

JUDE: How to Stand

JUDE, The Call to Stand

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Bible Text: Jude 8-10

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I want to encourage you this morning to open your Bibles to the book of Jude. If you're a first time guest or visitor with us or maybe you haven't had the privilege of being with us in several weeks, the book of Jude is actually the second to the last book of the Bible. In fact, if you go to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, and go back one, maybe two pages, you will discover this little book of the Bible as far as quantity is concerned, some 25 verses but as we discovered in the past few weeks, that qualitatively, there is incredible impact in these verses. As the Lord desires to share this one single truth with us, that those who are believers in Jesus Christ, those who would be called the sons and the daughters of God through the blood of Jesus Christ we have been commissioned and we have been called to take a stand. We've been called to stand for that which is godly and stand against that which would be labeled ungodly.

Over the courses of the last weeks, we've dealt with verses 1-7 and if you're a first time guest or visitor with us, allow me just to catch you up to speed momentarily. Kind of the crux of this book of the Bible is in verses 3 and 4 where it says that we are to contend for the faith. Literally it says, we are "to fight for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints." In other words, that belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and that which is righteous in him, should be fought for, contended for and stood for. Why? Because according to verse 4, "there are certain men who have crept in unawares" and what we've addressed over the last couple of weeks is this: that systematically and very strategically, there has been a takeover of the culture in which you and I live. It has been very subtle but yet at the same time, it has been very effective.

Over the last couple of weeks we've dealt with how or what are some of the things that we can learn from history. What are some of the lessons in history. In fact, there in verse 5 it says that we are to remember these things. The Israelites that fell into unbelief in the wilderness, the angels who left their first estate and even the behavior of what we know as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities surrounding. All of this leads up to today for today as we get to verses 8-10, we're going to discover how it is that we are going to take a stand or how we should take a stand. Now, in the weeks following, we're going to deal with some specifics. We're going to deal with some real tangibles, some real how-tos in the weeks ahead but today, we're going to look at verses 8-10 and see how do we take a stand. What does it look like and how do we actually do it.

I would encourage you to turn with me to the book of Jude. I'm going to begin in verse 3 just for the sake of context but we're going to emphasize verses 8-10 today. It says,

“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. 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. 5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. 10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.”

As we come to verses 8-10 in our study today, there are several points I want to highlight, some main ideas. But under every one of these main concepts that we need to learn today are going to be some subpoints, some pointing to details, so to speak and under every one of them the same supporting pillars are going to stand. We're going to deal with the person or persons that are involved, the problem that arises because of those individuals and the prophecy that the word of God gives us in light of the problem and the persons. But those are kind of the supporting details. There are three main ideas from verses 8-10 in the book of Jude that you and I need to understand as believers in Jesus Christ if we are going to stand and contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.

The first thing we need to learn or discover is this: the connection that is being made. Notice what it says in verse 8, “Likewise these.” In other words, that which we learned last week from verses 5-7: those who were in unbelief in the wilderness, the angels who left their first estate, the Sodom and Gomorrhah and surrounding cities experience. There is a connection between those three historical events as given in the book of Jude and this one specific as we'll see, confrontation in verses 8-10. There is a connection being made that you cannot isolate them. In other words, what the word of God is sharing with us is that the source of the problem or the origination of the problem in all three of the events that we addressed last week, can be connected to one single solitary entity and that is a person that is involved. Notice what it says in verse 9: who is contending? The devil.

Do you remember the old book in the movie “The Wizard of Oz”? The land was in flux; the land was in turmoil. There are all kinds of issues. Dorothy and Toto the dog and all their friends, trying to solve the problems of all of the land. What did they discover in that story? That all of the issues and all of the struggles and all of the problems could be pinpointed in one place, in one entity and behind a huge curtain there was one small man known as “The Wizard of Oz.” Listen to me and listen to me clearly: whether it was a lack of faith in the wilderness, whether it was the angels who lost their first estate, whether it was the situation with Sodom and Gomorrah or even beyond that, if it's any scenario, any situation, any predicament whether it involves an individual, a family, an entire community or a culture, if in those situations they are speaking against the things of God, they are acting against the things of God and dare I say, even thinking against the things of God, there is a connection to the person who is behind it all and it is the devil himself.

