

STAND with Jesus

A sermon on Matthew 10

We are finishing up our sermon series called **STAND**.

We learned that the only way to stand at peace with God is to stand **IN GRACE**.

We learned that that only way to stand in that *invisible* grace is to stand **BY FAITH**.

We learned that the only way to stand strong in faith is to stand **ON GOD'S WORD**.

Today we want to change prepositions one more time and learn what it means to stand **WITH Jesus**.

Before we do that, a prayer: **O Lord, strengthen us by the truth. Your Word is the truth. Open our eyes to see what you want us to see; open our ears to hear what you want us to hear; and open our hearts to believe what you would have us believe. Amen.**

I. The Challenge of Standing with Jesus

The lesson for today is taken from Matthew 10. It's a speech given by Jesus to twelve men that Jesus hand-selected to stand with him as disciples.

This speech takes place before Jesus sends them out to walk the roads, find people, and tell others that Jesus was the Savior.

I imagine these guys were excited.

They had seen Jesus do some amazing things.

They had heard Jesus preach some incredible sermons.

They had watched as tremendous crowds of people followed Jesus.

Perhaps they were excited for the same thing to happen to them.

I'm sure Peter could envision all the smart things he'd say to his soon-to-be thousands of followers on Twitter.

But Jesus tells them to expect something different.

Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves...So be on guard against people. (Matthew 10:16-17)

Jesus immediately insinuates that there will be danger if they stand with him.

The word he uses is translated, "Be on your guard," or "beware."

It's the same word we use to tell people about the vicious Golden Retriever residing behind the futon.

Beware...

If you get close, you may get slobbered to death.

Or at least some hair on your pant leg.

I've warned you.

Here Jesus says, "**Beware...of people.**"

Like religious people. "**They will hand you over to councils, and they will whip you in their synagogues.**" (v.17)

Like political people. "**You will be brought into the presence of governors and kings for my sake.**" (v.18)

Like people in their own family. "**Brother will hand over his brother to death, and a father will do the same with his child. Children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.**" (v.21)

It doesn't stop there:

You will be hated by all people because of my name... (v.20)

Like people you work with.
Like people who live next door to you.
Like people you are considering dating.
Like people you are dating.
Like people you have dated.
Like people who teach you 11th grade science.
Like people on social media.
Like people who are behind you at the Starbucks drive thru and do not appreciate the Bible reminder you put on your bumper sticker.

Friends, here's a **TRUTH:**
When you stand WITH JESUS, many will stand AGAINST YOU.

That's important for us to remember.
Because sometimes as followers of Jesus, we expect things to get easier.

On the one hand, that's true. We have absolute forgiveness and salvation in Jesus. There's not any guilt left for us to conquer. We will be in heaven.
On the other hand...

Maybe something like this has happened to you.
You head to Starbucks, grab a coffee and sit down to do some work in their outdoor patio area.
You strike up a conversation with the guy sitting near you.
You both agree that COVID stinks and you can't wait for it to be over.
You ask if it has affected their job.
They explain that it hasn't changed much because they work for a software company and it's easy to work from home.
You explain that you also have been working from home, but came to Starbucks for a brief change of scenery.
He says he understand and is glad he can still get a frappucino, even if it means social distancing.
You say, "Speaking social distancing: Why did the chicken cross the road?"
He says, "He doesn't know."
You say, "Because the chicken behind it didn't know how to social distance properly."

He laughs.
You laugh.
You set your bag down and get out your Bible. You're going to read while you're at Starbucks.

He says, "You're a Christian?"
You say, "Yes."
He says, "How can you believe any of that junk?"

And he puts his mask back up.
He turns his head into another direction.
And goes onto his phone.

Conversation over.

Maybe you've had something similar happen to you.
Why?

Jesus explains this phenomena:
A disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his master. If the master of the house was called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! (v.24-25)

It's logical really.
If someone hates Jesus' teachings, how will they feel when you tell them, "I follow Jesus' teachings."

If someone hates Jesus' work, how will they feel when you tell them, "I work for Jesus."
If someone hates God, how will they feel when you tell them, "I belong to God's family."

TRUTH:

People who stand against JESUS will stand against JESUS' FOLLOWERS.

Do take note this isn't a possibility.

This isn't a plausibility.

This isn't just something that might happen if you aren't careful to be polite.

This is a reality.

Jesus uses future active language these events.

They **will** hand you over. (v.17)

You **will** be brought to governors. (v.18)

Brother **will** betray brother. (v.21)

You **will be hated**. (v.22)

According to Jesus, it is a fact that if you stand with him,

Others will stand against you.

So...

Here's an important question:

Are people standing against you?

*Are you catching flack **because** you love Jesus?*

I don't mean that you're being threatened with death. Praise the Lord we live in a nation that says, "You can't kill anyone for their faith" – which includes our faith in Jesus. I'm not advocating that this be the case. (Although in some parts of the world, this is the case.)

The question for you, first-world American believer is this:

*Is there **any** friction in your life because of your faith in Jesus?*

If not...

Well..

One of the things you can do on Social media is you can LIKE "pages." This is your way of saying you support that pages. It is a way for Facebook's algorithm to send you content that you enjoy and increase the audience for that page's message.

Some of you like Gethsemane for example.

That increases the likelihood that you will see our posts and events.

It also increases our exposure as we plant Jesus in North Raleigh.

