

Have Courage

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Date: 23 August 2015

[0 : 00] I stood at the bedside of my wife as the surgeon swabbed this orange-red mixture, this disinfectant mixture over her belly.

! And the nurses swarmed all around us. And just before the surgeon started to operate and insert the scalpel to perform the caesarean section, I leaned over to Julie and said, Have courage, honey. I've got to go now. I'm going to faint.

I started seeing stars as I raced towards the door and quickly darted out of the operating theatre. Have courage, honey. I've got to go now. I'm going to faint. And my message today is a rousing call to the Church of God at this time of our annual meeting to issue a call.

Have courage! Have courage! We have need of courage today. Just to set the scene, we face much opposition and discouragement and enemies all around about.

It's par for the course. Like Adam said recently in a message, it comes with the territory. We know this is what we are to expect. This is the school of hard knocks.

[1 : 32] And we haven't graduated yet. We're still in it, aren't we? It feels like they're in that school right now. Yes, we are. It was Paul's experience too, as he faced much trouble and tribulation.

And even in the midst of it, he still found joy. Joy. In 2 Corinthians 7 from verse 4, Paul writes, Great is my boldness of speech toward you. Great is my glorying of you. I am filled with comfort.

I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For when we are coming to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side.

Without the fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless, God, that comforted those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.

Those that are cast down can find comfort. These times in which we live call for boldness. They call for courage. And we as God's faithful church can be filled with comfort and with joy. Even joy.

[2 : 35] Even though we're troubled on every side. Fightings without. Fears within. Despite it all, we can have exceeding joy. And be exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

Not that we've seen anything yet, really, have we? As a church in this land. But even when disappointment comes from time to time, and we get those setbacks, there is comfort for us. There is encouragement for us.

And I put it to you, brothers, sisters today, we have need of courage in these days that we live. We have need of courage. Courage to be steadfast. Courage to stand fast.

And courage to hold fast. When many will meander in mediocrity, they sit on the fence, they play church. When popular Christianity is pandering to the masses and watering down the message. Accommodating error with half-truths and compromise. In days such as these, we have more than ever the need for courage. More than ever. Now more than ever.

[3 : 42] A need for a courageous, uncompromising Christianity. And these are days that call for courage from you and me. Ordinary, simple, you and me.

Days that call for us to have courage. Days when men falter and fail. When many fall back and are cowardly in the face of challenge and give ground to the enemy.

We've seen the big names often doing that. Just compromising left, right and centre. When many will not seem to care about sound doctrine. They'll just swallow what morsels they can find as if searching through the garbage can, if you like.

Virtually. Looking for those tasty scraps. Yet they are poisoned. Laced with poison. And will harm them spiritually.

That's what's happening today. People are searching in the scraps that the TV preachers throw our way. And many times it's not fit for human consumption. And so this is a day when many are willfully ignorant of the devil's devices.

[4 : 47] And those who dare to be bold are those who are mocked and derided and castigated, called bigots and Bible thumpers and just laughed at. And we have need to stand in their number.

We have need of courage to speak up, to stand up. Not because we want to paint a target sights on ourselves. But because we want to be true to God. To be true to Him.

And care enough to tell others the truth as well. So I urge you, people of God, have courage, church. Have courage. First thing we have need of courage to be steadfast.

Steadfast. Steadfast. When I think of this word, steadfast, it makes me think of the picture of a captain around the wheel of the ship. Around the ship's wheel.

Braving the storms as the rain lashes and the wind blows. And steering the ship ever onward, ever forward, ever on course. And this is the picture for us, that we should be a steadfast people.

[5 : 48] As we work towards that graduation day from the School of Hard Knocks, from the University of Life. And I'm sure there'll be some degrees that you've never known behind your name when that day comes.

When he'll hand you his crown. And we have need, meantime, as we go through this hard yacker of the School of Hard Knocks. We have need of resilience.