It says here it was the devil who brought the accusation. It is the devil who came and he contended and we need to understand that all of the rebellion in society, all the rebellion within a home, there is a source of that rebellion and it is the person that the Bible calls the devil, the adversary, Satan. His name is the accuser. As we'll see in a few moments, originally his name in Scripture before his fall was “the lighted one, the anointed one.” The one who was in the presence of God. And hear me clearly: the devil has never had an original thought in his life. All he does is take the things of God and he twists them. He takes the things of righteousness and he tweaks them and he turns them so that they become unrighteous or they become ungodly. He's never had an original idea. All he does is take the things of God and he twists them and he turns them and behind every rebellious act, behind every rebellious culture, you can pinpoint the source of the problem as that it is a complete and isolated Satanic plot. Why? Because here it says “it is the devil that loves contending.”

That's the person that's involved but because of this, you and I have problem in this thing called life and the problem comes from 1 Peter 5:8 that says the devil, our adversary, roams around this world seeking to devour us like a lion. Now, understand what this verse says: that the devil's purpose in life is to destroy you. He's not interested in nibbling on your earlobe; he's not interested in tickling your toes. He wants to destroy you. He wants to crush you like a lion. In other words, the king of the jungle, the one who all other animals are fearful and scared of, the Bible compares him to the one who can crush any and all. Listen to me: the devil does not want to just make your life a little miserable, he wants to absolutely destroy it. He destroyed the Israelites in the wilderness, the angels who left their first estate and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and it would be foolish to think it wouldn't happen to you as well.

But behind this desire to destroy, there is a strategy. After all in 1 Peter 5:8 it says that he does this as a lion. The lion, the king of the jungle, who spends 20 hours of its day asleep. That means that that which can create the greatest destruction is also the most patient, waits the longest and is very strategic in the way and the means in which he hunts and when he so attacks his prey, the effectiveness or the rate of being effective is impeccable and incredible and that's exactly how the devil moves and works. Let me share with you:

it's been 2,000 years since Jesus Christ lived, died, rose again and ascended up into heaven and the devil's been asleep for a long time but he is raising his head like never before. He is becoming arrogant. He is becoming forthright. And that which used to be hidden behind walls and dark glass has now become open and visible to all. The lion has begun to roar.

Speaking of this problem, this idea of kind of patiently waiting and then coming to fruition: it was 30 years ago this year that there was an award ceremony on tv like none other. The year was 1984 and there was the little upstart television station that had begun to experiment with broadcasting a new genre of entertainment: we called it the music video, the idea of putting imagery and video to the music that people have been listening to the radio for decades. And there in 1984, some three years after this small little fringe rogue television station had begun, we called in MTV which stood for Music Television, three years later, they're having an awards ceremony recognizing those videos that were the most successful, the most popular or the most critically acclaimed. It was there on that evening three years after its inception that there was a young upstart musician, a young lady who was only by one single name: Madonna. That night, she donned a wedding dress from head to toe. She was completely covered, at least for the fabric, but for 4-5 minutes during one of her most popular songs she wrote, she slithered like a snake on the stage.

You say, "Well, why is that so significant?" It was a fringe tv station with a rogue new medium and a new upstart artist who created all kinds of furor that night. Thirty years later, 85% of homes in this country have direct access to MTV and if that was the worst thing they put on it, it might be worth watching for they have pushed the envelope to the point where they have ripped it, shredded it and tossed it out the window. Now 85% of American homes have access to their content if you want to call it that but this week, we saw that explicitness goes beyond a fringe rogue upstart medium. In fact, this week, let's take the awards ceremony of the entire music industry, put it on prime time during the "family hour." Were there violations of ethics and morals? Absolutely. Were there breaches of godliness? Absolutely. But let me tell you what occurred some 30 years later: it wasn't just an upstart musician slithering around in a very sensual way, you had outright blatant occultic and dark references being made. It's almost as if the devil showed up and showed out and nobody cared.

You see, 30 years ago, it was one little incident on a fringe and everybody was a little bit concerned. Did you ever think we'd get to where we are now after 30 years? You see, that's the roaring of the lion and here's the problem: the disbelief of the Israelites didn't happen in one day, the disbelief of the angels didn't happen in one day and Sodom and Gomorrah did not happen in one day. It was a progressive problem with the plot of one who according to the word of God, operates like a lion. Here's the prophecy though, here is the proclamation from the word of God based on what I've just shared with you, is that it's only going to get worse.

