

Standing Firm Through The Storms Of Life

-This week we're going to talk about standing firm when the storms of life come upon us.

-What do you think of when I say "storms of life"? (Usually something negative comes to mind.)

-But can storms be good? (That depends on where you go for help once the storms come.)

-Let's read together what the Bible says in James 1:2, #1 on our Verse Sheet: (James 1:2 "Consider it pure **Joy**, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.")

-Why do you think he wrote "Consider it pure Joy"? (...)

-How can storms or testing bring joy? (Because storms can be a *potential* source of joy, regardless of how it feels or however bad the circumstances seem. Storms present an opportunity for blessing from the Lord.)

-How can storms present an opportunity for blessing? (As we go through the storm, we recognize our need for Jesus. We experience our inadequacy and His sufficiency.)

-What do you think the goal of a trial or storm would be for a believer in Christ? (The goal of the trial is that we would stand firm, that we would actually grow stronger in faith as we **DEPEND** on Jesus. We learn to persevere, to be patient with His timing, to trust *His control* and accept His way over our own.)

-What do you think the definition of standing firm is? (Fixed, unchanging, firmly loyal, constant)

-Can we really do this in our own strength? (...)

-The way to stand firm in life and in hard circumstances is only by a supernatural power that is in Christ Jesus alone; through His Holy Spirit, and only available if we choose to remain "firmly loyal" *in Him*.

-Let's read together the Bible as it tells us how we can stand firm in the storms:

-Let's read James 5:8 together, it is #2 on our Verse Sheet: (James 5:8 "Be patient and stand firm because the Lord's coming is near.")

-What is he telling us to do? (Be Patient and Stand Firm)

-How do you do that? (Only by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Through His Word and promises in scripture as well as the strength His Spirit gives us, such as love, joy, peace, *patience*, gentleness, faithfulness, kindness, etc., are we able to do this.)

-And Why should we do this, according to the last part of this verse? (Because His coming is near. And as the years go by, His coming is closer and closer.)

-Let's read Hebrews 13:6 together, #3 on our Verse List: (Hebrews 13:6 "So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, I will **not be afraid**. What can man do to me?")

-What is he telling us to do? (To Stand Unafraid)

-How do you do that? (Only by realizing that The Lord is our helper, our complete helper. David wrote in Psalm 121: 1-2 “I will lift up my eyes to the hills-From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.” The God who made it all is our Helper!)

-Let’s read Romans 8:26-27 together, #4 on our Verse Sheet: (Romans 8:26-27 “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to **pray** for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”)

-What is he telling us to do, even when our words cannot express it? (Stand in Prayer)

-How often do you think we should be doing this? (...)

-Who stands in the gap when we can’t seem to find the words? (The Holy Spirit)

-Let’s read our next verse, I Corinthians 15:58 together, #5: (I Corinthians 15:58 “Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always **give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord**, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”)

-Again, how do we stand? (Firmly, giving ourselves to His Work)

-What is the work of the Lord? (Sharing His love with others.)

-Is sharing His love with others ever in “vain”? Why or why not? (...)

-Let’s read I Corinthians 16:13-14 together, #6: (I Corinthians 16:13-14 “Be on your guard; stand firm in the **faith**; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love”.)

-How shall we stand here? (Stand in Faith, trusting God will do it and love others in the meantime. Be Courageous. Be Strong. Be Loving.)

-Let’s read I Corinthians 15:2 together, #7: (I Corinthians 15:2 “By this **Gospel** you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.”)

-What do we stand on here? (Stand on the Gospel, Firmly holding on to His Word.)

-The Message in James 1 says, “In simple humility, let our Gardner, God, *landscape you with the Word*, making a salvation-garden of your life.” If we hold firmly to His Word, His Gospel of Jesus, our lives become a garden of life, saved from the garden of death.

-This whole time we have been talking about *how* to stand firm in life. We have learned that it is provided by God Himself, through His Son and His Holy Spirit. All we have to do is turn to Him and trust in Him. When we do, then we must put on the full armor that He gives us to face the trials that will come our way.

-Let me read the following scriptures that tell us how to Stand with the Full Armor of God:

Ephesians 6:10-12, 13-18 “Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm, then, with the *belt of truth* buckled around your waist, with the *breastplate of righteousness* in place, and with your *feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace*. In addition to all this, take up the *shield of faith*, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the *helmet of salvation* and the *sword of the spirit*, which is the work of God. And *pray in the Spirit* on all occasions with *all kinds of prayers and requests*. With this in mind, *be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints*.”

-Does this encourage you that God has given us all that we need to stand in the storms?

-Let's finish with our last two sets of verses. Let's read together John 14:15,21, #8: (John 14:15,21 "If you love Me, you will **obey** what I command. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him.")

-How do we stand? (We stand in Obedience to Him, because we love Him.)

-And then what does He do for those who love Him? (He loves them too and shows Himself to them! He shows up in the storms and works His wonders in our hearts, souls and situations.)

-Because storms are so disruptive in our lives, they tend to demand our full attention. Choose to take your storm to Jesus FIRST. Choose to see it from His perspective.

-Don't tell Jesus how big your storm is but tell your storm how big your God is! Watch as Jesus, the storm calmer, works in your situation, as you choose to surrender yourself to His control.

-Let's read our final verse together to help us understand this, Deut. 31:6, #9 on our Verse Sheet: (Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you".)

-When the storms come, you are on the edge of a miracle. With Jesus, you have His strength, His perspective and His peace. As you choose to trust Him in your storm, He will give you wisdom and guidance along the way. He will never leave you. That is the greatest miracle that we could ever experience, the presence of our Savior and our God with us, doing for us what we cannot do.

-I would like to read this last verse to you in James 1:12. Herein lies a promise from the Lord: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the *crown of life* that God promised to those who love Him."

-What a reward: Abundant life.

-So don't be surprised when the storms come.

-Choose to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and stand firm.

Standing Through Storms Verses

1. **James 1:2** “*Consider it pure Joy*, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”
2. **James 5:8** “Be patient and stand firm because the Lord’s coming is near.”
3. **Hebrews 13:6** “So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”
4. **Romans 8:26-27** “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”
5. **I Corinthians 15:58** “Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”
6. **I Corinthians 16:13,14** “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love”.
7. **I Corinthians 15:2** “By this Gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.”
8. **John 14:15,21** “If you love Me, you will obey what I command. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him.”
9. **Deuteronomy 31:6** “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord you God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you”.