And I believe it's what God wants for us. What God wants for us as a church. To be a devoted people. A steadfast people. A consistent people. Not deviating. But straight as a die.

Straight down the line. And we see that in Acts 2. When we see the steadfastness of the early church. In Acts 2.42. It says that they continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

What a steadfastness mark then. The steadfastness of the early church. Steadfast in doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, in prayers.

[6 : 55] And this mark of steadfastness speaks to us today, doesn't it? We can learn something from this. As God's people in Acts 2. They were a courageous people. They were bold in their God.

To speak the truth. And to face the storm. To brave the powers that lashed against them.

Empowered by God's Spirit. As they were led by the Word of God. To be a steadfast people.

Who wants to be steadfast today? Steadfast. Steadfast by the Word of God. Marked by faithfulness. As they confessed Jesus as Lord. And what did that mean?

It meant literally a cross for them. They were steadfast. And Paul remarked positively about the believers in Colossae.

About their godly order. And the steadfastness of their faith in Colossians 2 verse 5. He says, He could see there was an order there.

[7 : 57] He could see there was a steadfastness there. They set their faces aflint. They had set their course as it were on the wheel of the ship. And they were not going to deviate. It seems lacking nowadays to have this steadfastness.

Even in a secular form. It seems like no one is reliable. You can't count on people. Who's experienced that? You just can't count on people.

What is it with people these days? And spiritually speaking as well. It seems like many seem to flip and flop and flounder. Many seem to wander spiritually. And end up in the flaky churches.

Or in no church at all. Can we be like the Colossians? And buck this trend. Buck this trend. How desperately we need a steadfastness of faith.

How we need to be a committed fellowship of God's people. Gathering together. Gathering together under sound doctrine and teaching. Gathering together to the breaking of bread. Gathering together to prayers.

[8 : 58] A steadfastness should mark us. A steadfastness of unrelenting faith. Unbending faith. That will hold its course. No matter what. It should be the hallmark of you.

That profess to know Christ. A steadfastness should mark you. And we're also called to a steadfastness of service. Our service too. Should be a service unto our master.

That is unrelenting and abounding. In 1 Corinthians 15, 58. Paul says. Therefore, my beloved brethren. Be you steadfast. Unmovable. Always abounding.

In the work of the Lord. For as much as you know that your labour is not in vain. In the Lord. Let us then be firm. Fixed and faithful. Be those such as are unmoved.

And always abounding. Constant. Reliable. Dependable. Dependability. Dependability.

Dependability. Not fecal and floundering. And. Fair weather.

[9 : 58] Of sorts. I am. There's people under my employment. And this is the character traits.

These are the character qualities that I search for. That I look for. That I. That I. Choose.

Men. Women. With character traits such as these. Dependable. Dependability. Dependability. Dependability. Not fecal and floundering.

And. Fair weather. But. Full on. Straight forward. Honest. Reliable. Decent. Dependable. And I think that these are the character traits that God looks for too.

And he makes us such. Because of our own selves we're lacking of such things. In the picture of the parable we see the Lord. Spoken of us the picture of this master.

And what does he say? What does he say? What does he especially command? The good and faithful servant. Good and faithful servant. He commends that especially.

[10 : 57] What is the opposite of steadfast? I would say flaky. Flaky. We're living in a culture where it seems like everyone is falling over themselves to be relevant.

In the church scene. To be relevant. To find and follow the latest gimmicks and crazes. The new fad flaky ideas that the latest gurus are pushing on us.

What's the top of the pops this month? It's as if the goal posts are constantly shifting isn't it? On the church scene. And the church is ever shifting. Ever shifting to follow the world and its ways.

Is this how it ought to be? No. It's been truly said that the church rather than being shifting should be stationary. Stationary. Stationary. The church should be solid as a rock.

Amen. Solid as a rock. Amen. In a world of shifting sands. The sinking sands and the sinking sands are all just changing all around about. We are solid as a rock.

