

Stand Fast in the Liberty of Christ | Galatians 5:1

Sermon

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Date: 22 July 2025

[0 : 00] Stand fast, stand fast. Now, normally when I share a message, oft times I refer to the soul winning time and the soul! winners that go out and usually tell some little story about what happened. But unfortunately! we hadn't got that many. It was just me Saturday, so I didn't end up going out. So I took the morning off and went home. And what should happen but two Jehovah's Witnesses knocked on our door. So that was kind of funny. And I was home to be able to talk to them. Pray for, there's a couple of fellows, Andrew and Ron, had a good chat with them. It's kind of sad with the Jehovah's Witnesses because they've got a lot of zeal, but they don't have the gospel. They don't have the good news. And it's kind of a sad thing, really, that as much as they're enthusiastic, that they miss the point, really they're in this bondage, this system of works, rather than knowing the gospel of true salvation. So it's kind of sad for them that they're in that state. And I suppose it follows on this message that we should stand fast, not go into bondage and religious systems of confusion, but to stand fast for the Lord, stand fast in the gospel, stand fast in the liberty. So that's my message today. And we're going to the scripture here as really the launching pad for what we're sharing today. And perhaps we could just stand together and read this verse together, can we?

Just read it together a couple of times. Galatians 5 verse 1, stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. And again, Galatians 5 verse 1, stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you as we come to your precious word now. Think of those couple of Jehovah's Witnesses and many others like them that are in that system of bondage. They don't know the liberty, the salvation that is in Christ. Lord, we thank you that we can talk about that wonderful gift of salvation today and know your grace and stand in that liberty. Lord, we thank you for every soul that is here, those gathered, those who might be joining from afar. Lord, we pray bless each one, receive our gifts. Lord, help us to have a heart to receive from your word now and bless each heart we pray in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Please be seated. Stand fast. God calls you to stand fast, brother, sister, today. And Paul's talking in the Galatians letter of the gospel of grace. And he says, stand fast.

And you could see some pictures there of, as he relates, of standing fast like a soldier would stand fast. And that's the kind of intent of the word of the standing. It's got a military aspect. Stand firm in the battle and hold your ground. Stand fast, it says. And like a runner would stand and keep on urging forward in that race to pressing towards the finishing line, that persistence, that steadfastness of the runner. And then as a farmer too, you could picture of a farmer persistently planting, keeping that hope as they sow, as they faithfully sow the seed. There's a steadfastness there. There's a standing fast. And it's the same for you and me. Don't give up. Don't give up. I know there's an old song, don't give up on the brink of a miracle. I mean, we can give up, can't we? We think of our example we heard of the testimony there, of the grace of God, that God can work wonders in our circumstances.

We can think of the grace of God. Don't give up. Don't retreat. Stand fast. Keep strong. Don't quit. Keep going. Trust in God. Trust in his promises. Trust in his faithfulness. Trust in his strength to see it through. And keep on keeping on. Keep on trusting your Lord. Even in times of trial, of suffering, of testing, he is faithful. Amen? God is faithful, isn't he? Say it together. God is faithful. He's faithful. Stand fast. Stand fast. And notice firstly, you could think of the liberty here. Stand fast in the precious liberty that you have. I know it's a great name for a little girl, isn't it? Liberty. Now we've got another little newcomer amongst us this morning. Congratulations to Trent and Bethany. And think of liberty. What a name. What a truth. What a blessed truth. Liberty.

[4 : 55] Amen? The precious liberty that we have. And it tells us there, stand fast, therefore, in the liberty. The liberty that you have. Wherewith Christ hath made us free. Think of it, of that liberty. We stand as free men. No longer enslaved. No longer in bondage. Set free. As the people of God were set free from Egypt and given liberty. We are free, aren't we? Free indeed. Amen? Free indeed. Know your freedom in Christ this morning. And there's true liberty here. Think of that truth of the liberty that you have. It tells us of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Free. And elsewhere, of course, this liberty, the glorious liberty of the children of God. Think of that. This is something you can't put into human terminology. The glorious liberty that we have. And from the context here, Paul had founded these churches in Galatia during his missionary journeys. Now there was a crisis. There was false teachers infiltrating. And they were urging the Gentile believers to go back to Jewish laws, circumcision or observance of the Mosaic law, as if that was required to be fully accepted by God.

