

# Make Christ Your Standard for Manhood

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 16:13

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## **Eastvale Reformed Presbyterian**

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The sermon this morning comes from 1 Corinthians 16. Please turn with me there. I'll read verses 13 and 14.

“13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in love.”

Pray with me.

*Our great and powerful Lord, thank you for your powerful word that you give us. Use it this morning to change our hearts and change our minds and be glorified, Father, as our lives are changed as we point to you and as we point to your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.*

A number of years ago, I was sitting at a traffic light on Route 7 near Steubenville, Ohio and there was a car in front of me and as I observed the two people in it, the driver, a male, reached over and grabbed the hair of the female and he violently yanked her head back and forth. My breathing quickened, I felt my face flush and I reached for the handle on the door to confront the man and the light changed and the man drove away. What could I do? I had thought about following him and challenging him with his activity, instead, I drove to the nearest police department and I told them what I saw and gave them the man's license plate. What stirs in our hearts or what stirs our hearts more than violence against women, violence against children? This should stir something in the hearts of men as well because, men, you have been set in a place where you are to protect. You are called to be; you are meant to be protectors. And as we think about this woman treated violently, I would have you consider the church of Jesus Christ who is called the bride of Christ, the violence that the church suffers.

With this in mind, one day I posted a note that said, “I think Christian men need to man up.” I got several positive responses from this but I also got one negative response. It was from a lady who said, “I don't think that lines up with my thinking of a Christian man, this idea, of manning up.” She said, “That doesn't strike me as Christ-like.” Well, I responded and said, “Manning up in the sense of doing what's right even though it's hard.” I pointed to Christ and several instances with him where he did what was right even though it was hard: when he went to the temple, when he took cords and twisted them together and drove the people out; when he confronted sin with the Sadducees and

Pharisees and said, "Woe to you, you brood of vipers. You travel over land sea to make a single convert and then you make them twice as much a son of hell as you are." I pointed to Christ being the hero and the champion and laying down his life for the bride.

With this imagery of a man, how many of us need to man up to be the Christian that you were called to be? How many of you here are men? How many of you aspire to be one day? How many of you know a man? How many of you teach children as you would hope to be a man some day? How many of you hope to marry a man some day? You see, this application and this Scripture here as it tells us that men are to man up, they are to be strong, they are to be alert, they are to act like men, applies to this whole congregation. So, what I call on you to do this morning is to use Christ as your standard for manhood as you aspire to be men, as you train up young men and as you look for a husband. And, ladies, none of you would have to look very far to find a woman who gave their heart to someone who wasn't a Christian man to know the pain that comes from that. So men, women, children, use Christ as your standard for manhood.

First, I'll read the passage again, "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." I call on you to seek godly manhood as strong and courageous. In our culture, manhood has been watered down and it is something that is daily mocked on television. As you watch commercials, you see the father as the one who has no idea what's going on and it's often the children pointing him in the right direction. He's simply someone that families roll their eyes at and laugh at or laugh about. This is the work of the devil as men are meant to be the pictures of Christ in the home, to be the ministers and the pastors of the home. As I looked up the word there for "act like men" it's andrizomai and it's the only place that it's used in the New Testament and as I looked back in the Old Testament, looked at the Greek translation, it was one of those rare times where you find exactly what you want to find: act like a man means everything that I would ever dream that I wanted it to mean. It means they are beautiful when they are courageous and they are strong.

Joshua used the term when they had captured the five kings and they were stuck in a cave and he calls all the elders and the leaders of homes out and he says, "Come here. Come here. Open the cave." And they opened the cave and they brought out the five men and he says, "Be strong and courageous and put your feet on their necks." That same word: act like men and put your feet on the necks of these kings. Then they put these evil kings to death. You are called upon, men, to act like men. Indeed, everywhere through the Scriptures as we look where it says, "Be strong and courageous," the word is andrizomai, act like men.

One of the words in the Hebrew is chazak which we took great delight in, in the seminary. We had a student named Zack and Zack was one of those mountains of a man. He had thick, dark, curly hair and he was huge and strong and intelligent and as a little man, I always look at those guys and I wonder, "Could I take him?" And I put up with him walking through the halls looking so big and strong for two years and then in my senior year, I had to know. I had to know so I started antagonizing Zack and antagonizing him and messing with him and he just would say, "Stop it. Stop it," and I wouldn't so

finally one day he just grabbed a hold of me and he threw me like a rag-doll onto the couch. Now, I am by no means a big guy but I'm no rag-doll and when I went for Zack again, he threw me again and he threw me again and he threw me through a table and he said, "This is fun!"

