to go up to Bithynia. That's on the northern part.

And so he's got an eye towards that. And he starts going that way. But Acts says that the spirit of Jesus wouldn't let him. I don't know what that means exactly.

But the door was shut. And he can't go to Bithynia. And so they go down to Troas. And Paul goes to sleep. And he's sleeping.

[30 : 44] And God sends him a vision of a man from Macedonia. That's where Thessalonica is. And the man is standing and begging. Come over to Macedonia and help us.

Come and help us. So Paul woke up. He says he got up. And they went to Macedonia. And eventually he came to the city of Thessalonica.

How serious was God about getting his plan fulfilling his plan, fulfilling his purposes for them. These nameless, faceless Thessalonians that we don't know anything about.

How serious was he about getting the gospel to them? Well, he said no to Bithynia. And he sent a dream to Paul. Those aren't things that God normally does.

But that's what he was doing for them. But God's gracious purposes were at work. The time was right.

[31 : 51] And so God was calling them to himself. Now what about you? You were lost. You were blind. You were confused.

You were sold as slaves to sin just like the Thessalonians. You were willingly not believing. You didn't love the truth just like me. And then God's gracious purposes came into reality and to your life.

What he had planned in eternity past started to work here and now. And somehow, in some way, the situation came about and you heard the gospel.

And it came to you not as the words of men, but as the very word of God. And he broke you. And he called you.

And he brought you to himself. And so God's gracious purposes for you have been carried out.

[32 : 54] And they're starting to work themselves out. But his purpose is not yet fulfilled. You notice that Paul reaches into eternity future.

And he talks about this glory of Jesus Christ. God's purposes for you won't be done. Won't be complete until the old is gone.

The new has come. And worse, home safe and sound. Until we are sharing in the glory of Christ, God's purposes haven't been fulfilled. And so with all that in mind of what God has planned for you, what he has done for you in the past, Paul says, Paul says, So then, brothers, stand firm.

Well, how do you do that? Well, you rest on his plans for you. You trust his purposes for you. You repose.

You lay down in those plans. And you enjoy them. You turn them over in your mind. You roll around in them. You wrap them all around you.

[34 : 05] You let them sink into your weary arms and your weary legs. God is for you. God is for you. God has plans for you.

And he will get you to the end. And that gives you the strength to go on. And so it's this. It's your salvation. It's God's amazing grace to you.

That is the concrete for your soul. That's the ballast that gives your sailboat some stability. And it's those things that you can sink down into the ground and make a stand.

So you don't move from there. So you can think about it like a dock on the ocean. So what do you do with the dock on the ocean? Well, you have to drive those pillars, those beams, down past the water, into the ground, probably past the sand, onto the rock.

You have to find a steady place to put that dock if it's not just going to be swept away when the winds come and the storms come. And that's what we have to do.

[35 : 11] This is our foundation. God's plan for me. God's sovereign plan, sovereign love, amazing grace for me. He's called me. He's loved me. He's chosen me. And all this is coming true.

And so what I do is take my stand here. I drive my life down into these truths and I begin to enjoy Him. And so you can stand as you rest in God's purposes for you.

Well, not only do you rest in God's gracious purposes for you, but you rely on God's gracious provision. You rely on His gracious provision.

And that's what the last two verses are about. Where will the strength to stand come from? Where's the balance going to come from?

Well, it will come from the God who loved us. So let's read these two verses. May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

[36 : 22] So here Paul says, God the Father has loved you. Earlier he said Jesus has loved you, but now he says God the Father loves you. And so where does the strength come from?

Where are you going to get the ability to stand against the temptations, the trials, the false teaching that is pushing up against you? Well, it's as you learn to rely on God's love for you.

It's knowing that your Father loves you. But more than that, it's saying God has loved you and He will not disappoint you. He won't let you down.

He won't dry up the resources that you need. And that's why he's saying, that's what he's talking about when he says this eternal encouragement and good hope.