And these teachers were kind of undermining the sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross, suggesting that faith alone was not enough. And Paul warns the Galatians here not to abandon the gospel of grace, of the liberty, of the grace of God, not to abandon the grace, the gospel of grace for a system of works, a works-based kind of religion. And we can stand fast today because of the grace of God, because we have true freedom. He set us free. He's liberated us by his precious blood.

There's liberty for the captives. Amen? And you can know a release. If you've yet to trust Christ, you can know a release that your sins can be forgiven. You can know his grace, a home in heaven, and you can know the reality of living in the grace of God. Christ is sufficient for you.

He saves us from sin, from fear, from enslavement, from bondages of all kinds. And Christ is sufficient this morning, that Christ has made us free. And we think of the standing fast in that reality of God's grace, of his work that's sufficient for our saving, for our sanctifying. The blood of Christ is sufficient.

And this liberty that we have, it means that we reject that kind of mindset that would say, I must do more to be accepted of God. I must do more to be accepted of God. No, it's the grace that saves you. Of course, you should do more, but that's not about the salvation part. Amen?

[7 : 47] The grace saves. And that's the grace that we need, the grace that saves. And trust that. Of course, we ought to do more to be honouring our Lord and glorifying him, but that's after the salvation. And we think of this truth that we set free. Think of it, brother, sister, you're free.

Free from sin's penalty. The wages of sin is death. You're set free from all of that, all of that condemnation. You're no longer condemned. And we stand justified in his righteousness, clothed with his righteousness. We're free from legalism in the sense that salvation is by grace through faith. It's not of works. And with this couple of men, Andrew and Ron, that I was talking to yesterday morning, I was trying to reinforce to them, Ephesians 2, for by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves. They kept trying to say, well, we've got to obey. We've got to be obedient. We've got to kind of keep on in our own strivings effectively to have salvation. No, it's by grace through faith, that not of yourselves. And I was politely, compassionately urging them to open their eyes and see this truth of the Saviour for their sin. And yet some are in this bondage where they feel that they have to earn it through works or rituals. Christ fulfilled all the law's demands on your part. He's freed you from the curse. Galatians 3.13, redeemed us from the curse of the law. And we're free to live for God. Of course, he wants you to walk in that truth of liberty, to be empowered by his spirit, to live out your life with the fruit of the spirit. Galatians 5, to be empowered to live righteously, to walk in the spirit. And Paul's shown us through his writings, Galatians, Romans, for example, Romans 3.28, he's shown us that a man is justified by faith, not by the works of the law. It's not by works. And if only people could realise that.

And Baptists can get it wrong too, that they're kind of trusting in some kind of work. No, it's faith. The works follow on. That's sanctification. We're children of God adopted into his family. And these false teachers were here with the Galatians trying to get them back to the law, some kind of law keeping, adding works to Christ's finished work. Yet there's a freedom we can know, brother, sister. And that's the truth of the word of God. As our Lord tells, if therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free, free indeed. We can know real freedom. And that's not to say we should do despite to the grace of God. But there's a freedom that is the foundation. That's the starting point. The freedom that we have. Our freedom was purchased for us. Everything was done for our freedom, for our setting free, that we can be free indeed. When Christ laid down his life for us, he

paid the price. He paid the penalty in full, paid in full. And Christ has opened the door to freedom for us now. We're set free. You could picture it as a prisoner set free from those prison bars, from that prison cell after years of being held in chains, set free. The chains falling off.

My chains fell off. My heart was free. You know, the song that we sing, the thing of the cell door swung wide open and stepping into the sunlight, no longer bound, no more bondage, but truly free. [11:41] The wonderful freedom that is in Christ, that Christ has given for you. You're set free. And realize that today and stand fast in that truth of the liberty. That sin's dominion and all of the chains and bondage and the confinement and the result of our sin, it's broken. The chain's broken.

And we can understand freedom today, true freedom. And so therefore we reject any system that enslaves. We think of where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There is liberty in Christ. So you're free, free indeed, free from condemnation, free from sin's guilt, free from fear, free from yourself. And so stand fast in that liberty. Know your freedom as a free child of God. Think about liberty in Christ.

Christ has made you free, free indeed. And then we think of this command to stand fast. As I say, it's a military term, as with a soldier standing, holding their post under enemy fire against the enemy's assaults, standing fast. Stand fast. Paul says stand fast. It's talking about steadfastness. A resolve, an unwavering commitment to hold fast no matter what, no matter the opposition. And the Galatians had these false teachers urging them to legalism, to rely on this law keeping for their salvation. And no, we should stand fast. That's not salvation. That's not the gospel.