But this word "chazak: strong, courageous." I want you to take this guy and have this imagery and if you're small like me, it doesn't matter but it's courage of the heart. As we look at this passage, it's standing firm; it's doing what's right; it's being alert. We see the same words used in 2 Samuel where Absalom tells someone to go and murder his enemy and he says, "Don't be afraid. Be courageous. Act like a man and take this evil guy out."

It's used all through the Old Testament when the people are told to follow God and follow his word. David uses it when he's telling Solomon to, "Be strong and be courageous. Be a good king. Be strong. Let your heart take courage," in Psalm 27:14. And Daniel is told, "Take courage," and makes it a verb, "be courageous." Men of the church see being a man as being strong and being courageous for the purpose of protection, for the purpose of leading. Make certain that your view of strength and courage is defined by this and defined by Christ.

Now, look for a godly manhood that takes its stand against sin. Christ did this in his work on the cross and Christ also did this as he walked the earth for those 33 years. In John 4:16, this is a difficult passage as Jesus was dealing with the woman at the well and he dealt with sin decisively but gently. Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.'" Jesus could have just ignored that, instead he said, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.'" What an awkward and difficult moment but Jesus was not afraid to deal with sin. He was not afraid to deal with the issues and then you must not be afraid to deal with the issues.

First, in dealing with sin in your own lives. First and foremost, dealing with sin in your own lives. But then also, dealing with it in the lives of others, strong enough to address people's sins because this is loving, because this is the loving thing to do. I already mentioned Jesus dealing with the Pharisees much more harshly and there is a time for men to be harsh, there is a time for men to be aggressive. Many come from a church where the Christian men there are weaklings, where they are cowards, where they are the ones who are mocked and made fun of, where they are quiet and they are shy and they just put on a godly smile and go about their business and would never, ever, confront someone's sin. But this is not the model Christ has set. Christ would have you to be men, where you see unrepentant sin, especially in people who should know better, where you say, "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, you brood of vipers."

Be men of courage. Be men who are courageous. Be men who are strong. And, ladies, look for that. Look for that in the men that you would make your husbands. Look for that. Wives, encourage that in the men that you now have. Mothers, encourage that in your sons. Teachers, encourage that in the children that you deal with. Teach them to be

strong. Teach them to be courageous. Tell them, first, to deal with their own sins but also not to stand by as sin is flaunted in front of them.

Jesus also dealt with this decisively with his friends and so must you. The people around you, those that you would claim to love and that you would claim to care for, you must not let sin reign in their lives and go unexposed. When Peter came to Christ and asked him, "How many times shall I forgive my brother?" Jesus laid it out very plainly and then exposed the sin in Peter's life, letting him know that he had been forgiven so much and then he said, "The man who will not forgive will be turned over to the torturers," until that man had paid back everything that he owed. So Jesus, in dealing with Peter, let him know that, "You are in danger of the torturers until you can pay me back everything you owe." Exposing his sin.

Paul dealt with it decisively also dealing with Peter in Galatians 2, "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned." Your friends, who would wallow in their sins, stand condemned and must be dealt with. You see, there is this false notion in Christian manhood that we're weak and we're complacent but here God tells you to act like a man and to deal with sin.

We see it in this passage. Look with me again at verse 13, "Be on the alert." Be on the alert. This is a warning. This says, "Look out!" This says, "Watch out!" As if you were walking down the street and someone yelled, "Look out!" and you would duck and you would turn to see what the danger is. Men, be on the alert. Look out for sin. Look out for sin in your heart and look out for the temptation for complacency. I would take you back to your first father, Adam, and remind you of that terrible day in the Garden where the serpent came and tempted Eve and then she gave Adam the fruit. Adam who was with her; Adam who watched this happen. And we are sons of Adam: complacent in dealing with our own sins; complacent as the battle rages around us; complacent as the bride of Christ is grabbed by the hair and shaken.

We stand by and are content to go through the motions. You must be alert against your complacency as Adam that day should have taken a rock and smashed in the head of the serpent. We then see Christ accomplish that. Christ comes and he defeats death and he crushes the head of the serpent on the cross and this is the Christ that you are called to follow, the Christ that you are called to model your life after. Man up. Man up. As you would become red in the face as you saw that woman shaken by her hair, become red in the face and become angry about the way the church is treated: treated by Satan; treated by one another. And be the men that you must be, protecting this church, protecting the congregation, protecting the saved and even marching off into the darkness to find the lost. This is who you are called to be.

One of the comments when I said, "Christian men need to man up," was from a woman who said, "That's kind of hard to do when women keep sliding into the driver's seat." Women make your men man up. Make them do what needs to be done. That's not by grabbing them and jamming them into the driver's seat but just leave it empty. Leave it

empty until they do what they have to do. Pray for them. Encourage them. Strengthen them to be the men that they must be: men who are alert; men who stand firm against sin.