[11 : 58] Solid as a rock. And in many quarters it's as if the church has been so transformed that to become so relevant to the world that it becomes irrelevant to God.

And irrelevant to its mission. Its calling. Its purpose. And so the church has lost this salty flavour that it should have.

As it's become bland and blended in. And it's just lost its impact. It's lost that sharp cutting edge that it should have. And it's become weakened and made powerless by worldliness.

I pray that it not be so of we. That God helping us will be a steadfast people. Amen.

We're meant to be steadfast in service. Unmovable. Rock solid. Grounded. Stable. Sure and firm. And God wants us to be always abounding in the work of the Lord.

[12 : 58] Always abounding. Always flourishing. Always having some word. Some service to render for His glory. Something to do. There's a work for all of us to do.

There's no excuse for anyone in this church to be bored. I can't remember the last time I was bored. You know there's always something for us to do isn't there?

Amen. You can always find something to do for God can't you? Amen. Something surely. There's a work for all of us to do. And when it says here, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

This word labour has the sense of a fatiguing labour, of an intense labour, of a labouring even to the point of exhaustion.

You know, it's not necessarily ungodly for you to wear yourself out in God's service. In a good way. Of course you've got to be sensible about these things. But find what God wants you to do and do it with all your might.

[14 : 06] Find what God wants you to do and do it. What's stopping you? What's stopping you? I put that question to you. So let us not give in, but rather let us be steadfast in this.

And even when persecution threatens, you ain't seen nothing yet. Amen. What's round the corner? We don't know. We can't even imagine. When we could easily weaken. When persecution comes. When we get some little setbacks here and there. It should make us ever more steadfast. Ever more determined. Ever more devoted. And the Lord will strengthen you, strengthen me to be a steadfast people.

So firstly, let us have courage. Let us have the courage to be steadfast. Steadfast. And secondly, let us have the courage to stand fast.

Stand fast. When I think of standing fast, I think of a faithful military unit holding its ground. Against all the odds. Standing firm together.

[15 : 07] As a military unit. Lockstep. Shoulder to shoulder. There's a courage that we can have as we stand shoulder to shoulder against the fight to come.

Against the opposing forces. And there surely are many of those. And Paul urges the church at Philippi along these lines in Philippians 1.27. He says, Only let your conversation, or in other words, your conduct, be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye! Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Paul said, whether I'm there or not, I want to hear about your standing fast. With one spirit, with one mind, for the faith of the gospel. How much we need this today.

In these days where many flip and flop and flounder and fail, there's a crying need for a standing fast, with one spirit and with one mind, together, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

[16:14] Notice it says, not a striving against one another. You know, Paul writes elsewhere about some Christians biting and devouring one another. You know, I'll get you some food if you're that hungry.

You know, don't bite and devour one another. We're meant to strive together for a common cause, for God's common goal, a common love, a common faith. And with that one spirit, that one mind, striving together, standing fast.

How we need that as a church, to stand fast in a godly unity as we strive together, as we have an earnest ambition and a purpose for the faith of the gospel.

And our standing fast is a standing strong with a manly faith. When the church seems to have been emasculated in many quarters. It's like it's been emasculated.

The men don't stand up, so the women have to fill the gaps. Where are the men who will stand up and be counted? Our standing fast should be a standing strong and a manly faith.

[17:19] When men of God will rise up and it's high time to man up. In 1 Corinthians 16, 13 it says, Watch ye, stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men.

In other words, quit yourself like men. Act like men. Be strong. So we have much need to stand fast. Stand fast.

For me it speaks of a solid faith. Of having a firm resolve. That we're absolutely committed to this all-important, mission.

With a resolution. With a strength. With a resolution. With a strength. And against the opposing forces. It's as if I like to kind of picture it as God's Spirit is using us to hold up a banner.