As there's a liberty in Christ, there's freedom. There's a standing fast in the gospel of grace. Stand fast. And Paul says in similar terminology, watching, watch ye, stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men. Be strong. In other words, act like men.

[13:34] Be brave. We have to stand fast. You see, people are going to knock your door and they're going to say, well, you've got to do this, you've got to do that. Our organisation says this or that.

No, we're saved by grace through faith. It's not of works. And that's what we have to be clear about. We stand fast in the faith. The faith. By grace through faith alone. We believe in faith alone.

And some churches and false cults want to add to the finished work of the cross. And that's wrong. They would try to teach it's faith plus. No. As if faith in Christ is not enough. We stand fast against that. We stand fast against that. It's not faith plus. It's faith alone. In Christ alone. By grace alone. For the glory of God alone. We stand fast against the world, the flesh and the devil. The world would try to attack us. We've got to stand fast against the world. Think of the world we're living in. We know we're constantly barraged with the world, aren't we? With its values and priorities. With its Christ-hating ways. With its priorities that are false and contrary to God. With its affections and lusts. The world, the flesh. Six to drag us away. To old habits and sin. And carnal kind of thinking. And then the devil. The world, the flesh, the devil, the devil. Would try to steal our joy. And sow doubt. Destroy our faith. He is like a roaring lion. We should be vigilant.

[15:06] Again that military kind of analogy. That we've got this enemy that's constantly on the war path. Prowling around. Looking for the weak points. The Achilles heel. There's some kind of area where he can get you. And we have to stand fast against the world, the flesh, the devil.

Stand fast. It means to refuse to retreat. To refuse. Compromise. To persevere in faith. To have that faith that stands strong. Stands fast.

And when you think of this standing fast in the faith. It's really like a daily, hourly, moment by moment thing. It's a persevering. It's a pressing on. It's a steadfastness.

That we will hold our ground. And be firm. And stand fast. The faith. That Christ saves. And Christ is sufficient. And says I will not quit.

You see, as I know it was a sermon last week of that running of the race. Let us lay aside every weight and every sin. That does so easily beset us. Let us entangle us. And let us run that race.

[16:18] Run it with patience. Run it with endurance. Run it with perseverance. That race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus. Amen. Stand fast. We must stand against all that seeks to entangle us.

Think of a runner at the racetrack as if they were encumbered with some extra baggage and unnecessary encumbrances. We've got to let all that go and run the race. Let's just get focused as an athlete would focus and have that standing fast. That steadfastness. Also, as a soldier under fire as well, there was a time in the Gulf War. Apparently, the Prime Minister of UK, Margaret Thatcher

at the time, told President George H.W. Bush, this was the time of the Gulf War. She said, quote, this is no time to go wobbly. This is no time to go wobbly. Now, sometimes when there's a war on, they go wobbly and they don't know what they're doing and they change their policy and they maybe change their tactics or they lose their momentum. Don't get wobbly. In other words, don't get shaky.

Stand fast. This is a battle. This is a fight on our hands. Lift up the shield of faith. Amen. And stand your ground. Are we tempted to go wobbly? It's human nature, isn't it? We can get wobbly. We can get shaky. We can kind of flip-flop. No, we've got to be firm. Stand fast. It's got this sense where we're going to keep on towards the target. And we can feel like opting out, maybe opting out of prayer, feeling like not sharing our faith, dropping out of this or that.

No, we've got to lay aside every way. We've got to keep pressing forward. Set your sight on the finishing line, looking unto Jesus and pray for God's strength. So, brother, sister, I guess the exaltation here in a nutshell is to stand firm, to stand fast, to keep that resolve, to keep that resolve. Easier to drop the ball. And I'm encouraged to see some here that maybe they haven't fellowshiped for a while to be back in the saddle. Get in the saddle. Amen. God wants you to keep on in the race. [18:37] Get back into it. If you've dropped out, get back into the race. Think of some that are not here, that might be watching. I think we'd love to see them in church. We'd love to see them in the race, on the racetrack. Be a part of the church, visible. As much as you're part of the church, spiritual, it's good to be present and into fellowship. That's important. That's standing fast, isn't it? And think about how we should wait upon the Lord when our strength gets lacking, when we're feeling flagging at times on that racetrack of the Christian walk, the Christian life.

