

JUDE: The Call To Stand

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Bible Text: Jude 1-3

Preached On: Sunday, January 5, 2014

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This morning I would encourage you to get your Bibles out and if you're one of those who is technologically savvy, that you have brought an electronic Bible, you use an app on your phone or tablet or such, the beginning illustration is going to be somewhat difficult. No, it's not going to be difficult for you, you just have a very unfair advantage. You see, when I was a child growing up in church, before the days of Awana Ministries and such that took the fruition they have today, I was a part of an organization, I was a part of a group as a young child that would meet together regularly to study and learn the Bible and we were part of an organization officially known as Bible Drill. Do we have any old Bible Drillers in the house today? There are a few. Y'all remember this little illustration right: you remember that you were called to attention and then you would present. You all remember that, right? Here's what I'm going to ask you to do: present your sword, present your Bible. There is a position of which you would take in which one hand was on the bottom and one was on the top. Now you say, "Why would we be doing this today?" Because I'm about to ask you to turn to a passage in your Bible that for some of you only has one page. For some of you, it might have two depending on the size of the font of your Bible. One of the most difficult passages to find. If you'll just keep your Bible with the spine to the right, your hand on the back, begin turning at the back and you'll notice the book of Revelation. When you get to Revelation, hang a hard left because we're going to be in the book of Jude.

It is only one chapter in length. In fact, if you want to mess with somebody's mind, you tell them today that at church you studied from Jude 2 and just see what they do. The book of Jude only has 25 verses but yet, in the history of Christendom, it is one of the most ignored, it is one of the passages of Scripture that is the least taught, preached and studied. Yes, it is small in number but it is great in message. And the reasons that people have not paid as much attention to this portion of the Bible as they should have are twofold: one of them is what I like to call the academic reason and one is what I want to call the actual reason. Academically speaking, as you study the book of Jude, there are issues and struggles that somewhat make your brain hurt at times. For example, you get to the very first verse and it says, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James," and you begin to study who is this character that the Lord used to write this passage in the Bible and you begin to flesh out all the thises and the thats and one of the things that you will learn is there is great evidence that this individual who the Lord used

was the brother of Jesus Christ. I mean, after all, in Matthew 1:25, the famous Christmas story. It says that Mary gave birth to her firstborn child and people say, “Well, why didn’t he just come and say, I’m Jesus’ brother? Why didn’t he make it a little bit easier?”

So, that’s a struggle with it. Then you get down a few verses and you’ll discover in verse 9 that it says there is this battle that takes place between the devil and the archangel Michael over the body of Moses. If you study the Old Testament back in Deuteronomy 34, we find out that when Moses died he was denied the access into the Promised land. In chapter 34 of Deuteronomy it says that his body was buried in a place that nobody knew where it was. No human that is. But in verse 9, we find out that Moses’ body was disputed of with the devil and the archangel Michael. A few verses later, it said that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied that there would be judgment of the ten thousands of angels. You say, “Well, why is that a struggle?” Well, when you look at that passage about Moses, you look at that passage about Enoch, there are writings out there that are extra-biblical, they’re not a part of the Bible, that address things and some of them are titled like “The Assumption of Moses,” and “The Book of Enoch.” A lot of them make the History Channel late at night if you’ll stay up and watch. This has caused people to struggle because there is such a short amount of material that there are so many questions that come up.

Additionally, the fact that about half of the contents of the book of Jude are identical to portions in the book of 2 Peter, it has caused many to question and to become frustrated in the studying of its simple 25 verses. I think sometimes people neglect it because they don’t like tackling the tough questions. I think sometimes people neglect it because they don’t want to have to deal with all those things that you kind of have to deal with in studying of those matters.

But here’s what I believe is the actual reason why most people whether consciously or unconsciously, have neglected these 25 verses in the Bible: you cannot read this passage in the Bible without understanding that we were not designed as believers in Jesus Christ to sit on the sidelines. We were never called to go hide in a cave, cover our ears and sing Kumbayah until Jesus comes back. In fact, illustration after illustration after illustration in the book of Jude is either someone who got with it or someone who the Lord judged because they did not get with it. One of the things that we’re going to address over these next couple of weeks is this idea that you and I have been called to stand. There are things that we are to stand for and there are things that we are to stand against. And we’re going to discover that there are different means and different ways in which we can be proactive in our stance for our faith.

