



Being a Courageous Christian in Today's World

"Standing Firm" - Week 1

2 Timothy 1:1-12

Introduction: How can we be courageous Christians in a morally compromised world? How can we stand firm in our Christian faith when Christianity is so often mocked? In 2 Timothy, Paul encouraged Timothy to stand firm in the Christian faith. Paul's words to Timothy are the words we need to hear in our day as well: "Stand firm in the faith."

Five Fast Facts about 2 Timothy

Fact #1 - 2 Timothy was the final book Paul wrote.

Fact #2 - When Paul wrote this book, he was in prison, in chains, in Rome.

Fact #3 - The first church was in a time of crisis.

Fact #4 - Almost everyone abandoned Paul when he was in prison in Rome.

Fact #5 - Timothy represented the next generation of Christian leaders.

For today's Christians to have courageous faith, we need to ...

1. Remember how we came to faith in Jesus.

(2 Timothy 1:1-5)

2. Rekindle our God-given spiritual gifts.

(2 Timothy 1:6)

3. Refuse to be intimidated to share the gospel with others. (2 Timothy 1:7-12)

Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word

Truth #1 - The Church must always be investing in the next generation.

Truth #2 - Everyone can do something for God, and most of us can do more than one thing.

Truth #3 - The gospel must be preserved to be proclaimed.

Truth #4 - The good news is news too good not to share with others.

Truth #5 - We must know WHAT we believe, but we must also know WHO we believe in. Jesus gives us faith over fear in this present life and the assurance of everlasting life.



Proclaiming God's Timeless Truths

In Ever-Changing Times

"Standing Firm" series - Week 2

2 Timothy 1:13-18

Introduction: The book of 2 Timothy emphasizes "standing firm in the faith." However, some Christians, churches, and denominations today seek to change God's Word instead of allowing God's Word to change them. If we believe in the authority of the Bible, when God says something is right or wrong, our opinions don't matter. If God said it, that settles it. Now more than ever, we need to read and heed Paul's words to Timothy for our day: "Stand firm in the faith."

Four charges for Christians to keep in changing times

Charge #1 - Remain committed to teaching the truth in Scripture.

(2 Timothy 1:13)

Charge #2 - Guard the good deposit of the gospel given to you.

(2 Timothy 1:14)

Charge #3 - Don't stray away from God's plans and purposes for your life.

(2 Timothy 1:15)

Charge #4 - Be faithful to the Lord to the end.

(2 Timothy 1:16-18)

Essentials of the Christian faith

1. **The Bible is God's inspired, infallible Word.** (2 Timothy 3:16)
2. **There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) who exists as three distinct Persons within the Trinity.** (Genesis 1:26; Matt 28:19)
3. **Jesus is deity. He is the eternal Son of God who came to our world as the Son of Man.** (John 1:1; 1:14; Colossians 2:9)
4. **Jesus was humanity's substitutionary sacrifice for humanity's sins.** (2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 2:2)
5. **Jesus physically died on the cross, was physically buried in a tomb, and physically rose again.** (Matthew 20:18-19; 28:9; Acts 1:3-10)
6. **Jesus will one day physically return to earth again.** (Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11)
7. **Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus alone.** (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 4:12)



How Will You Be Remembered?

"Standing Firm" series - Week 3

2 Timothy 2:1-7

A most important question: How will you be remembered? It's a simple question, but it requires some deep thought. How will you be remembered when your time on earth has ended, and you are no longer here? What will you leave behind as the legacy of your life? When people remember you, what will they say?

How to leave a faithful legacy

To leave a faithful legacy ...

1. We need to pass on our faith to others.

(2 Timothy 2:1-2)

2. We need to pursue a life that pleases God.

(2 Timothy 2:3-4)

3. We need to avoid regretful living by obeying God, which will bring blessings to us. (2 Timothy 2:5)

4. We need to practice perseverance and patience.

(2 Timothy 2:6-7)

Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word

Truth #1 - Before passing on, pass on a legacy of faithfulness to God, trust in God, and a love for God.