It tells us as this principle here in Isaiah 40, 31, that familiar passage that tells us, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, renew their strength, and they shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

It's about waiting on the Lord, isn't it? And sometimes we've got to get that refreshing again. And it's all about standing fast, standing firm. Keep that resolve. Keep that persevering heart, that steadfastness of faith, and stand fast for your Lord. And think of it as our text talked about that danger of entanglement. It's easy when we're running. Sometimes you get entangled.

Things drag us down. Paul warns, be not entangled again. Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. You can think of a picture of perhaps an animal snared, trapped in some hunter's net.

One moment, it's a bird flying free, soaring in the sky, and then it's caught in this hidden snare, and snared. The bird catcher, as it were, the snare of the fowler. It's one of the titles of the devil, isn't it? He's like a bird catcher, and wants to catch us in his little trap. And the Galatians were being tempted to retreat from the gospel of grace. There were these Judaizers, trying to bring them back under all of that. We're set free from that. We don't have that constraint. And yet, there was this bondage, this system of law, of human effort to earn their salvation.

[20:48] We know he cannot earn it. It never has been that we can earn it anyway. But Paul warns against returning to this yoke of bondage, this kind of idea that they had to go back to all of those ways, the law-keeping. And it's really a constriction of the gospel's freedom that we have.

Think of the yoke of bondage. It could take many forms. A system that enslaves the mind. A yoke of bondage. Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. What could it mean? Old sins can be like a yoke of bondage, can't they? It was maybe the old pattern of who you were, old patterns of habits, of addiction, of thought patterns. Christ has freed us from that, from that yoke of bondage, the old way of the old man. It's not who we are anymore. I'm not that Andrew Craig anymore.

It's that yoke of bondage, isn't it? The old man. We think of legalism, trying to earn God's favour. Now that's every religion but Bible Christianity, trying to earn God's favour as if through performance we can be saved. No, it's through Christ's work. Christ's work. They would try to say Christ's work isn't enough. This is what these well-meaning, smartly dressed, convincing kind of men were telling me, these Jehovah's Witnesses were telling me, that Christ's work is not enough. We've got to obey.

We've got to do and keep on doing and do, do, do. No, it's done. It's done. Everything's done. Amen. It's not about earning God's favour through our own works. Christ's work is sufficient. That is the truth of the gospel. And another yoke of bondage can be discouragement. We can get fearful. You know, our preacher was fearful, as I am fearful sometimes when I minister. But sometimes that fear can be a yoke of bondage. Oh, I'm too afraid. No, don't ask me, Pastor. Oh, go and ask somebody else. When the pastor says a volunteer, I'm asking for something. No, they just look at

their shoes and look out the window. You know, it's fear, isn't it? Fear can be a yoke of bondage. Don't ask me, Pastor. Don't ask me to do anything, to step out of my comfort zone to serve. It's a yoke of bondage, isn't it? You never do anything because you're too, oh, no. It's like that easy to retreat into our own kind of constriction. Oh, no, I might get hurt. Someone might pick on me and say something. Or someone might not like what I say.

[23 : 32] If we were held back by fear, we'd never do anything, would we? So overcome your fear with faith. And that discouragement, it can rob us of blessing, can rob others of blessings because you're not serving how he wants you to. And another yoke of bondage can be worldly distractions. Oh, you don't know what's on TV this morning or tonight. You don't know what's on worldly distractions. Other priorities. Hey, I've got this on my calendar. I can't.

Honestly, what matters? God's best. Oughtn't we to aspire rather than other priorities pulling us away when we know where we ought to be? It's a snare. It's a bondage. It's a yoke. And it robs us of blessing of joy. Biblical liberty. Biblical liberty emphasizes salvation by grace through faith. How can we be saved? We must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Simply that. And this is what I was trying to reinforce with these Jehovah's Witnesses. Are you saved? Are you born again? You must put your trust in Christ, in Christ alone, in Christ's work at the cross for your sin, in Christ alone, and trust fully in God's grace alone as the basis for your righteousness. People can get things wrong in that area. There was one time they found a man dead and he was clutching in his hand the key to his safe.

He wanted to make sure his money was, you know, he had control of his money. And then he breathed his last breath. We can get the priorities wrong, can't we? We can get the focus wrong. We can cling to our worldly treasures that cannot save. And so yoke of bondage, isn't it? Let's cast off everything, anything that slows our spiritual race. Let's get rid of any entanglement that would slow us down in our war with God. It's easy to get entangled with all of those things. And as a young man, for example, freed from addiction, saved, but they return to the old habits. It's that yoke of bondage. They're getting entangled again. In that moment of weakness, they start to drift and backslide and end up getting out of God's will. It's easy for those yokes of bondage to get a hold of us and drag us away.