The encouragement that God gives us is eternal. We are going to keep meeting it forever and ever and ever. And this hope that He has given to us is a good hope.

[37 : 27] It's solid. It's sound. It's not going to go away. God won't let you down. He won't abandon you. The Father who has called you and who has set you on this path to heaven and He has told you to stand fast no matter what happens to you.

He's not going to leave you. He's present with you. He's always present with you to comfort you and to encourage you, to strengthen you and to establish you.

Well, what does that have to do with standing fast? It doesn't have everything. It has everything to do with standing fast. But we get the strength to hold on as we rely on His provision for us.

As we learn to trust that God is going to meet our needs. That He's going to meet our spiritual needs. That He's going to lovingly supply everything that we need.

I don't have to look around. I don't have to dig in the closets of my life and in my own strength to find what I need to stand. This isn't Custer's last stand that we're talking about here.

[38 : 39] Where it's just us and the enemy and it's just a matter of time before we're wiped out. You're not alone. God has all the resources, all the reinforcements that you need.

You're never alone in this battle. And so, you will have all the reinforcements you need to stand on the evil day. Verses 16 and 17 are in a form of a wish.

But it isn't like Paul's wishing upon a star. He isn't wishing on a God that is fickle.

That's going to change his mind. It's on the God who has loved them. And He's called them according to His purpose. And so, it's relying on God's ever arriving, ever ready supply of grace. So, He's ready moment by moment in your lives to give you what you need. And it's that kind of grace. That grace that is still future.

[39 : 50] That is coming towards us. That gives us the ability to stand like an iron pillar when all around the sea is tossing everyone else to and fro.

And so, young people, you're in the heat of a debate. You're in the heat of trying to evangelize. You're trying to stand for God.

You're trying to stand for His truth. And so, Paul says, be strong then. Be courageous. God's grace is flowing to you. It will meet you in the next minute.

It will meet you tomorrow. It will meet you every single day after that. So, you're standing in a river. And there is a lot of grace that is behind you that has come and has gone.

And we're to rest in that grace. But there is more grace coming towards you. There's more water coming your way. So, all the treasures of God's wisdom and strength and love and everything that you need, it is stored up in Jesus Christ.

[41:02] He is this lake. And it is rushing down towards us in this river. And there is more grace coming. And that's what I mean by future grace.

It's this ever-arriving grace of God that's going to meet us in the next minute, in the next hour, tomorrow, for the rest of my life and forevermore.

That God loves me. He has a plan for me. And He can give me everything that I need in Jesus Christ. And so, sisters, this week you might be facing something very difficult.

I know some of you are. It just might be living with an unbelieving spouse. And I didn't mean it like that. I mean, it could be that.

It might be pain. It might be surgery. It might be difficulty. It might be discouragement. But there is grace to stand in Jesus Christ.

[42:00] And it's coming your way. You don't have it yet because you're not there yet. But when you get there, it will be there waiting for you. And that's what we're talking about.

This eternal encouragement and good hope. This process where God is always establishing us and strengthening us so that we can stand. And so, it's as we rest in God's provision for us that we get the grace that we need to hold on.

So, faith lays a hold of a refuge that is higher than I am. And faith hides and the rock of ages cleft for me.

And it's there that I find all the strength that I need to be steady, to have that stability, to hold all the way on my course to heaven.

And so, blessed is the man who has this ballast in his ship. Blessed is the man who realizes, you know what? God has a wonderful, gracious plan for me and purpose for me.

[43:14] And it's already begun to be worked out. And blessed is the man who realizes that, you know what? Every day that I meet, I'm going to run into encouragement and God's strength.

Because God has loved me.

I know I'm His. I know His plans for me. Plans to prosper me. I know His promises to provide for me. And that is ballast. That is weight that gives us the ability to stay on course, even in the roughest of waters.

But some of you, it's not that way. Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of God. And on His law, He meditates day and night.