The other day I decided to look back on my profile and see all the things that I like.

Some of them were expected:

Doritos.

The Packers.

Starbucks.

But some of the things I found...

I had forgotten that I had LIKED them.

Like the book, "The Catcher in the Rye". Honestly, I don't think I ever finished it way back in American Literature class. And I can't remember what it's about. But I think I put it on there because I set up this profile when I was single, and I imagine that this was my way of seeming intelligent to my future wife.

I liked “Aladdin.” Which is cool. I do like it. But I’m not sure why I liked it enough to make it my “must know information” about me to all who view my profile.

I liked “Joshua Radin.” Who is a guy who sang that one song that was popular that one time.

Finally, I also liked “jogging.”

Not a book.

Not a movie.

Just jogging.

The exercise

Which is proof that this whole “LIKE” concept is a lie.

Is that how you follow Jesus?

Is it just something you did once because it seemed cool at the time?

Is it something people would have to search deep in your life, somewhere on tab number five, in order to know it was a part of you?

Is it hidden under all the popular, cool, and *straight fire* things that society likes so you blend in and life is comfortable?

Remember – Jesus said that when you follow him there will friction between you and the world.

Because there’s always friction between Jesus and the sinful world.

So...

For your consideration...

If you say that you are following Jesus.

But you aren’t experiencing any kind of friction.

Not a disgusted look.

Not a disappointed, “You won’t join us in our sin.”

Not a shocked: “Why would you live your life *that way?*”

Not even an angry emoji.

Then either Jesus is a liar...

Or...

Maybe you are.

II. Blessings of Standing with Jesus

Do you know what the most quoted command in the Bible is?

It isn’t “love God.”

It isn’t “love others.”

It’s “Do not be afraid.”

Or another version of it like:

“*Do not fear.*”

“*Fear not.*”

“*Do not be terrified.*”

This section of Scripture is no exception.

Jesus says:

Do not be afraid. (v.26)

Do not fear. (v.28)

So do not be afraid. (v.31)

One of the main reasons that we might be afraid to stand publicly with Jesus is fear.

Fear of acceptance.

Fear of what others will say.

Fear of what others will do.

To that fear, Jesus, “Do not be afraid to stand with me.”

And with good reason:

(1) Jesus Saves

If you’d like to live forever, stand with Jesus.

Because standing with your political party won’t do it.

Nor will standing with that political party.

Nor will standing with society.

Nor will standing with your friends.

Nor will standing with your family.

If you want to live forever, you need to stand with Jesus.

He lived perfectly when you couldn’t.

He died innocently in your place.

He brought forgiveness for all your sins.

Whoever endures to the end will be saved. (v.22)

Notice there is zero doubt in Jesus’ voice here.

Just like when he said, “Kill me and three days later, I will come back to life.”

They killed him.

And he came back to life.

Jesus speaks with certainty here.

If you stand with him here, you will stand with him there.

If you stand with him on earth, you will stand with him in heaven.

If you stand with him now, he promises to stand with you forever.

(2) Jesus Reveals the Truth

Jesus is holy.

The world is sinful.

The natural friction between holy Jesus and this sinful world leads the sinful world to conclude that *Jesus was the bad guy*.

The same thing happens today.

A consequence of following Jesus is the sinful world will conclude that Jesus followers are often considered to be the bad guy.

And nobody likes to be the bad guy.

Jesus says this, **“Do not be afraid of them, because there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and**

nothing hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim from the housetops. (v.26-27)

Did you hear that?
The truth is revealed.

The truth is that Jesus is the Savior.
One day everyone will realize that.
Whether they are standing on his side or not.

And if you're standing on his side, listen to this --
It will be revealed that you are stand on the winning side.
You stand in truth.

You aren't the bad guy.
You're the good guy.
Because you are the forgiven guy.
Because Jesus is THE Good Guy.

(3) Jesus Controls Eternity

Because, honestly, what is the worst people could do to you?

For these disciples, it was death.
They would face death for the sake of Jesus.

And if history is to be believed, they faced death in some terrible ways.

Thomas had a spear thrown through his body.
James the Less was sawn in half.
Bartholomew was skinned.
Peter was crucified upside down.

All of which sounds awful.

But then again...
Each gruesome event only lasted for about 1 minute, tops.
Then, eternal bliss.

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (v.28)

They heard Jesus say that.
Then, they saw Jesus die.
And come back to life.

Now they stand eternally in heaven with him.

The same is true for you.

Don't fear losing a Facebook friend.
Don't fear losing popularity.
Don't fear losing a job.

Stand with Jesus.
You will stand eternally.

(4) Jesus Cares Deeply for You

Daniela loves *pajaros*.

The very first day that we had her with us, we spent the afternoon at the park across the street. The park was filled with *pajaros*.

That's the Spanish word for birds.

She'd see one over here, point and say, "Ah!"

Then, quickly she'd see another out of the corner of her eye and say, "Ah!"

She'd see one across the playground area and then embark on what must have seemed like an epic journey for her little legs, all the way across the park just to be near the pajaros.

Jesus says this: **"Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without the knowledge and consent of your Father. So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. (v.29-31)**

He is so very interested in your life.

He is so very invested.

When you face some kind of friction for your faith,

He is there.

Right beside you.

Cheering you on.

Do not be afraid to stand with Jesus.

Because he stands with you. Amen.