Next in verse 13, “Stand firm in the faith.” Men, what is this faith that you must stand firm in? Standing firm sounds so strong but then it's in faith and that is in trusting someone else. That is: stand firm as you are trusting Christ. Trusting this great salvation that has been purchased for you. If you have trusted in Christ, you must continue in your relationship with him. We see that even Jesus Christ, the perfect man, in Luke 5:16, it says, “But he himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.” To be a godly man, to be strong, you must have this relationship with the Father: spending time with him; knowing him; and being strengthened by him.

In Joshua 1:9, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” How can you stand firm? How can you be strong? By knowing that the Father is with you, knowing that he is your strength. In Psalm 118:14, “The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.” You see, it's this strange and bizarre thing: as Christians we are weak and strong at the same time. I am weak in the things that I can accomplish; I am weak in being able to be a good husband; I am weak in being able to be a good father; I am weak in being able to be a good pastor; I am weak in being able to proclaim the gospel to you with any strength and power at all. But we are strong in Christ. You are strong as the Holy Spirit lives within you. You are strong as you have been called sons of God and told to march forth and told to conquer and told to lay hold of the kingdom of God. And as you are told that the gates of hell will not prevail against the kingdom, you are therefore told to go and kick in the gates of hell itself.

Men, be men. Go to the lost. Go to the weak and rescue them. Embrace this bride and love her. How many times as children as we play knights and heroes and champions and we always needed that princess to rescue. The church is that princess. The church is that bride. The church is that maiden. Why are men aggressive? Why do we love to go to football games and see big guys hit each other? Why do little boys run around and want to wrestle across the floor? Because God has designed them to be warriors. God has designed them to be mighty in battle. God has designed them to be aggressive.

So men, where is your strength going? What are you applying it to if not applying it to the church? If not applying it to the bride? Where are you wasting it? Where are you using it sinfully? Repent, men. Repent of the wasted energy that you are spending on yourself and spend it on the church. Spend it on the bride of Christ. Be men. Be champions. Be strong and courageous and step up and care for this bride that Christ has laid his life down for. Again, women, look for men who do this. Encourage them and strengthen them.

So men, be committed to protect those God has placed around you. We see this word “chazak” and “andrizomai” come out again in 2 Samuel 10:12, “Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight.” For the sake of his people. For the sake of

his bride. For the sake of his cities. For the sake of the kingdom of God, be strong and courageous. In Isaiah 1:16, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.” Men, did you ever need a stronger charge than this? Have you ever needed more purpose in your life than this? Do this. Be strong.

Look at the way that men treat women. It is tragic. Tragic. They are made objects in the media and in print and on the internet. Those that you are called to protect are simply made slaves. Simply made objects. And we run around and play like children. So often we treat women as if they're something to be mocked, something that exists for our pleasure, as if we should make fun of them and tease them just to get a rise out of them. This is sinful. It is sinful not to cherish a woman. It is sinful not to protect her. You are meant to stand by and give strength and to give security. And I will say this to our children, the boys in our midst: cherish the girls around you. They're not here for you to mock. They're not here for you to make fun of. For you to tease. For you to push around. They are here so you can step up and be a champion. So that you can protect them. And so that you can love them. Do that. It is time to put away foolish things and it is time to behave as Christ, the one who laid his life down for the woman, for the bride. Do that and be that and take your stand for Christ, following Christ, marching for the final victory.

In Revelation 19, starting with verse 11, we get this picture of where we are going and who we will be. John writes,

“11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”

And here we come,

“14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.' 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, 'Come, assemble for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.' 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the

earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

“20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

You see, Christ is coming in ultimate victory. Ultimate victory and you are called upon to make the way straight. You are called upon to stand firm as you look forward to this great King and this great Judge and to deal with sin decisively. Why do we deal with sin? Verse 14 of 1 Corinthians 16, “Let all that you do be done in love.” Dealing with sin is the most loving thing that you can do for anyone because you see the great judgment that is coming and God has told you, “Be on the alert. Stand firm in the faith. Act like men and be strong.” Pursue this manhood. Pursue this manhood that Christ has modeled. Champion this manhood in your life. Champion this manhood in your family. Champion this manhood among your peers. And pray for it, ladies. Pray for it. Pray for it in your husbands. Encourage it and teach it in your sons. And look for it in your future spouses.

Pray with me.

*O, our God, forgive us for our weakness. Forgive us, Father, of our complacency. Forgive us for playing like children when you have called us to be men. God, make us men. Make us strong and truly courageous. Be glorified in our lives. Be glorified in every relationship that we have: as friends, as brothers, as fathers, as teachers. Father, bless the marriages that will flow from a biblical model as men step up and are leaders. God, we thank you for this great commission that you have given us. We thank you for your Spirit to strength us and enable us to fulfill this so that you will be glorified. It is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*