So, kind of the theme of the book of Jude is found in verse 3 when it says, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith.” It states it very clear that the faith that we have in Jesus Christ, we’re not just to contend, it says we are earnestly to contend for it. So, the stance that I want to make over the course of the next few weeks as we study this very short yet powerful passage in the Bible is that

the Lord has called us as believers in Jesus Christ to take a stand for that which he advocates and to stand against that which he deplors.

So, that being said today, the first three verses – I know I’ve read verse 3 just to kind of give you a context but beginning back in verse 1. It says,

“1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, [and] called: 2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. 3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

So, what does this mean as we begin this study of this somewhat obscure but powerful passage in the Bible? What do these three introductory verses, what do they share with us about how we are to take a stand? The first thing we need to address and it may sound a little academic but you’ll see it doesn’t in a moment, is we have to see who are the recipients of this initial passage. Now understand, you cannot completely understand communication unless you first address not only the one who is speaking but the ones who are hearing. The first thing that we grasp about these recipients is that they are plural in nature. Now, if you’ll read verse 1, it says, “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them.” Now, I tease you all a lot that in college I was not an English major but I do realize that “them” is more than one. If you were to enter some kind of athletic competition and you were to play an opposing team, you would not just signal out that you beat the quarterback or that you beat the coach. At the end of the day when being interviewed, you would say, “We beat them.” And “them” would be inclusive of the coaches; it would be inclusive of the team, the players; it would be inclusive of the trainers. It would even include the owners and if you really want to get nit-picky, you could also include the fans who wore the opposing name.

We beat them. You see, it is plural in nature and this is what is important: as we talk about taking a stand, we need to understand that the word “them” is all of those who claim to be believers in Jesus Christ. It does not say a particular group over here or a side section over there. It is plural in nature. It says “to them,” and what you discover in the book of Jude, that the only qualification for “them” is that they are believers in Jesus Christ. These are the recipients.

Additionally, the recipients are very particular in nature. Not particular in the sense that this group versus that group but as you read the New Testament, particularly the letters of Paul, you could even get to Hebrews and James, it always begins by addressing the particular people who this message is written to. For example, “To the church which is at Corinth”; “To the saints at the Thessalonika.” You get into Hebrews and James and it says, “To the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad.” It’s very specific that to this particular group of people, I’m writing this particular message. What you discover here in the book of Jude is the particular group is not classified as a single local church but it is all local churches. It is not those that are large but also those that are small. It is not those

that are rich but also those that are poor. In fact, you get to the book of Revelation 2-3, there are seven churches that are mentioned. There is the church of Ephesus and Sardis and Pergamos and Thyatira and all the way to Laodicea and you discover that every single one of them had good aspects and every single one of them had not so good aspects. Here, there is no distinguishing over the churches that are growing or the churches that are struggling, those that are well off versus those that are not.

It just simply says, “To them.” You see, the particular group of “them” that is being addressed is actually all of those who call on the name of Jesus Christ. The recipients for the message to stand it’s not just that church or that group or that location, but all of those who call upon Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is plural, it is particular and here is the word we often struggle with: it often deals with persecution. Notice what it says in verse 3, we’ve read it twice already: contend for the faith. Why? Because there are certain people and we’re going to deal with this more specifically next week. They have crept in unawares. They are wreaking havoc. You know, when we talk about the word or the concept of persecution, we could look at the hundreds of thousands of “believers in Jesus Christ” who are persecuted every year worldwide. There are those who are maimed for their faith. There are those who are injured for their faith. Yes, there are those who even lose their life for their faith. You and I live in a world today, a culture and a civilization, particularly here in the United States of America that though it does occur on that level, you would have to be honest that the maiming and the death for our faith is limited in nature.