He's like a tree planted. Psalm 1. Some people are like a tree planted. And He's fruitful. But not so the wicked.

They're like chaff. The wind blows away. Chaff has no roots. Chaff has no stability. And that's how some of you are. You're adrift on the sea without an anchor.

[44:20] You're just floating, floating. It's like being adrift on the Niagara River. Or you'll be okay for a while. But you're going to come to a bad end when you go off the side.

And so you're in a boat with nothing to keep you steady. And day by day, you're building your life, action by action, word by word, you're building your life without a foundation.

And in the storms of life, you will not stand. And in the final storm, in the day of judgment, you'll be blown away like the rootless chaff that you are.

And your boat will sink in the waters of God's fury. But the Lord watches over the way of the righteous. And the way of the wicked, but the way of the wicked will perish.

And so I say to you, if you have no love affair with the word of God and you don't care for the living word, Jesus Christ, then look at your condition. it's only a matter of time before you go over the edge.

[45:30] It's only a matter of time before the wind comes and tips your boat over and you don't come back up. And so I say to you, rest yourself in Jesus. That's what faith is.

It's resting yourself. And so we say, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about resting in Him. Putting yourself in His hands.

And you say, for you, all the follies of sin, I resign. And when we come to Christ and say, I'm leaving everything else and I'm getting on board you, then He takes us up and He saves us.

And so I'm saying, put all your weight, all the weight of your sin, all the weight of your past, all the weight of your present, all the weight of your future, all of you put it on Him.

Because He can hold you up. And He can get you to heaven. It's one thing to say that a boat is seaworthy. You're standing on the dock and you say, that boat is seaworthy.

[46:30] It's another thing to get on the boat. To get on board. And to go on a cruise. You might be able to intellectually agree that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners and that He's a seaworthy ship.

He can get me there. But it's another thing to get on board. To put your weight on Him. He can carry every sinner to heaven.

But have you got on board? Have you got on board? Are you waiting on the shore? You're waiting at the dock. You're waiting. And the boat is there.

And the gangplank is down. And I'm telling you, get on. Get on board. You can get it. You can go. He'll take you. You know, Noah's Ark could save anyone that got on.

It could have saved every single person that got on. But it only saved eight. It was the eight people that walked up and were inside the ship.

[47:39] And Jesus can save anyone who gets on board. He can save anyone. And so will you board tonight or will you stand still for another night on the shore and say, well, that's a nice boat.

But I think I'll stay here. Get on board tonight. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, I ask that you would do that work that only you can do. Do it for your praise sake and call a sinner.

Call more than one sinner to yourself tonight. Make your words become like an arrow right into their heart. May it be an arrow that kills the old self and brings life to the new living self made in the image of Christ.

Give birth to a new sinner tonight and you will have praise. The angels will worship you. That person will worship you. We will worship you.

[48:53] Why wouldn't you do it? Why wouldn't you do it for your own glory? We ask that you would do it. Father, we've talked a lot about standing firm.

It's one thing to talk. It's another thing to stand firm. Will you give us courage? Will you bring this message to mind? Will you make it to change how we think?

As we go out and we hear strange things and men seduce us and the world seduces us, will you please give us eyes to see the world and all that is in it or what it really is.

It's an ugly rebellion against you. Will you help us to stand firm on the word of God that we would take what we have been handed and hold on to it.

Not letting it go. Not holding it loosely. But really holding it. Holding it to ourselves. Give us grace to make our stand. Take our stand here. to do what you've called us to do.

[50:02] And whatever happens, let it happen, but help us to be faithful. Lord, we ask that you would bless us as we go on our way.

Be with those who face a difficult week. For those who are hurting and suffering, will you be an encouragement to them?

I have preached on the fact that they would have grace in the hour of their need. Please don't let your word fall short for them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Let's turn in our Bibles, in our hymnals, to 319. And let's stand as we sing, Lord, may may