And the tide is all against us. Many oppose us, but we will stand fast. We will stand fast. We will stand fast holding the banner. And the Spirit of God will raise up a banner.

[18:18] And that's what I want for this church. That we will stand fast. That we will rally to the cause. And we will stand fast as a church of God. And I urge you, brothers and sisters, to be committed to this work.

Not half-hearted, but fully committed. To get behind it. To put your shoulder to the wheel. To be reliable. To be one who will stand fast. We take a stand for something.

I know a brother just said earlier this morning, which is a common kind of phrase, if we don't stand for something, we'll fall for anything. And that's what's going on, isn't it, in the world today.

And it will not matter to us that others quit and cave into the world. We will stand fast. We will swim against the tide. We will not give ground. And we'll face many an attack.

But we will stand fast. As you could picture that military analogy, that we stand fast, shoulder to shoulder, as brethren in arms, as it were. And our standing should be uncompromising and solidly biblical.

[19:20] Boldly biblical. Boldly biblical. That's my prayer for this church, for we, as a body of God's people. Paul tells us of this standing that we can make. He says we can stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

There's a freedom there. As we stand together for the faith of the gospel, we're not press-ganged into it. You don't have to have someone to hound you and cajole you and bribe you to be here, to be serving.

But it comes willingly from within. There's a willingness. There's a zeal that springs from within. You don't have to be a conscript in this military service, but a willing volunteer who will say, Yes, Lord, use me.

Here am I. Send me. And we're not serving as conscripts, but we're freely serving God from the depth of our heart. Not as a slavish bondage manipulated by some system of religion or some latter-day teacher or having to climb some ladder of works to satisfy our God.

No, it's all by His grace. And that's why we serve Him out of love, out of acknowledgement of the wonder of His grace, that He would choose us.

[20 : 32] And our loyalty is a heart-deep loyalty. It's born out of a deep love for our Saviour. That's the standing fast that we have. As willing servants, always abounding, serving our Master with our heart's desire to please Him with our lives.

So, stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. We stand securely in Christ. Our salvation is secured by His sure blood, not of our own works, of any of it.

And we are willing combatants in this battle. And we will stand fast and we will shoulder the flag and we will take every step by His grace and to His glory.

And we will stand fast on the fundamentals of the faith, of historic Christianity. Not the airy-fairy world of Latter-day revelations or the flaky philosophies of men.

We stand where the remnant church has always stood, down through the centuries, while facing scorn and fire and sword. We stand in their tread, we walk in their tread, and it has withstood the test of time.

[21 : 39] This is the church of God, God's remnant church. And we are one of many such churches, I trust. 2 Thessalonians 2.15, Paul says, Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle.

He says those traditions, there's something you can stand fast for. And in a sense, it's those time-tested doctrines of the faith. And as a church, God helping us, we don't want to budge and be swayed to become more relevant if it damages the message.

Or makes our ambition to be more palatable for compromising men. That must not be our motive.

And so the traditions that we stand for are not the fashions and fads which are changeable, the fancies, the floundering flip-floppers, if you like, of this day and age.

But we stand on the time-tested truths. Time-tested truths that are built on the short and firm foundation of the faith. The faith, once delivered.

So what is it that we stand for? What is it that we hold dear? The word of quote. The stand that we make is for the fundamentals of the faith. This means we don't go along with the latter-day errors.

[22 : 59] Charismatic errors or Calvinism or Lordship salvation or countless other man-made teachings and errors that have sprung up over time. We're against them. We'll oppose them.

We'll counteract them. We'll contradict them by the power of God's word. I was challenged by talking with someone recently and challenging his theological ideas that he presented.

And they were relatively modern in invention. They were flawed and out of step, out of accord with historic Christianity. And I think that is a good general guideline.

It's generally a good guide as far as doctrine goes. If it's a comparatively new teaching, then it is wrong. If it is a comparatively new teaching, it is wrong.