But what you need to see, what we need to hear in the book of Jude, you don’t see a full-fledged persecution taking place. It just says that those have crept in; they’re beginning the process. And we live in a world today where the persecution may not be full-blown but the birth pangs have begun. There are little bitty baby steps that are happening in our culture. They are taking place in our civilization and if we, the believers in Jesus Christ, do not take a stand for that which is godly and a stand against that which is not, it will take a full-fledged persecution to our lands. So, you and I as the “them” need to realize we are the recipients. This isn’t just a group of obscure believers 2,000 years ago in some remote island, this is a people who are on the other side of our now planet earth who are facing drastic physical persecution. This is to you and I and you and I had better heed the message lest we fall into the same pattern. One of the things they say about history is this: one thing that men never learn from it, is to learn from it. So, as we study the book of Jude, we are the recipients, there are some things that we need to learn so that we do not fall into the traps of history.

The next thing we need to understand is not only just the recipients but the reason. What is the reason that the Lord would ask us to stand? What is the reasoning behind this which leads to the future weeks of studying the “how” and the “what” and the “why.” And the reasons are laid out in verse 1. It describes the “them,” that they are sanctified, they are preserved and they are called. The reason that God has called us to stand, the first and foremost is this: he calls us the sanctified. The word “sanctified” means “holy,” it means “distinct,” it means “separate,” it means “set apart.” 1 Peter 1:15 says, “Be holy

for the Lord your God is holy.” In fact, the book of Titus 2:14, it calls us “peculiar people who should be zealous for good works.”

Now, to be holy, to be sanctified, to be set apart simply means this: if you wake up today or any other day and you notice that your life looks a lot like reality tv, you’ve got a problem because our lives as believers should be different than that. Our values should be distinctly different than that. Our morals should be different. Our actions and our words. Listen, if you read the newspaper or watch the news and the stories that are on the news sound like the stories that are in your home, it’s not sanctified, folks. We have been called to be holy. We’ve been called to be distinct. We’ve been called to be different. Listen, Jesus Christ never promised popularity. He never promised that you would win most likely to be everything to the world. Why? Because in John 15, he made it very clear. Jesus speaking said, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” Then he goes on and at the end of that passage, he says, “Marvel not if the world hates you. It hated me first.” Jesus Christ never promised that in being sanctified and holy, we would be popular.

But let me give you another word he never promised and this goes in the face of most of what we call Christian television today: Jesus Christ never promised prosperity. He never promised that we would be filthy stinking rich. In fact, let me give you a phrase that I’ve learned to appreciate over the years: those with vision often rarely have the money, those with the money rarely if ever often have any vision. Now, let me tell you when God works, it’s when the resources and the vision come together. That’s when you see some exciting things that take place. But in that sanctifiedness, our holiness, our set apartness, please understand that if the world is patting us on the back, giving us accolades and recommending us to everybody else, we may not be very sanctified. We’re to be sanctified, separate, distinct. That’s what it says we are. This is the reason we are to stand. Why? Because even though we may be in the minority numerically, we are in the majority spiritually. We are sanctified.

But there’s a second word there. It says we are preserved. Now, in that word “preservation,” the concept of being preserved, it simply means that that which had originated is still as good as it ever was. Now, in the physical illustration, something that my wife is very capable of that, to be honest, I know I’m not so I haven’t even tried, you can take fruit from a tree that is in great abundance at the harvest season, you can do what you’re supposed to do and I don’t understand it all and you can can it and you can preserve it so that in times where it’s not harvest season, you can still receive not only the taste but the nutrient of that which had been picked months or sometimes even years before. When it says that we are preserved, it’s not just speaking of eternal security, it’s also speaking that there are times that are in season and there are times that are out of season. You do realize there are times in the Christian life where it’s not always going to be rosy. Speaking of rosy, last time I checked, all roses had these things called thorns.

So, as we live this thing called life, this thing known as discipleship walking with the Lord, I’ve noticed that between every two mountain peaks, there is a large valley in between. And when it says that we are preserved, the Apostle Paul was right. In 2 Timothy 4, he said, you need to preach, to live out, to speak the truth in season and out.

