

March 14, 2010

Standing Firm

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

What's the difference between standing firm and being stubborn or hard-headed? Can you be one who stands firm and be wrong? Is there ever a time when it is bad to stand firm? When is it more helpful to be flexible than firm? How do we know when it is time to stand firm, and when it is time to be flexible? When do you stick to old traditions, and when do you explore new ideas? In light of last week's text, how do you discern if the new idea is false or deceiving?

Today's text:

1. vs. 13-14. Is there someone for whom you thank God? Why? Do you feel *loved by the Lord*? Are there times when you do not? Why? Paul wanted to thank God because the Thessalonians had been saved. Do you thank God because of someone else's salvation? Paul says God chose these people. Are there folks He doesn't 'choose'? What part do we play in this 'choosing'? Joshua 24:15. What is the *sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit*? To review the tasks of the HS in today's world, read _____, _____, and _____.

2. vs. 15. Are there principles that you were taught by your parents that still remain at the core of your beliefs? Have you jettisoned some of those ideas? Paul says *stand firm and hold to the teachings*. What are some of those teachings to which we hold? What are some foundations upon which we stand? **Heb 13:8**

- Christ was crucified and resurrected
- Salvation comes by God's grace through faith
- Jesus is returning in judgment and glory
- –others?
- –
- –

How do those principles help you today? Are there times when standing firm may be a hindrance to the gospel? How do we know if we are standing firm in a Bible principle, or if we are merely guarding a favorite tradition?

We have two anchors to hold us through difficult times. The faith of the Bible, the strength God gives. **Philippians 4:13**.

3. vs. 16-17. This may be the 'how' of standing firm. Paul gives encouragement. Does this not illustrate how we need the church in order to do the 'stand firm' part? Do you need to be encouraged in word and deed? Has your faith ever been strengthened by a trial? What helps you persevere in those times? The church is *so* important to our Christian growth and strength. **Heb 10:24-25**.

Which of the following Christian teachings do you feel you stand firmly behind, and with which one do you feel a little shaky? Mark F for firm, S for shaky.

- The Bible is our authority on spiritual truth
- God created all that is
- Jesus is the Son of God and our Savior
- Salvation is by grace
- We are called to love one another and to love God
- God rewards his children with eternal life
- Jesus is coming again

What do you need to do to better stand firm in your faith?

- Study the Bible more to be sure of what I believe
- Be more committed to what is true rather than what is popular
- Pray more for God's strength
- Be closer connected to my church for its support
- Be an encourager to others

How do you get more connected to your church?

If Paul were writing a letter to you, is there something for which he would commend you? Is there something for which he would give you encouragement?

What will **you** do this week to strengthen your resolve to stand firm? Is there some way in which your church could assist?

In all the changing in the world over the centuries two things remain constant.
God loves us

We need His love and forgiveness