



## **STAND UP FOR THE LORD**

**Matthew 26:31-35, 47-75**

- In our **CHALLENGING TIMES** series we are learning from the challenges Jesus faced in the last days before His death and resurrection, and we're challenging our Church family to **SERVE** in Church ministries, **PRAY** for the Lord to transform people's lives, and **SHARE** their faith or an invitation to Church/Easter services.
- ***Who are some Friends, Relatives, Associates, or Neighbors I need to be praying for, witnessing to and inviting to our Easter Services?***
- Paul - *"The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me - to tell people the Good News about God's grace."* (Acts 20:24 NCV)
- **Sometimes it's difficult in today's world to speak up and stand up for the Lord.**
- *"Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came over and said to him, 'You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean.' But Peter denied it in front of everyone. 'I don't know what you're talking about,' he said."* (Matthew 26:69-70)
- ***What are some things that we must overcome if we are to be strong Christians and bold witnesses for Jesus in challenging times?***

***Standing Up For Jesus Requires:***

### **FIGHTING AGAINST OUR PRIDE**

- *"On the way, Jesus told them, 'Tonight all of you will desert Me.' . . . Peter declared, 'Even if everyone else deserts You, I will never desert You.' Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, Peter - this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know Me.' 'No!' Peter insisted. 'Even if I have to die with You, I will never deny You!' And all the other disciples vowed the same."* (Matthew 26:31-35)
- **The sin of pride is a preoccupation with self and one's own importance, achievements, status, or possessions; and pride has often brought about the downfall of individuals.**
- *"Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall."* (Proverbs 16:18)
- **The Lord wants us to fight off pride and become humble individuals.**

- *“God opposes the proud but favors the humble. So humble yourselves before God.”* (James 4:6-7)
- **Humility is an attitude that sees: 1) our daily need for God’s help, 2) others as very important, and 3) our life and worth from God’s perspective (Romans 12:3).**
- *“Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less...Humble people are so focused on serving others, they don’t think of themselves.”* - Rick Warren
- *“Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.”* (Philippians 2:3-5)
- ***What steps do I need to take to conquer ungodly pride in my life?***

**Standing Up For Jesus Requires:**

**MAINTAINING OUR SELF CONTROL**

- *“Judas arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. . . . Judas came straight to Jesus. ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ he exclaimed and gave Him the kiss. . . . Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested Him. But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest’s slave, slashing off his ear. ‘Put away your sword,’ Jesus told him. ‘Those who use the sword will die by the sword. Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and He would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?’”* (Matthew 26:47-54)
- **How we respond when we are challenged can define who we really are - so we must strive to always respond to challenges in good ways and not bad ways.**
- *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.”* (Ephesians 4:31)
- **When we lack self control, we find ourselves making big mistakes in our lives.**
- *“A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls.”* (Proverbs 25:28)
- **We often put too much emphasis on our feelings; so to maintain self-control we must challenge our feelings.**
- *“Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.”* (Galatians 5:16)
- **Our sinful nature and emotions will lead us to make wrong decisions in our lives, while the Holy Spirit will lead us to make good decisions.**
- *“The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit . . . self-control.”* (Galatians 5:22-23)
- **Self control is a demonstration that we are surrendered to Jesus.**
- *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”* (Romans 8:14)
- ***In what areas of my life do I need to demonstrate more self-control - and what steps can I take to have more self-control?***

**Standing Up For Jesus Requires:**

**STAYING CONNECTED WITH OTHER BELIEVERS**

- *“Then the people who had arrested Jesus led Him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of religious law and the elders had gathered. Meanwhile,*

*Peter followed Him at a distance and came to the high priest's courtyard. He went in and sat with the guards and waited to see how it would all end.” (Matthew 26:57-58)*

- **Sometimes we have to stand up for Jesus by ourselves, but typically we are stronger in standing up for Him when we have the support of others.**
- *“There are no successful ‘Lone Ranger Christians.’” - Dr Randy Millwood*
- **Continual isolation leads to defeat and failure in our lives, while sharing our lives with others leads us to have more joy and victory in our lives.**
- *“All the believers met together and shared everything they had. . . . They worshiped together . . . , met in homes . . . and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.” (Acts 2:44-46)*
- **We all need the support and encouragement of other Christians.**
- *“Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)*
- **We must regularly surround ourselves with other strong Christians (i.e. *Life Groups*) if we are to be victorious in our lives (Acts 2:42-47, 5:42).**
- ***What steps do I need to take to become more connected with other Christians who will help me better stand up and speak up for the Lord?***

### **Standing Up For Jesus Requires:**

#### **OVERCOMING OUR FEARS**

- *“Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came over and said to him, ‘You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean.’ But Peter denied it in front of everyone. . . . Later another servant girl noticed him and said to those standing around, ‘This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.’ Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. . . . A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and said, ‘You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent.’ Peter swore, ‘A curse on me if I’m lying - I don’t know the man!’ And immediately the rooster crowed. Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind: ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know Me.’ And he went away, weeping bitterly.” (Matthew 26:69-75)*
- **Fear will keep us from standing up for the Lord or speaking up for Him.**
- The Lord - *“Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with My victorious right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)*
- **Whoever or whatever we fear has control over our lives.**
- *“Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the LORD means safety.” (Proverbs 29:25)*
- **As followers of Jesus, the power to overcome fearful obstacles or opponents comes from God; we just have to submit Him to receive that power.**
- *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7)*
- ***What fears do I have that keep me from standing up or speaking up for Jesus, and what steps can I take to overcome them?***
- **Even when we fail the Lord, He is willing to forgive and restore us when we admit our failures and re-surrender our lives to Him (Mark 16:6-7, John 21:1-17).**

- Peter on the Day of Pentecost - *“God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. Now He is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. . . . So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”* (Acts 2:32-33, 36)
- **Who do I need to share Jesus with and invite to our Easter services?**
  - **Friends** - \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Relatives** - \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Associates** - \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Neighbors** - \_\_\_\_\_