You go to the Old Testament and there is a great illustration. The Bible itself in the book of Psalms 12:6-7 says its words have been preserved for this generation forever. Do you realize that the book that many of you hold in your hands is not only the most loved book in the history of the world, it's the most hated and people have tried to burn it, they've tried to destroy it, they've taken those who translate it and they put them to death. But you know what? Even though they did all of those things, you and I, we have a copy in our hands. Why? Because God preserved it for that generation forever which means this: the reason that we stand, listen to me clearly, isn't just because we're distinct and holy, it's because he's preserved us. That means when the battle gets tough, he said, "I won't abandon you. I won't forsake you." He says, "When things get lonely," he says, "lo, I am with you to the end of the age." So, the reason we can stand isn't just because we're supposed to be holy, but because he's promised in his preservation that he will be with us even in the bad times.

But there's a third reason: sure, we're sanctified or supposed to be; sure, we're preserved even in tough times but there is this word, we are called. Now, let me give you my definition. This is a pretty simple definition of calling. It goes a little something like this: that even if you don't feel like it, even if you do like it and even if you do not enjoy it, you are compelled to do it anyway. That is one's calling. Now, let me share with you the difference here: there are a lot of things that I like in life, there are a lot of things that I appreciate in life. I love good food, good sports and fast cars. I like all those things but honestly, I can live without any of them. I can. I don't want to but I can. When I understands their calling, they literally cannot live apart from it. They are compelled to do it even in the face of danger, even in the face of drought and even in a destitute, desperate situation. They are called to do it.

You say, "Well, what is our calling?" I'm glad you asked. Turn a few pages to the left. The book of 1 Peter 2:9. There is a simple verse here which would comprise an entire sermon in itself but we're just going to use it as an illustration. It begins with my favorite word of the Bible, "but," and it's describing hardships and struggles and persecutions. It's describing the turmoil of the life of faith. Verse 9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Let's think about that: you are a chosen generation. Maybe you've fallen into this trap at some point in your life and my wife, Tracy, and I have this discussion on a regular basis and it takes the two of us to correct each other, it's a wonderful marriage. Have you ever said, "Boy, things would be so much better if I had just been born then. If I didn't have to face these struggles today." How many times have you said, "Boy, if we could just go back to the good old days." You do realize the good old days did not have air conditioning. Because we presume that those days or a different day somehow were easier, more palatable, simpler to live one's faith.

But when it says that you are a chosen generation, you do understand that the Lord knew the day you were going to be born. He knows the day that you're going to die and he never said, "Ooops, missed that one by three decades." He chose to have you live your faith in him at this time. We are a chosen generation and, in fact, it has been said and it's

a brilliant statement, that Christianity is the only faith that is one generation from extinction every generation that passes. Why? You cannot physically be born a Christian. It's impossible. No matter what your last name is, you're never born a Christian even if physically that is your last name. For a Christian, a believer in Jesus Christ, is someone who understands that they are a sinner in need of saving and that Jesus Christ is the only answer to forgive them and to save them. Listen, if we understand and we grasp that we are a chosen generation, then we realize this, that 1. we were by God's ordination, to live during this time facing these problems and to ensure that the faith that is so important to us does not die out with us.

The next statement says that we are a royal priesthood and there is so much to unpack there but the idea of a priest that stands between God and the people, you have access to the throne room of God. In addition to that, you actually display God everywhere you go as a believer. You are that priesthood that demonstrates to them who they can be in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

But it's this next one that gets me: you are a holy nation. Now, before you read too much geopolitical sovereign entity into this, I do realize that today we reside in a physical sovereign nation known as the United States of America. But understand that the body of Christ is a lot older than this particular country and before it was started and I hope this never happens but after it ends and I hope it never does, the body of Christ will be forever because it is eternal. The word "nation" literally means "group of people." Can you apply it to sovereign entities? Absolutely, there are so many prophetic passages in the Bible it's not even funny. But when it's describing believers as a holy nation, what that is saying is that you and I as a group of people, we represent our King, our Monarch, Jesus Christ, and we are to operate together in unity. Our calling is to work together for the sake of our leader, our Savior, Jesus Christ. We have been called to be a holy nation. You say, "I don't want to do that when I wake up." It's your calling, not your preference. There is a difference.

Chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation and then I love this phrase, "a peculiar people." If we, as the believers in Jesus Christ, stand for that which we are to stand for and stand against that which we are to stand against, the world at large ought to look at us like, "Huh? That's peculiar. I don't get that." Listen, if the world gets you, you may be more worldly than you are wordy if you understand what I mean. That is our calling. Let me be honest with you: sometimes that's not fun; sometimes it doesn't feel good. But that is what we have been called to do. We are sanctified. We are preserved. We have been called to stand.

Now, the question is this and we go back to Jude: what are the results? What will happen in our home? What will happen in our culture? What will happen in this country if we the people who are believers in Jesus Christ will actually take those three attributes to heart? Sanctified, distinct, preserved, called lives. What can we expect to occur? Look at verse 2, "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied." Now, be honest with me: as you read through the text of the New Testament in particular, it begins "to the saints that are in this church or to the church that's in this location," and there's oftentimes these

flowery things that are said. You're like, "Okay, that's nice. Let's get to the meat of the matter." But in the context of the book of Jude, what we see in verse 1 and 2 is that if we are sanctified, if we are preserved, we are called, then what we see in verse 2 is that mercy and peace and love will be multiplied out of that calling in our life.

In other words, one of the results that we can expect by standing for the things of God is that we can expect mercy to come into our lives. Let me give you a definition of mercy, simple definition: not getting what you deserve. Let me share with you what we deserve. We deserve the judgment of God. You know, the elder statesman and evangelist, Billy Graham, has been known for years and he is absolutely correct when he said this statement: he said that if going at the same rate we're going, one day the United States of America is going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. And he's right. Why? Because, let me tell you what we deserve in our culture: we deserve judgment. We deserve the hand of God to be removed from us. You see, some people don't want the hand of God on them, listen, you don't want the hand of God off of you. Then that's when you're in trouble. We deserve judgment as a country. We deserve judgment as a civilization. Folks, oftentimes our homes deserve judgment because we are not what verse 1 said that we are to be.

But it says that if we are these things, if we stand, we will receive mercy. Now, I began to grasp this really in kind of a full technical matter when I was in my last semester of my Master's Degree in seminary. Understand that we were in a position where my income was little to nothing. Tracy was a school teacher and the place where we lived and the school where she taught was 92 miles away from the school that I attended. And I did my best to try to strategize my classes: a Tuesday/Thursday class so I didn't have to go but two days a week. In those days, yes, I understand, I'm getting older, there was no such thing as online education. The only education you had was in room education so I had to get there 92 miles each way. It took three years to get through the program. I continued to delay this one first semester class that I never wanted to take because I was hoping they would change the rules. Surely, somebody would understand that there are people like myself who are taxed at best. This one class, are you ready for this, that everybody had to take met Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday at 8 a.m. 92 miles away from my house. I got to the last semester. I didn't have a choice. It was either get up every morning at the crack of dawn and drive and graduate or don't and not graduate. I was exhausted. I was worn out and can I be honest with you? I had a good case of senioritis. I was tired of this and so I would show up to the class 8 in the morning, several hundred students in the room and can I just be honest without calling his name? The professor was about as exciting to listen to as grass is to watch grow. It was awful.

So, what do you think I did? I'll tell you what I did, I slept. I mean, after all, all I needed to get this diploma, let's just get out of this thing here. I'm thinking I am on the highway. About 2/3 to 3/4 through the semester, the bell had rung, the class was dismissing, I woke up. We were walking down the steps to get out of the classroom and the professor called me. He said, "Mr. Meyers, I need to see you for a moment." And he began to explain to me that my passing of the class was not just dependent upon the grades I made which were decent and it wasn't just dependent upon the fact that I was seated in the seat for the

right amount of days. He expressed to me that as a professor and as the authority of the class, he had the right to fail me because of my lack of attention to the subject matter. He expressed to me that day, he said, "I have every right to make it so that you do not graduate in a couple of months." He said, "But I'm going to show you mercy and give you a second chance." I said, "What does that mean?" He said, "If you fall asleep one more time, it's over. That's all you've got. You'd better stay awake from this point forward."