If the faithful of the past were not teaching and preaching it, then chances are it is off track. And we ought to steer clear of it. If we could tremble back in the time capsule and go back in time to the reformers and revivalists of old and there's something that's quite contradictory to the essential message that they preached, chances are it's wrong.

[24 : 13] So we may be accused of being back in the past. Now they're using that kind of phrase about some particular politicians of our time. Those hateful remarks that are thrown against some politicians today who dare to stand up for natural marriage between a man and a woman.

They say he's stuck back in the past. That's right. Just because something is back in the past, just because something is old fashioned, doesn't make it wrong. That's right. Doesn't make it wrong. I would say rather that newfangled truth is often mangled truth.

Yeah, that's right. Newfangled truth is often mangled truth. I invented that one. So let's not give in.

Let's not give in, but rather let us be steadfast. Let us not give up, but rather let us stand up.

Stand fast. Stand fast. And let us have courage to be steadfast and to stand fast. And thirdly, thirdly, let us have courage to hold fast.

Hold fast. We have something precious, eternal, and something that we need to hold on to for dear life. For dear life. It sustains us. It strengthens us.

[25 : 19] This is our lifeline, our communication with heaven. And Paul urges young Timothy in 2 Timothy 1.13. He says, Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Hold fast the form of sound words. Paul speaks of sound words, of sound doctrine. It's critical these days that we have that eye to what is sound, what is rightful, what is God honouring.

And hold it fast. Hold fast that which is sound. In other words, it's healthy and wholesome. You know, the Lord said, it's a man with a withered hand, stretch it forth and it was made sound. It was made whole. That's the sense of the doctrine. It's wholesome. It's whole. It's healthy. It's rightful. And there is need for courage. Courage, brother. Courage, sister. It may not be popular to say these things.

It may not be easy to say these things. But we must not hold back. The truth must be told. It must be. And so we surely must hold fast the form of sound words.

[26 : 26] Sound doctrine. Sound teaching. Sound doctrine is sadly absent in many quarters. The clear and crystal truth has been adulterated. Adulterated.

It's like muddied waters. It's like taking that spring water and pouring some poison into it. There's much confusion in these muddied waters in this confusion that abounds in the world of the TV preachers by and large where such teaching is causing utter confusion and bewilderment such that people can't distinguish between truth and error anymore.

They've lost that capacity. And instead we see a chaos and a confusion in the compromised ecumenical scene where it's just confusion abounds.

It's so prevalent. It's all pervading. There's this just one big blur. There's one big fuzzy wuzzy kind of idea. And many just go along with such things seemingly innocent, inter-church things where doctrine gets blurred, gets put on the shelf.

Well, we won't talk about that. Someone might get offended. We'll put that aside. But no, we must have sound doctrine. We must have it clearly expounded and delivered.

[27 : 48] The danger is it can lead to a dumbing down of Christianity where we just put things on the shelf, where we just go along to get along. Don't we have need of courage? We desperately have need of courage.

The absolute truth of the Bible is under attack today. Historic Christianity, more than any other time in history. And sometimes there's professing Christians who are doing it, blindly, belligerently.

Another part of the problem is the confusing Bible of so-called Bible versions that abound today. A Bible. In other words, a confusing array. The atheist French philosopher Voltaire said this, If we would destroy the Christian religion, we must first of all destroy man's belief in the Bible.

We must destroy man's belief in the Bible. Of course, Voltaire's home ended up becoming a publishing house for the Bible after his death. But more than ever before, we need to stand for the sure Word of God.

Hold it fast. Hold it fast. More than ever before, we have need of the Word of God. And we can hold it fast. By God's help, thank God he has preserved his Word.

[28 : 57] Preserved his Word and given it to us in our day. Paul gave this charge to Titus, holding fast the faithful Word, as he hath been taught that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Titus, hold it fast, the faithful Word. Hold it fast. Don't loosen your grip. We call to a Word that is faithful. There will be gainsayers who will mock the Word of God.