Truth #2 - Don't become ensnared in self-interests, which have the potential to delight and distract us from the One for whom our hearts were designed to love and obey.

Truth #3 - Being faithful in the Christian life, like a soldier, an athlete, or a farmer, is hard work, but the rewards here and in Heaven are worth it!

Truth #4 - Carve your legacy on hearts, not a tombstone. In addition to whatever else people remember about you, live so they remember that you loved God, loved people, and loved pointing people to God.



The Life God Blesses

"Standing Firm" series - Week 4

2 Timothy 2:8-26

An important reminder. In 2 Timothy 2:8-13, Paul tells Timothy to remember something. It is not a reminder because it is something Timothy might forget, but so that he is reminded to keep this in the forefront of his mind and message - Jesus is a faithful Savior!

The life that God blesses

1. The life that God blesses is grounded in God's Word.

(2 Timothy 2:14-18)

→ **Note this:** There are three questions to ask and answer when studying the Bible. First, ask, "What?" "What" does God's Word say? Two, ask, "So what?" "So what" does this mean for me today? Third, ask, "Now what?" "Now what" am I to do based on what God says?

2. The life that God blesses is confident in God's ability.

(2 Timothy 2:19)

→ **Note this:** Although Christians were experiencing persecution throughout the Empire of Rome at that time, Paul makes it clear that the kingdom of God would not be shaken. The Roman Empire fell in 476 AD, but God's Kingdom continues to stand firm today.

Perhaps people in the first century wondered if Christianity would be wiped out by Rome and Christians would cease to exist. But today, Christianity is the world's largest religion, with an estimated two billion followers of Jesus worldwide!

God's got us. It could be easy and even tempting to look at the world and give in to despair. However, verse 19 reminds us that even in the most difficult times, the Lord knows us, and He has got us. No matter the amount of stress, we are still blessed because we have confidence in God's ability to care for us.

3. The life that God blesses is clean from unholy living.

(2 Timothy 2:20-22)

→ **Note this:** The bad news is that God cannot bless a life where the heart is unclean. The good news is no one needs to stay that way. We may struggle with anger but don't have to stay that way. We may struggle with our thought life, but we don't have to stay that way. We may struggle with having a critical spirit, but we don't have to stay that way. We can change, but the change must start in our hearts (1 John 1:8-9).

4. The life that God blesses is the life that is kind to others.

(2 Timothy 2:23-26)

→ **Note this:** Most of us know people who seem to have the "gift" of getting under our skin. Paul's instruction is simple but not always easy to follow: Don't let people get you so upset that you lose your temper, say things you shouldn't, and end up in an angry conversation. We are not to match the tactics of those who may argue with us, especially those who oppose our faith. Here is why: You can't argue a person into the kingdom of God. You can't insult a person into becoming a Christian. It is quite possible to argue a person away from Christ, but you can't argue with them to Christ. What can point a person to Christ is seeing the kindness of Jesus in us. And that is the life God can bless!



Living In The Last Days
"Standing Firm" series - Week 5
2 Timothy 3:1-9

Introduction: As a positive, hope-filled person, I would love to think, as some do, that one day, if we all try to get along with one another, we can create a kind of utopia on earth. A kind of Garden of Eden 2.0! But in this sin-cursed world, where we have said in essence to God, "Thanks, but no thanks. We think we can run the world better than You," this world system will not keep getting better and better and one day have a fairy tale ending. For the Christian, the best is always yet to come. However, for the unbeliever and this present world system, the worst is yet to come. This is what the Apostle Paul tells Timothy in the 3rd chapter of 2 Timothy.

Four important doctrines

1. The doctrine of end times. (2 Timothy 3:1)

→ **Note this:** The doctrine of the end times refers to the period near the end of the world that sets the stage for the return of Jesus. Three main events make up the end times: the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:17), the Great Tribulation (Daniel 9; Matthew 24:21), and the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:36-44). Before the beginning of the last seven years of tribulation on the earth, evil will increase. The phrase "terrible times" suggests difficult and dangerous times.

This is the kind of atmosphere that will mark the last days before the coming again of Jesus. The characteristics of "the last days" started in Paul's day and continue to increase in intensity to our day.