Well, there happened to be some of the students that were sitting around me that stayed around to watch the side show. They were first semester students. They were scared out of their minds. I was scared. They were really scared. I showed up the next day at 8 a.m. and on my desk was a diet Coke and a Snickers and that holy nation said we're going to do this together. And I would begin to get sleepy because I was tired and behind me somebody would kick my chair from behind. It was their objective to make sure I did not sleep again. The final came, I turned it in and I went to the front. I had done my obligation. The professor said, "Mr. Meyers, I need to see you in the hallway." I thought, "Oh, what now? I just want to graduate." I get out in the hallway and this man who at the times was in his mid-70s extended his arms. He hugged me and said, "I knew you could do it." You see, mercy was extended when literally he said, "This is your last warning."

Folks, I am not God and I am not necessarily a prophet but I wonder how many more chances this civilization has with God's mercy? I wonder how many more days. I wonder how many more events. I wonder how many more fill in the blanks before the Lord says, "Sorry, here comes judgment." Here's the great news: as of this moment in this day, if we the people, the believers in Jesus Christ, according to verse 1 will get our act together, he said, "I will present mercy to you."

The second thing he says is, "I will bring peace." Folks, peace is not just something that's said at the end of a Miss America contest, okay? Everybody says world peace, this peace, peace in the Middle East, peace with these people, peace with that people. We sing about peace, talk about peace. We yell and unfortunately people do awful stuff in the name of peace. Everybody wants it. In fact, you think about history for a moment: several years ago we called it World War I. Do you know what the original name of the war was, right? The War to End All Wars. Boy, we did well there, didn't we? Our best efforts rarely if ever bring genuine peace.

You know, several years ago at the church that I was pastoring in in another state, I had an opportunity come by. It just so happened that our worship center was one of the largest buildings in the area and some community leaders called me up. They said, "Jeff, we've got an issue in our community that you're not aware of that needs to be addressed." I said, "I'm fully aware of it." We had two groups of people: we'll just call them group A and group B. They could not get along. They were great in number. They were in opposition and the battles were happening privately, they were happening publicly. It was destroying our community around us. They came to me and said, "Would the church mind hosting an event where group A and B all get together and talk about their differences and their struggles and how to better get along?" I said, "I would love to

host that event.” Then for the next few moments they began to tell me that we’re going to bring this person in and do this and it’s going to be this format and that. I said, “Whoa, whoa, whoa. Our building, our rules.” They said, “Well, what do you mean by that, Pastor?” I said, “Let me tell you something,” I said, “if you really want group A and group B to be at peace then the only name we need to talk about when you show up is Jesus because he’s the only one who can bring peace between these two groups.” I’m still waiting for that meeting to take place.

Why? Because we consistently in this world refuse to admit that the only entity, the only person who can really bring peace is Jesus Christ. That’s why Romans 5:1 says that he brings peace between God and us. He is the peace that passes all understanding. There are struggles and there are problems and there are people in this world who cannot for the life of them get along. Sometimes it’s in their home. Sometimes it’s in the culture. Let me tell you how to have peace: Jesus Christ at the center of it all. And it says here if we are sanctified, if we do these things according to the book of Jude and we take these stands, then the mercy of God will be ours and the peace of God will take place in our life.