You say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, let me share with you that the devil will not be content with just having the music industry. He will not be content with just having

the television industry. Let me share with you what he wants: he wants it all. He doesn't want some of it, he doesn't want most of it, he wants the entire culture. He wants the arts. He wants the films. He wants the radio. He wants every aspect. He wants the schools. He wants the buildings. He wants the people. He wants it all and when you read your Bible, the next book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, when you get to chapter 13, there is an individual that shows up that we know him as the antichrist. He is the devil in flesh and you see in his reign that will happen one day in the future, he controls all, everybody is subject to him. In fact, it says he put a mark in people: they cannot buy, they cannot sell, they cannot live unless he gives them permission. And he is so arrogant, he is so vile that according to Revelation 13, one day the devil incarnate will walk into the temple of God, into the Holy of Holies and according to Daniel 9, he will declare he is God.

Understand: what we're seeing today that is so infuriating to those who have a believer's mindset, understand that this is just but the birth pangs of what he desires and according to one day in the book of Revelation, will prophetically occur. Understand very clearly folks that the person of Satan is alive and well. He is operating like a lion and he is only going to start chewing and devouring more and more. That's the connection that we've got to make to these three historical events.

So now we need to understand, so what is the exact contention? What's actually happening here in the book of Jude when it says in verse 9, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Now, who are the persons involved in this exact contention that we have displayed? Person 1: Moses, the great prophet of God, the one who God came to when he was in the middle of the wilderness with the burning bush that was set aflame but it was not consumed. The one who went with his brother, Aaron, back to Egypt in front of Pharaoh and there the famous ten plagues from the water being turned into blood to the frogs and the lice, ultimately to the death of the firstborn and the escape of the Israelites with what we know as the Passover celebration, through the Red Sea, into the wilderness and even though as we saw in verse 5, many of the Israelites did not believe. Moses was a strong man of faith. He was there going into the tabernacle, bringing down the Ten Commandments but at the end of his life, at the end of his journey on earth, rather than going into the Promised Land, rather than going into the land of Canaan, the people came to him saying, "Moses, we're thirsty. Do you not care about us? Year ago you hit the rock with your stick and it flowed water, would you do it again?" He said, "But God hasn't told me to." They said, "But we're begging you." He did it anyway against the provision of God. The water flowed and he was not allowed to go into the Promised Land.

The book of Deuteronomy 34, it records for us Moses' funeral, that he was dead and he was buried. According to Deuteronomy 34, in a place that no man knew of and though no man knew of it, what we see here in verse 9 is there are two entities that were completely aware of it: the devil and God himself. Because here in verse 9, not only do we have the body of Moses that's under contention, but the devil himself shows up. Now, this must be an important event because the devil is not omnipresent. He cannot be everywhere at

once. In fact, he can't even be at two places at one time but he was here at this point. Whatever was taking place was so critical, he personally showed up.

So, who does the Lord send? The Lord sends Michael, the archangel. Now, he joins Lucifer, who became Satan, as one of the only three angelic beings in the Bible who have a name that we are given as far as a proper name. We have Gabriel, the messaging angel; we have Lucifer who was the worshiping cherubim, we'll deal with that in a moment; and here Michael, the archangel. For lack of better terms "archangel" means that the biggest of the big. He was the one that was positioned, at least in the Old Testament, as having the angelic responsibility for the nation of Israel, for the people of God. In Daniel 10, Daniel is praying to God, he is pleading to God on behalf of those who are in captivity in Babylon. It says he's praying, he's fasting, 21 days without an answer. Finally, after 21 days, an angel shows up. This angel shows up and says, "Man, I wish I would have been here earlier. Here's the problem: I was in this big battle with the Prince of Persia, an angelic war was taking place." He said, "But thankfully, Michael came and helped me out." In other words, when Michael shows up, things get moved that were stuck in place. When Michael shows up, things get freed that were in bondage. Michael is the archangel. He is the biggest and he is the baddest of all of the big and the bad angels.

Those are the people who are involved: the body of Moses, fallen Lucifer now Satan, the devil and the angel of angels. We've got a fight on our hands. Here is the problem: the problem is hierarchy. Now, let me give some of you adults some wisdom that we give our kids on a regular basis that we all need to know: anytime you walk into a room, the first question you need to ask is, Who's in charge? Think about that for a moment. It'll take you a long ways because rarely when you walk into an office or you walk into a building or you walk into a place, are you the one who gets to call the final shot. What some of the best advice is asking, Who is in charge? Who has the upper hand? We've got a contention going on here and we've got to ask the question: who has the upper hand in this battle?