[26 : 11] And we want to examine our own lives. Are we entangled again? In that old habit, that fear, that self-effort, that kind of the old way, well, I've got to do. No, that's the old way of thinking.

That's religion. But we can know that it's done. Salvation is done. And maybe we think of those yokes that we could cast off today. And I think, how can we let that go? Another aspect in our text, it tells us that in the context of Galatians, we see that there's a sowing to be doing, a sowing faithfully to the Spirit. And we read that in Galatians 6. Paul tells the Galatians, be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. We stand fast like a farmer would stand fast, sowing that seed.

Season after season, as the farmer would keep on sowing that seed, faithfully sowing that seed. There's a steadfastness there. And when you think about this picture, this analogy of sowing, every choice is a seed. And every choice yields a harvest. It's the same with you and me, isn't it? With our lives. We can sow to the flesh, chase after sin, selfishness, worldly pleasures, and we'll reap corruption. Or we can sow to the Spirit through prayer, following our Lord, sharing the Gospel, being in His will. And there's an eternal reward there. There's a blessing.

Paul says, don't get weary. Don't lose heart or grow faint. Faint not. Faint not. In other words, don't give up. It's easy to give up. That's the opposite of standing fast, isn't it? Give up.

[28 : 19] Faint. Imagine a weary farmer. They're sowing that seed in that hard, unyielding soil. You think of the examples of late. There's been a lot of challenges for farmers. And they could easily give up and abandon the work of trying to harvest. But if they persist, the harvest is going to come. If they persist, there's going to be a harvest. It's the same with us in your Christian walk. That faithful heartedness of sowing the seed. Put your time into that which is going to be eternally valuable.

That's going to bear fruit, good fruit, eternal fruit. And keep at it. We think that progression of what we sow, it's a familiar saying some have coined. Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny. What we sow has got a follow on, doesn't it? And every small choice matters. Every prayer, every kind word, sow it, sow that

prayer. Sow that word of encouragement. Sow that act of service. Sow that obedience to God. And it compounds over time. It's like interest in the bank. The more we sow, the more it multiplies. And the blessing multiplies to others too. What are we sowing? We could think of, for example, the tragedy of a young man in a drunken rage, killing a woman and the bitter harvest that comes from all of that, of sowing to the flesh. He was drunk and bad things happened. We sow to the flesh, we're going to reap corruption. And then in contrast, you could think of maybe another kind of sowing is, for example, one who would keep sowing the seeds of faith. Maybe keep sharing those little words of gospel witness with loved ones. There'll be an impact, an eternal harvest that you can reap.

Your choices today determine your harvest tomorrow. So think of it. How can you, brother, sister, how can you make some intentional decisions about, hey, maybe I could think about what can I sow?

To share my faith, to pray for a friend, to serve, to sow to the spirit. Stand fast, stick at it. It says, let us not be weary in well-doing. Sometimes we can serve and we get weary. We can naturally get weary.

[30 : 57] But faint not. Faint not. Every choice is a seed and every choice yields a harvest. So stand fast and sow wisely. In our standing fast too, you could think of another analogy. As we've talked about a farmer, again, we could talk about the soldier standing fast in the battle. It's a spiritual battle we have. And we're all in this together.

It tells us, Ephesians 6, of this wrestling that's going on, not against flesh and blood. Hey, we might have differences with humankind of different ways, but it's not about that.

It's about principalities and powers. It's about the rulers of the darkness of this world. It's spiritual wickedness in high places. That's where the real wrestling is going on. And we need to stand fast like a soldier, to be vigilant, to be battle ready, have that dogged persistence and determination to hold our position despite the enemy's assault.

You could think of an example of that. There was a time when David faced up to a giant. Who knows the story? David and the giant. It wasn't Goliath. It was years after Goliath. Years after David defeated Goliath, David faced another giant.

Some of us don't always think about this other giant that David faced. You read about him in 2 Samuel 21. A giant called Ishbi Benob. Everybody say that after me. Ishbi Benob.

[32 : 24] So David and Ishbi Benob. David went down, it says, and the context here was the Philistines were coming. And it says that David went down and his servants with him and fought against the Philistines.