But there’s one last result. It’s a word we talk about, we sing about, we twist it and we turn it. A famous group years ago said all you need is love. It depends on how you define love. The biblical definition for love is something that is very rare for our world today. It’s placing somebody else’s interests above our own. An unselfish attitude. Love. Can you imagine, not only a world where the mercy of God is extended and the peace of Jesus Christ is lived out but that love, true love, genuine love is actually exhibited? You say, “Well, how can we do it? As a believer in Jesus Christ, how can we see that occur?” Let me give you some great theological advice from a toilet salesman. You say, “A toilet salesman?” Yes, one of the greatest theological premises I’ve ever heard came from a man years ago who spent his life selling toilets. Now, some of you are thinking, “Is that a good business?” Listen, do you see how many toilets are in hotels nowadays? I mean, it’s a good business. We were standing out in the hallway and kind of discussing some of these matters and I’ll never forget what this man said. One of the greatest theological statements I have ever heard in my life: he said, “It is very difficult to hate somebody you pray for every day.” Isn’t hate the antithesis of love?

You know, when we talk about taking a stand, yes we stand for that which is godly, we stand against that which is ungodly but even Jesus Christ our Savior said, “Pray for your enemies.” Let me conclude the message today by this very important statement: the call to stand is not simply just about being right. Let me repeat that again: the call to stand is not just about being right, it’s about being right and calling those who are in error into a right relationship with Jesus Christ. Folks, it’s not just saying, “Oh, we’re right and they’re wrong.” You see, the whole goal here when you’re talking about mercy, talk about love, is so that those who are in error, those who are walking in darkness, those who are apart from the love of Jesus Christ will know him as Savior. Folks, it’s one thing to stand up and say, “We’re right and you’re wrong.” It’s another thing to say, “I’m right and I’m going to pray that the God of this universe gets a hold of your heart like you’ve never seen in your life.”

Folks, if we do what Jude 1 says then these things naturally come out. Let me tell you what standing will produce: it will produce revival. It will produce a move of God in our homes, in our cities, hopefully in our country, in our entire world. And so we've got a decision to make. We can either choose to stand or we can go hide in a cave and hold our ears and sing Kumbayah until Jesus comes back. But I'm here to warn you that the struggles and the problems and all the things we could discuss aren't going to get any better and so we might as well go ahead and stand today.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed as we prepare for our time of invitation. Maybe you're here this morning, maybe you're a first time guest, maybe you've been here for years, maybe you're a man, woman, a boy or a girl and you realize in the context of all the verbiage today, you're hanging on to that one part of the message where I talked about those who are Christians. Not something that your birth certificate can declare, not something that your last name can declare but only that the King of kings, Jesus Christ can declare. Maybe you're that person today who realized you're not a believer. Maybe you realized that you're not a part of the family of faith. Maybe you realized that if eternity were to begin today for you, it would not be a positive experience. And you're here this morning saying, "I need to get things right." Let me encourage you wherever you're seated in this place, wherever you are at home, on tv or listening on the internet, maybe this will be the time where you just have a conversation with God where you just pray. You say something like this, not out loud and not necessarily these exact words, you say, "God, I realized today that all along while I was blaming everything and everybody else, I'm the problem but I also understand that Jesus is the solution and the answer. So, this day I come confessing I have sinned, I have messed up, I have been the wayward one but I understand that Jesus Christ loved me enough, not just to be born for me, not just to live for me but to go to the cross and raise from the dead so that my sins could be forgiven and my eternity could be settled. So, Lord, this day it is my desire to be born again. It is my desire to have a second start not based on my merits, my own worth but on the person and the blood of Jesus Christ alone and the best way I know how, I want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads bowed and our eyes closed, before we come to our time of invitation, before we stand and sing together, maybe you've been a believer in Jesus Christ for years but in light of the message today, you realize that your life looks more like the world than it does the word. Today you realized that rather than being distinct and holy, your life has just become commonplace with whatever the world is speaking. Maybe today would be that day where you take a stand and say no more will I go down that path. Lord, as we come to this time of invitation, your word teaches us in Hebrews 4 that we stand before you naked, we stand exposed. You see every aspect about us and so, Lord, help us to agree with our hands, our feet and our mouth what you've already shown us in our heart and in our mind. Lord, would you give us the courage not just to stand up and sing in just a moment but to walk out of this room in a few moments and to stand for you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.