You see, some years ago, I had the privilege of knowing an individual that was incredibly high ranking in the United States Navy. He had retired, all types of officer recognitions and such and even though he had been retired for many, many years he knew that even though I did not serve, that I was a huge supporter of the United States military and there was a situation that was going on and he came to me. He said, "Jeff, would you be interested if I could get you on a naval vessel just for a visit, just to kind of look around." Not one of these memorials; not one of these that are docked but I'm talking about when it's actually doing what it's supposed to do even though it's onshore. I said, "Man, sign me up." So, we started through all the process and it never actually happened because you and I know there's all kinds of red-tape and stuff there but in the process of doing that, we're doing all the paperwork and he came to me and he said, "Jeff, now I know you need to understand something that when you get on this vessel, every individual no matter what their rank is going to call you by a specific title. Why? Because you're a civilian." I said, "Okay." He said, "It's a title that you don't get called a whole lot and I just need you to be understanding that don't correct them. They're supposed to call you this." I said, "Okay, I can follow protocol." He said, "Everywhere you go, whoever you meet, they're going to refer to you as Dr. Meyers." I said, "Okay, I can live with that." He

said, "Do you know what they're going to call me?" I said, "What?" He said, "They're going to call me god." I said, "What does that mean?" He said, "Because I outrank them all." I said, "Could you kind of flesh that out for me? What does that mean?" He goes, "We get to do what we want and go where we want because I outrank them all."

And what he was illustrating was this: that even though that was not his vessel, even though he was technically retired, when he stepped foot in that situation, any and all answered to him. Understand, in verse 9, Michael is technically outranked by the devil because in Ezekiel 28, whom we know as Satan is called "the cherubim over the throne of God." Michael is the representative of the people of God. But here's what Michael does and here's the brilliance in this problem: Michael doesn't say, "You know what? It's time you and I finally had that arm-wrestling match I've been begging to have." He didn't say, "You know what? You and I, let's get to it right now, right here in the dirt of the desert we're having it out." What does he do? He takes a step back, says, "The Lord rebuke thee." Do you know what he did? He pulled the hierarchy card. He said, "You may have me but I know someone who has you." And so when he calls on the Lord to rebuke him, what he was simply doing is saying, "I can solve this hierarchy problem by bringing the one who commissioned me because he is the one who outranks everybody." That's the problem that we have in this contention.

You say, "So, what's the prophecy here? What is so key? Why would the Lord put what appears to be an obscure passage in the Bible. I mean, after all, we're talking about standing for the faith. We're talking about contending for the faith. Why does he give us this story about the body of Moses and Satan whom we know as the devil, and Michael fighting over it? What's the prophetic element here? Why would the devil be so interested in this?" Matthew 17. We call it the Mount of Transfiguration. There was that day in the life in the ministry of Jesus when he takes Peter and James and John. He goes up on the mountain and it says there that he's transfigured before them. He becomes as bright as the sun. The Bible says there are two people that were standing with him that day: there was the person of Elijah and there was the person of Moses. So much so that even Peter opened his mouth and said, "Hey, let's create a tabernacle for all three of you."

You say, "Why is that so significant?" Because Elijah was one who never experienced physical death. He was caught in the whirlwind of the chariot. Moses, according to Deuteronomy 34, was as dead as dead can be but both of them are standing side-by-side with Jesus. You see, the prophecy there is this: whether we be alive or whether we be dead, if we are in Christ, we will one day be with him. That's why the devil didn't want his body out of the ground. Why? Because that's a testimony to the majority of people who believed in Christ they have passed on. But it gets even better than that. You see, one day as I mentioned earlier, that this character known as the antichrist, the devil in flesh, the devil is going to get basically what he wants. He will consume more control over what we know as planet earth.

In Revelation 11, it says that for 3 ½ years, there will be two individuals, two witnesses, that will speak up against him. These two men will rise up and in the face of the whole world who somehow falls under his diabolical deception, they will speak up. There in

Revelation 11, these two men, it says that if anybody opposes them, fire comes out of their mouth and destroys them. It says that after 3 ½ years of witnessing and speaking and preaching, it says they chop their heads off and 3 ½ days later it rolls back on their bodies and phfft, they go straight up into heaven. Who said Hollywood had the best stories? You ought to read that chapter, Revelation 11.