And David waxed faint. So he got weary. David got weary and it says, and Ishbi Benob, which was of the sons of the giant, thought to have slain David. So along comes another giant.

He's dealt with Goliath, but this is sometime later, Ishbi Benob, another giant. And he thought to kill David.

Verse 17, but Abishai, the son of Zerua, succored him, or helped him, and smote the Philistine and killed him. There's a picture here of a giant. And we can think of giants we face as spiritual challenges.

David was weary. He was exhausted. And it says young Abishai comes along. Now Abishai was David's nephew. And Abishai stepped up and he defeated the giant.

[33 : 26] Think of the picture here of standing fast and of having others stand fast together with you. Stand fast together with you. Now thank God we've got people standing fast together.

Alright? We've got people standing fast together. In this church and like-minded churches have stood together with us. Thank God for people that stand fast together in the faith. And we see that some of the thoughts you could pick up from this story of the giant coming again, this other giant, that Satan persists.

He's going to keep after you. You might have one victory here. Goliath has got knocked out. And along comes another giant. And in the context there's another giant.

And another giant. We see this truth that Satan, our enemy, never gives up. And he returns with new challenges. You might say, I've got victory in my life, Pastor.

And then tomorrow, oh no. Another one. Another battle. Another giant. You know, Satan persists, doesn't he? It's the same with our Lord. In Luke 4.13, it says that Satan, it says, he departed from him for a season.

[34 : 39] Wow. Okay. We've got victory for a season, but then he's going to come back again. It says he departed from him for a season. Luke 4.13. So be ready for new challenges, brother.

Even if you're standing fast and you've stood fast and you've kept on standing fast, you've got to stand fast tomorrow. And the days after. We see God's provision that God raised up others to help David.

And it's the same for you and me, isn't it? That's why we've got a church. That's why we belong together. We can stand fast with one another. And God raised up Abishai to fight alongside David. It's the same for you and me, isn't it? Don't do ministry alone. You know, ask for prayer. Encourage that people want to pray before the service. We can pray for one another. We need to be dependent upon our Lord, don't we?

And have that heart to stand alongside one another. As prayer warriors. As mentors of others. Of encouragers. And we can get some encouragement too.

[35 : 39] David got some help here. Abishai helped David. David, the king. Yeah, he needed some help too. He needed some help. The pastor needs some help. Now there's a sense where we're not a lone ranger here.

David had help. And Abishai was there. And a good truth here is that the next generation is important too. We want to urge the next generation, don't we?

That's why I've encouraged this morning having some of the young fellows do some things. We need some Abishais. Some young believers to stand up. And they can learn to stand fast.

So when us older ones are gone, they're standing fast. And the work is standing fast. As older believers, we want to make way for the next generation. We want to help them, nurture them. Help them to grow. To seize their ministries. And urge that next generation to stand fast. And David fostered courage in others here as well to stand fast.

[36 : 38] There's a battle. There's a battle context here. And we want to see others rally to the core to support us in battle. Sometimes we can take that support for granted. You know, I know there's some people I say, Oh, can you help with this?

Can you help with that? You know who you are. Different ones amongst us that I say, Can you help me with this one or this thing or this or the other thing? We don't take that for granted. Here's a story to illustrate that.

There was a man called Charles Plum. And he was a US Navy jet pilot during the Vietnam War. And he had 74 successful combat missions. But on mission number 75, it was just days before he was set to return home, he was shot down.

His plane got shot down by a surface-to-air missile in Vietnam. And Plum ejected. He parachuted into the enemy territory. He was captured. He was held captive in a Vietnamese prison for six years.

And he survived later to become a motivational speaker. And he shared some of the lessons that he learnt from his ordeal. And years after his release, while dining in a restaurant with his wife, a man came up to him and says, Oh, you're Plum.

[37 : 48] You flew jet fighters from the Kitty Hawk. You were shot down. And surprised Plum asked, How did you know? And the man replied, I packed your parachute.

I guess it worked. And so Plum was overcome with gratitude. And he realised that this sailor had fastidiously, meticulously packed that parachute.

The meticulous work of the sailor had saved the fighter pilot's life. And that night, Plum couldn't sleep. He reflected on how the fighter pilot, he'd overlooked them.

He'd overlooked that sailor who had worked tirelessly under the deck, folding the parachutes for pilots that he didn't know. And Plum asked people now, Who's packing your parachute?