But this is the faithful Word, the Bible, that we know and trust. And we will not budge from it. As a church, we will hold it fast. In a day of biblical illiteracy abounding, we need to be such as know the Word of God and search it out and study it.

It's completely trustworthy. You can stake your life, your eternity on it. And we call to hold it fast. To cling to it. Cling to it. Take it seriously. Grasp it firmly.

In days when many attack the King James Bible, we see many compromised Bibles emerging, such as the NIV and the Message Bible. We need to hold fast the faithful Word, the faithful Word, and not deviate from it.

[30 : 05] Take it and read it and believe it and follow it. It's been said that there's over 100 different English Bible versions today. Over 100. And none of them agree with the other in both text and meaning in hundreds of verses.

Confusion abounds. It's just what the devil wants. And to take a position that any Bible will do just leads to confusion and uncertainty.

Satan hates the Word of God. He hates it. And his fingerprints are all over the modern Bible translations today. As a church, we must hold fast the Word of God, the faithful Word.

Hold it fast. Hold fast. God has preserved his infallible words for us, for our generation, in this book, between the covers of this book. He has provided the Bible for us in our own language.

He most assuredly has. And so we have confidence that we have God's complete and perfect words. So hold fast the faithful Word. So hold fast the faithful Word.

[31 : 08] As a church, the authority of the Bible must underline and underpin what we do, what we teach, what we practice, what we believe. It's our absolute guide and trust. And we can be assured of the accuracy and veracity of this book.

It is the perfect preserved Word of God. Inspired, inerrant, infallible, 100% reliable, word for word. Word for word.

As Dr. Shelton Smith put it, God has preserved his inspired Word for us. It is preserved in the Hebrew Masoretic text and in the Greek textus receptus. It's also preserved for us in the English in the King James Bible.

What he had first inspired, the Lord God, has now preserved. Therefore, when I hold the King James Bible in my hand, I hold the inspired text. It was inspired and now that inspired Word has been protected, preserved and provided for us.

We thank God for him delivering it to us. The words of the Lord are pure words. A silver trite in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven.

[32 : 18] Thou shalt keep them, O Lord. Thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever. This word is preserved. It's preserved. It's pure. It's powerful.

It's precious. It's alive. And God has breathed life into these pages. It's the complete and absolute truth. And here is how one church defined their position about what they believe about the Bible.

We see, and I wholeheartedly agree with such things as their stem as given here. Plenary inspiration. Plenary means entire, whole.

It's the view that the entire Bible from A to Z is inspired. Plenary. The entire Bible is inspired. Verbal is the view that God breathed to the choice of the very words of Scripture.

So that the God breathed truth was grasped by God appointed men who were guided by the Spirit in their selection of words. Verbals. In other words, every word.

[33 : 17] Preservation. Preservation. Preservation is the view that God will and has preserved His word in pure form. In the most minute detail. The jots. The tittles.

The punctuations, if you like. And that this would include the whole Scriptures. Old and New Testaments. And this doctrine of preservation is verbal. In other words, the words. Plenary. The whole.

It's the only reasonable view in the light of the biblical doctrine of the Word of God. And then inerrancy. It's another term. This is the view that the Bible is without error.

Inerrant. It's without error. So that the Bible is correct in every statement that it makes. Inerrant. Another term. Infallibility. The view that the Bible is infallible.

Infallible. Which means when used it always works. It never fails us. It's incapable of error. It's never wrong. And so it's absolutely trustworthy.

[34 : 15] And then another term. Sufficiency of Scripture. We believe that the Bible, in other words, is all that we need to equip us for faith and service.

The sufficiency of Scripture is under attack today. You know, you go to some churches and they say to you, I've got a word from the Lord for you. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's not in here. I've got a word from the Lord for you. It's right here. This is it. This is it. This is it. Right here. The sufficiency of Scripture. You don't need some Latter-day revelation or some supposed Latter-day prophet.