But here's the deal: there's been a lot of dispute over who the two witnesses are but did you know that one of the figures nobody argues with. One of them is Moses. It says he took the water and he turned into blood. He was able to part that which no man could part. The body of Moses, the Lord sent Michael for it. Why? Because he would demonstrate to us that if we die in Christ, we will always be alive in Christ and one day he will even come back and he will descend on this earth and he will speak against the devil incarnate. Now do you understand why the devil did not want his body going with Michael? There is a contention that's taking place and there's all kinds of prophetic elements involved.

I know you may be thinking here, "Man, this has been a great Bible study. Lots of stuff. Lots of verses. Lots going on." But how does this help me stand tomorrow? How does this help me in a home that's frustrating at best? How does this help me with finances that seem to be leaking like a sieve? How does this help me in a culture and in a school, in a workplace that just seems to be more and more godless? I'm glad you asked because there is not just the connection between the three historical references and the person of the devil, there is a similarity for us, there is a connection, there is a comparison that you and I need to glean from verses 8-10. Here it simply is this: the person involved. Are you read? Here's the person involved with the comparison: you. You say, "What do you mean me? I'm not Michael the archangel and surely not Moses." That's correct but whomever you are and wherever you have come from, if you are an individual that at any point in your life you have recognized that you have gone against the things of God, recognized you have strayed from the truth of God and you have come to this conscious understanding that you have become and you have done what the Bible calls "sin" and knowing that you were a sinner and realizing that the wages of sin is death, at some point you've called on the name of Jesus Christ and said, "By your blood, forgive me and save me," then you, by identification, are the enemy of the devil.

He despises not just Michael the archangel, he despise you. And there is an old phrase that is so true: it says that if you wake up in the morning and you do not walk face-to-face into the devil at some point in the day, there may be a chance you're going the same direction he was. Why? Because as a believer in Jesus Christ, standing for the things of godliness, standing for the things of righteousness, understand that before your feet hit the floor and you've had your cup of coffee, the enemy like a lion is proud and ready to destroy you: to destroy your testimony, to destroy your home, to destroy your finances, to destroy your future, to destroy your impact, to destroy any and everything that would have your name or identity attached to it. Here's where the rubber meets the road: the person involved in spiritual warfare is you as a believer in Jesus Christ.

But there's a problem that arises. You say, "Well, what could the problem be?" Well, the problem actually is found in Ephesians 6. Ephesians 6 and for the sake of time, feel free to go there, this is the passage beginning in verse 10 that talks about putting on the armor of God. It says that we fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, and we wrestle against the wiles of the devil and it says that in the midst of that warfare, in the midst of that struggle that we as believers in Jesus Christ, we have the privilege of being able to bear, to wear or to be donned with the armor of God. It says that we have access to the belt of truth. We have access to the breastplate of righteousness. We have access to the shield of faith. We have access to the helmet of salvation. We have access to the sword of the Spirit. And we have access to our feet being shod with peace.

You say, "Pastor, that sounds really good. What's the problem?" Of all of those pieces of armor, everyone of them but one is defensive in nature. All but one of them is designed to withstand the fiery darts, to withstand the blow, to withstand the ideas, to withstand the thoughts, the idea that God wants to protect us from his blows and from his attacks. The problem is that in this battle that as a believer in Jesus Christ we are guaranteed to have every day if we're going to take a stand for him, we only have one offensive weapon: the Spirit of truth. Do you know what that is? That's the word of God; that's the Bible that you hold in your hand. According to Hebrews 4, it is a double-edged sword. The problem is this: just like we've seen our culture slowly demise over the decades, let me tell you what else is demised: our knowledge and our utilization and our reverence for the word of God. We are becoming quickly a biblically illiterate society. God gave us a double-edged sword and most of us are walking around with a two inch rusted out pocketknife and we've got no use and we've got no victory and we've got nothing going on. Why? Because if you don't know your weapon, if you don't have knowledge of it, if you don't have a use of it and you don't know how to utilize it, then you have nothing on the offensive. When the devil comes to you with those ideas and those thoughts and those temptations. Sure, you've got the helmet of salvation. Sure, you've got the breastplate of righteousness. But what are you going to throw back at him? Because you don't have anything that can defeat him.