Who's packing your parachute? You've got to think about that, don't we? Of others that are helping us, helping us to stand fast. Hey, we ought to think about that. About others that are helping us.

[38 : 50] Like Abishai helped David. And acknowledge them. That they're helping you get through. And so this pilot, he was saved by a parachute. Fast like Abishai helped David.

And think of the spiritual battles that you get through. It strengthens others too, doesn't it? Think that David, he slew Goliath, and now Abishai slew Ish-bebanop.

And David slew the other one, alright? And we see the example there, that we can be a witness. By us standing fast, we can be a testimony to others. And think about the people who pack your parachute, as it were.

Others that help stand fast with you. And I love this one here. Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. Stand fast.

Pray for one another. That's why we want, as a church, to have times of prayer, praying for revival, for God to bless. Have that heart to stand fast together.

[39 : 49] And a closing thought too, of this truth of standing fast, is it's like a running with endurance. As we talked on before, of running the race with patience.

It talks about a steadfast endurance, under pressure. And we've all got our own race to run. And we've all got weights to get rid of. We've got sin. Let's be as a marathon runner.

And it's true, apparently, of marathon runners, they hit the wall about mile 20. Exhaustion comes. They've got to get that second wind to keep on running. Sometimes we can run, and we're flagging. We get tired. Keep running. Don't quit. Stand fast. If you feel like giving up, look unto Jesus, know his help, and finish strong.

And sometimes in that running race, we've got to have the idea, the mindset, hey, it's a long distance event too. And some have said, there's a saying, new levels, new devils.

[40 : 58] In the sense that, you know, we might get through one level. Almost like playing those, not that I play video games, but, oh, I've got through level one. Oh, now level two. Oh, it gets a bit harder. Level three, it gets a bit harder.

You know, new levels, new devils. I'm not meaning to encourage you to play such things, but that sense where, when we get through one victory, there's new giants coming at you.

You get through those giants. There's more giants yet ahead of you. That sense where there's new challenges in the faith, isn't there? So we keep that running race. There's a sense where, hey, you get victories here.

You got through one stage of the race, but there's more stages. There's new levels. There's new devils. There's new challenges. But God's grace is sufficient all along the way. Amen. As we grow our faith.

Praise God. So keep on running with endurance. And another thought really is to trust the Lord in suffering too. That sometimes in that running race, there's going to be tests and trials.

[41 : 58] There's a chastening. The Lord loves the ones he chastens, it says. There's going to be a partaking of his holiness there. It's like a father chastens a child, training them, disciplining them.

They're shaping that child. And that's what suffering does for us. I noticed the testimony earlier. The thing about suffering or the times of testing, God's doing something. So we're going to learn.

So we're going to grow. Others will benefit. Others will learn of our testimony. And in it all, that God's grace is sufficient. And we can glorify God like Job through his trials, like Paul with his thorn to find the sufficiency of the Lord.

And knowing the truth, Romans 8, 28, that all things work together for good to them that love God, et cetera. And sometimes the works of God should be made manifest as in the blind man's healing as well.

We think of Fanny Crosby, blinded at six weeks old. She could have despaired. Yet she wrote over 8,000 hymns, some of which we're still seeing now. And she wrote this.

[43 : 02] She says, I think God intended this for my good, that I might be a blessing for others. Think of the millions that she's impacted through her testimony. God uses our trials to shape us and bless others too, to shine through us.

And so be steadfast in those times that are hard. Be steadfast in the hard times. When sorrow comes, when hardship comes, when loss comes, run to Jesus.

Keep on running that race. And when we're pressing towards the mark, and I know the analogy was talked about last week, we think of that runner in the race. They look at their finishing line.

They look at the ribbon. They see in the spiritual terms, looking unto Jesus. And the runner in the race doesn't look at the other runners. The runner in the race doesn't say, oh, that runner's not running so good or I'm running faster than this runner.

No, just run your own race. Run your own race. And we don't care what some other churches are saying that might be contrary. We want to keep running our race as the runner would run in his own lane.

[44 : 08] And we don't look at the other lanes. We focus on our own path, our own journey, our own failings, our own need of Christ to run and focus our path on the finish line.

You have your own God-given race to run. And that's the truth for all of us. We've all got our race to run. So let's run well and keep on running. Have that steadfastness. And we know that God's going to finish what he started as it tells us here.

He's going to finish what he started. And there's a harvest to come. There's a harvest to come. Don't give up. Don't faint. Keep on sowing the seed. Don't be weary in well-doing.