2. The doctrine of sin. (2 Timothy 3:2-5a)

The doctrine of sin says sin is a matter of nature, not just behavior. Everyone is born with a sinful nature (Romans 5:12). Sin is doing the opposite of what God says (James 4:17). Because everyone is a sinner, everyone needs a Savior, which is Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23).

3. The doctrine of holy living. (2 Timothy 3:5b-7)

→ **Note this:** The doctrine of holy living (sanctification) is God's grace at work in the Christian life to make us like Him (Philippians 1:6; Galatians 5:22-23). Holy living has a negative and a positive aspect - we are to be separated from sin and separated to the God (Romans 12:1-2).

4. The doctrine of God's sovereignty. (2 Timothy 3:8-9)

→ **Note this:** The doctrine of God's sovereignty says God is always in charge and is always working His ways and His will to accomplish His purposes for His glory and our good (Psalm 147:5). No matter how bad things become in our world, our great God is always in control.

Conclusion: Christians should never give in to fatalism. Christians in every generation are mandated to fight the good fight (2 Timothy 4:7). Although evil is a reality in our world, so is good, which points people to a good God (Matthew 5:16). We cannot be fatalistic when we know the end of the end times – Jesus wins, and we will live with Him and other believers in Heaven forever!



Standing Firm by Standing on God's Word

"Standing Firm" series - Week 6

2 Timothy 3:10-17

Today's main truth: To stand firm in challenging times, turn to and trust in God's Word for strength, guidance, and comfort.

Three ways to stand firm in challenging times

1. **Trust the Lord with the outcome of your circumstances.**
(2 Timothy 3:10-13)
2. **Keep on doing the right thing one step at a time.**
(2 Timothy 3:14-15)

Five Reasons to Believe the Bible

Reason #1 - We can believe the Bible because it has been miraculously preserved.

* **Isaiah 40:8:** "The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever."

Reason #2 - We can believe the Bible because its incredible unity points to a divine Author.

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God ..."

Reason #3 - We can believe the Bible because Jesus believed in the Bible.

* See Matthew 19:4; John 6:31-32; Luke 17:26; Matthew 24:15; 22:40; Matthew 10:15; Matthew 12:40.

Reason #4 - We can believe the Bible because of the proof of its prophecies.

* See Isaiah 7:14 and Luke 1:26-27. Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1. Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23. Isaiah 53:12 and Matthew 27:38. Isaiah 53:9 and Matthew 27:57-60. And Luke 24:27.

Reason #5 - We can believe the Bible because of the life-changing power of the Bible.

Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is alive and powerful ..."

3. **Get into God's Word and let God's Word get into you.**
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

To get into the Word ...

1. **Need the Word. Psalm 119:105:** "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
2. **Read the Word. Nehemiah 8:8:** "They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read."
3. **Heed the Word. James 1:22:** "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves."

Today's Truths from God's Word

Truth #1 - No Christian gets a pass from pushback persecution for being a follower of Jesus.

Truth #2 - God wants to use parents and grandparents to influence and encourage the Christian faith in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

Truth #3 - We never outgrow our need for the Word of God.



Watch Out for Substitutes for God's Word

"Standing Firm" series - Week 7

2 Timothy 4:1-5

Three predictions about a falling away from God's Word

Prediction #1 - There will come a time when people will not tolerate the teachings of the Bible.

Prediction #2 - There will come a time when people will prefer lies instead of the truth because lies will make them feel happier than the truth.

Prediction #3 - There will come a time when professing teachers of truth will tell people what they want to hear (myths) instead of telling them what they need to hear (truth).

Three things we are to do with God's truth

Instruction #1 - We should know the truth. (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

→ **Note this:** On four different occasions, Jesus said to the religious leaders, "Have you not read," referring to reading the Scripture, which they claimed as their source of authority (Matthew 12:3, 19:4, 21:42, and 22:31, Matthew 21:16). Jesus was saying to them, "Don't you read and know the Scripture which you claim as your source of authority?" What if Jesus asked us today, "Don't you read and know the Bible, which you claim as your source of authority?" To avoid substitutes for God's Word, we must know the truth.