The sufficiency of Scripture is under attack today. And sometimes this happens in our own churches where you've got management techniques. You've got worldly methods of drawing crowds.

You've got entertainment. You've got extra-biblical revelations, mysticism, so-called healing meetings, psychological counselling. All of these things try to replace the sufficiency of Scripture.

[35 : 17] This book is sufficient. Sufficient. Sufficient. This is all that we need. The Lord Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice. And I know them. And they follow me. John 10, 27.

His voice is all we need. We need to hear it crystal clear. And make sure we're not misled. The Scriptures are His voice. Completely and utterly sufficient. So brothers, sisters today, let us hold fast the faithful word.

By it we are saved. In 1 Peter 1 it says, being born again, not of corruptible sin, but of incorruptible. In other words, it cannot be corrupted. It's incorruptible. It cannot be damaged or need some

refinement.

It is incorruptible. It is complete. By the word of God which liveth, talks of inspiration, and abideth, talks about preservation. It lives and it abides forever.

Amen. Brothers and sisters, I encourage you today, as Bible believers, to hold fast the faithful word. Hold it fast. It is the supreme and final authority for faith and life.

[36 : 20] And as we approach this book with reverence and godly fear and love, we'll be as the man who Isaiah spoke of that God praised, but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.

God says he'll look to the one. He'll look to the one who will look at his word and tremble and take it seriously and take it as true and take it personally. So this book has power to transform the soul.

It's the book that has changed the world. And the Lord Jesus says, the words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life. God is faithful and his word is faithful and reliable.

He keeps his promises to us. And so I urge you, one and all, hold fast the faithful word. Hold it fast. Firmly defend the Bible and hold it fast.

Now there's much more academic presentation I could give to counter those that would seem to undermine faith in the Bible. This is just a simple exhortation today.

[37 : 23] But if this has spoken to you and you'd like to contradict or argue the point, I welcome that and I'll be glad to meet with you. This is my plea for the church today, to have courage.

Have courage. Have courage, church. We have needed courage. Courage in a day when compromise abounds, when it seems like opposition is at every quarter and we see that we're in the school of hard knocks, how easy it would be to wimp out.

But we must have courage. Have courage in terms of being steadfast. Be steadfast. Steadfast as the ship's captain at the wheel. Steadfast, set your course and don't deviate.

Steadfastness as the early church had in the steadfastness of continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and in prayers.

May we as a church display that steadfastness, that courageous Christianity that committed steadfastness to doctrine and fellowship. That committed steadfastness to an unbending faith that will hold its course.

[38 : 26] To that steadfastness of service unto our master who deserves all the glory in that unrelenting, unmovable, always abounding service that he calls us to.

Have courage, church, to be steadfast. Have courage, church, to stand fast. Have courage to stand fast as a military unit. Courage that won't wimp out but courage that will take a stand.

Courage that will take a stand no matter what the cost, no matter what the heartache. And we will be as a church that will be as in Philippians 1. Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, always striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Stand fast in one spirit and in one mind. And it's time to man up. We need some men to rise up and take the challenge of being men. It's time to man up. Watch you stand fast in the faith.

Quit you like men. In other words, act like men. Be strong. We have need to stand fast for the fundamentals of the faith. Have courage, church, to be steadfast. Have courage, to stand fast.

[39 : 30] And thirdly, have courage, to hold fast. Courage to hold fast. Hold fast the faithful word. Titus 1 verse 9, we read that it says, Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Hold fast the absolute truth of the Bible. You can count on this word being true from cover to cover. In every word, in every jot, in every tittle, in every minute detail of it, this book is trustworthy.

And you can trust God to give you his faithful word. Preserved, precious, pure and powerful in the word of God. It is supernatural, supreme and the final authority in faith and life and sufficient.

So church, have courage today. Have courage to stand. Have courage to hold fast. Have courage to stand up for Jesus.