As that steadfastness, as that standing fast, we can be inclined to think, wow, it's kind of hard. Stand fast. Be steadfast. There's a fruit there.

We know Romans 5, it talks about trials produce patience. There's experience. There's hope. Trials produce things. There's good things come out.

[45 : 11] And 1 Peter 1 talks about the tested faith is more precious than gold. That faith that is tried. And brother, sister, know this, there's an eternal reward ahead.

Paul says, I've fought a good fight. Hey, this is a fight. He says, I've fought a good fight and I've finished my course. He's here on the last leg of this running race.

He says, I've kept the faith. And henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love is appearing.

Galatians 5 tells us, stand fast. Don't quit. Stand fast. And don't go back to the yoke of bondage. Keep on sowing faithfully.

Keep on running faithfully. Keep on fighting faithfully. The world, the flesh, the devil, the world would whisper, quit.

[46 : 12] Give up. But the devil is wrong. God says, stand fast. God says, stand fast. Press on. And so to recap, think of it, stand fast in the liberty.

You're set free. Glory. Glory. Glory. Set free. You've got true freedom from sin, the law, from yourself to live for God, for his truth.

Free indeed. Free indeed. Stand fast. In the liberty, stand fast. Like a faithful soldier would stand fast. The missiles are coming, but they're going to keep on the front line.

Don't get wobbly. Stand fast. Be not entangled with the yoke of bondage, old sins, old habits. The old man, kill him, crucify him, nail him, nail him down again, die daily, kill the old man, the world, the yoke of bondage, be not entangled again, and keep on sowing.

Every choice is a seed. It yields a harvest. Every day we decide to do one thing or the other. Are we going to sow to the flesh or sow to the spirit?

[47 : 22] What are we going to sow to? Choose to sow to the spirit. Amen? And then you'll have a spiritual harvest. Choose the spiritual thing to do with your time. Sow to the spirit and keep at it.

Stand fast like a faithful farmer keeps planting and faint not, even if there's new giants, new levels, another giant, another giant, new battles to fight.

Stand fast and run with patience like a faithful runner, trusting God through trials, whatever circumstance, press on, keep on, don't let the trials deter you, let them make you firmer and more resolved.

Stand fast and don't quit. Stand fast. Trust God's character, his promises, his power. A winner never quits, a quitter never wins.

Keep sowing, keep running, keep trusting, keep planting, keep following until we see Jesus, until we see his face.

[48 : 32] Stand fast in the liberty that you have. You're set free. You've got a glorious liberty. You have eternal life. I was trying to urge that when these men that are Jehovah's Witnesses, really false Jehovah's Witnesses, because they're not really Jehovah's Witnesses, but of the false prophet organisation, and to tell them 1 John 5, you can know that you have eternal life if you believe on the name of the Son of God.

You know that you have it if you put your faith in Christ, but they're in this yoke of bondage. They can't see it. But we can stand fast in that liberty of the gospel of grace.

Stand fast in the liberty of Christ and keep on standing. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, stand fast, unmovable, be unmovable, always, always abounding.

Keep on sowing in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. let us pray. Lord, we thank you that we can know your saving grace.

We pray that each one can have that assured knowledge today as we know you as prophet, as priest, as king, as our substitute, our saviour, and know the forgiveness of our dreaded sins

because of the grace of God, because your blood was poured out on our part, because the penalty of our death was paid at the cross.

[50 : 03] Thank you, Lord, that we can know a setting free from our sin and the penalty of it, the power of it, the presence of it by your grace. Lord, help us, we pray, that we can have that victory to know salvation and to walk in that truth that we're free indeed.

We've got a glorious liberty. Pray each one might have that heart's knowledge today that we're no longer in that prison cell of our own making, but we've been set free.

You've released us, Lord, from all of the guilt and shame and, Lord, you've set us free that we might be children of God to walk in that truth, to walk in that glorious liberty, to walk in that walk of faith of your spirit.

Help us, Lord, when the old flesh rises up that will nail it down again. Lord, help us that will crucify our flesh. Lord, to get daily victories we'll see those new levels and those new challenges, those new giants, Lord, and we'll help one another like Abishai helped David.

Lord, we'll rally together, we'll stand fast together in the faith. Lord, help us to have that heart that this faith, this saving faith, is what saves us and what motivates us, Lord, to know your love, to know your saving.

[51 : 18] Lord, we pray every heart might know that grace today that saves us from our sin and stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.