Instruction #2 - We should guard the truth. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

→ **Note this:** "Itching ears" teaching is "make me happy" teaching. It says: "Meet my needs, help me feel good about myself, build up my self-esteem, don't talk about sin, don't be negative, and don't be divisive. Teach me what I want to hear, not what I need to hear." It describes people seeking opinions and teachings that support their lifestyle decisions. To guard God's truth, we must uncompromisingly teach and preach God's truth and not conform to the ways of the world (Romans 12:2).

Instruction #3 - We should speak the truth. (2 Timothy 4:5)

→ **Note this:** When we speak God's truth to others, the Bible says we should speak the truth in love with gentleness and respect (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 3:15). Some people will receive the truth of the gospel and what God says. But no matter how nicely we share truth with others, not everybody will listen. Some are going to be offended. Others may accuse you of being narrow-minded and holier-than-thou. But it is better to tell the truth and be thought judgmental than to twist the truth or avoid the truth and be thought loving and compassionate. The most loving thing we can do is to share with people what the Bible says so their lives can be changed now and forever.

Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word

Truth #1 - The Bible must be the final authority for the Christian and the church. The church's "Supreme Court" must always be God's Word.

Truth #2 - When people come to church, they should expect to hear a sermon based on the Word of God - not on opinions or philosophies, but on what God says.

Truth #3 - A church that preaches and teaches the Word will find itself at odds with the world. If you preach the Word, you have the blessing of God but not always the approval of others. The church can please God or it can please the world, but it can't do both. The Christian and the church should always look to please an audience of One - God.



How To Leave a Well-Done Legacy

"Standing Firm" series - Week 8

2 Timothy 4:6-8

- ➔ **Note this:** The Bible tells us in Ecclesiastes 7:2: "... Death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart." Ecclesiastes tells us that the wise person is mindful that no one lives forever, and one day, everyone will complete their life's journey.
- ➔ **Note this:** Writing from a Roman prison cell on death row, knowing he would soon die, the Apostle Paul considered three things. One, Paul LOOKED AROUND at where he was in life. He realized he had less time than more time left in life. Two, Paul LOOKED BACK at his journey with Jesus and considered how he would be remembered. And three, Paul LOOKED AHEAD to life after death in Heaven. It is to our benefit today to consider these three thoughts if we, like Paul, want to leave a well-done legacy.

1. Paul considered his departure from this life. (2 Timothy 4:6)

2 Timothy 4:6: "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near."

- ➔ **Note this:** Paul didn't view his death as a tragic ending but as a wonderful new beginning. As he wrote in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Remember this: When a Christian dies, they're not really deceased – they have simply departed. The Christian has departed to Heaven ... to be with God ... to be reunited with believing family members and friends ... to be together forever!

2. Paul considered his legacy left behind. (2 Timothy 4:7)

2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

- ➔ **Note this:** The words "fought," "finished," and "kept" are all action words. As it has been said, "If you're not dead, you're not done."

Questions: "How do you want to be remembered? What do you hope people will say about you after you are gone? How will the people who knew you summarize your life? Will you be remembered as someone who loved, trusted, and followed God?"

3. Paul considered his arrival in Heaven. (2 Timothy 4:8)

2 Timothy 4:8: "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

- ➔ **Note this:** Nero and Rome may have declared Paul guilty, but there would soon come a reversal of Nero's verdict when the righteous Judge awards Paul the crown of righteousness. Any believer who faithfully, not perfectly (1 John 1:8-9), lives out the Christian life will also receive a crown of righteousness.

How to be a good and faithful servant

Matthew 25:21: His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! ..."

Characteristic #1 - A good and faithful servant spends time with his master, Jesus.

Characteristic #2 - A good and faithful servant studies God's Word.

Characteristic #3 - A good and faithful servant obeys his master in public and private.

Characteristic #4 - A good and faithful servant serves others.

Characteristic #5 - A good and faithful servant is a good steward of their time, talents, and treasures.



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