Michael the archangel said, "The Lord rebuke thee." Let me give you some ideas here. There are many of you that over the course of time, you've been abandoned, you have been left, you have been done wrong and there's all kinds of emotions that go with that. Do you know what Psalm 27:10 says? "When my mother and my father forsake me, the Lord lifts me up." Do you understand that when that is spoken, that is a sword that wields victory. When you feel like there is nothing in life going right, it says there in the book of 2 Chronicles, that we can have strongholds pulled down. That means that which the devil has created and installed can simply be broken. And I could go on for hours and hours and hours of all of the promises and all of the opportunities and the victory that the word of God gives us in our lives.

But understand that the devil has increased in his veracity. Unfortunately, the church of Jesus Christ has decreased in our understanding of our weaponry. It is a double-edged sword in the sense that he is gaining ground and we are, unfortunately, quickly losing

ground. Which leads to the prophecy, leads to that final thing, that final element, kind of the climax of the message. When we leave this place today, when we wake up in the morning, when we've been called to stand understanding that as a person who believes in Jesus Christ, I am going to come under attack. Understanding that the problem doesn't have to be the problem if I know and learn and can yield and wield the word of God. So, what's the prophecy? It's found in James 4:7. It's a simple little verse tucked in the midst of all kinds of other things. Here's what it says, "Submit yourself to the Lord, resist the devil and he will flee from you." That's what this says: that if we surrender or we submit to the Lord and resist whatever the devil is doing, it doesn't say that after 30 days he might take off, it doesn't say that if we flip the coin just right he will depart. It says, "He will flee."

You see, the victory that we have to stand, the ability to stand in a home where you're the only believer, the ability to stand in the school house when you may be the only person in the classroom, to be able to stand in a corporation where you feel like you're the only one with biblical values, to stand in a culture where it seems like so many times we're outnumbered numerically so drastically, if you would just desire for the devil, for Satan, to flee whatever environment it may be, it begins by submitting to the Lord. Submitting or surrendering is simply meaning this: giving him everything you are. You see, if you hold something back, you're not resisting the devil. If you're holding something back, you're not completely surrendered to him and that is the crux of how to take a stand. When we give God everything we are, we submit to him and by doing so we resist the devil, guess what happens? He flees from us.

And as we approach our time of invitation, as we prepare in just a moment to come together, to stand, to sing, to prepare for the opportunity for a decision to be made or whatever it may be in your life, let me ask you a very simple question: does the devil have any ground in your life? Does he have areas of compromise? Areas of defeat? Areas of non-victory? Well, let me suggest here in our time of invitation, that you pray like King David did in the Psalms. Here's what he said, he said, "Lord, if there's any iniquity in me, if there is anything that is wrong, show me so I might confess it."

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed as we prepare for this time of invitation. Maybe you're here this morning and you realize, or maybe you're watching on tv and you've come to an understanding that you are not surrendered to the things of God, first and foremost, let me ask you a very important question: are you a child of God? Are you one who can say, "That's right. I am a sinner who has been saved. I was headed toward hell but now I'm headed toward heaven only because of the blood of Jesus Christ."

Maybe you're here this morning and that's not your story. Maybe you're watching on tv and saying, "That's not my story." I've got some great news for you: no matter who you are, no matter where you've been, no matter what you have done, if this morning you will just have an honest conversation with the Lord, technically we call it praying, then those of you who are headed the wrong direction can be headed the right one very quickly. It's real simple: you don't have to say it out loud, you don't have to exactly say these same

words but having a conversation with God might go a little something like this: you say, “God, I realize this very moment that I’ve been headed in the wrong direction. I realize that I’ve bought the lie of the world and of the enemy and I understand that because of that, I’m a sinner and I need to be saved and I need to be forgiven. God, you know how many different things I’ve tried all to no avail but today I come in complete surrender asking Jesus Christ and the blood that was shed on Calvary to wash me white as snow, to cleanse me of my iniquity and to save my soul. God, I confess I don't have all the answers but I do know I’m the problem and that Jesus is the only one who can fix me so I’m asking you to save me and in the best way I know how, I want to turn my life over to you.”

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, as we prepare for our time of invitation. Maybe you're here this morning, maybe you're watching on tv and you're that individual and you've been saved for years, maybe even decades but you'd be honest with yourself this morning, the devil has gained ground in your life. There are some struggles. There are some darkness. Whatever it may be. Maybe it does not require stepping out and stepping forward but maybe this is the time we say, “Okay God, I’m going to take a stand right now. No longer am I going to go the way of the enemy. No longer am I going to subject myself to his lies and his deception. From this point forward, I surrender and I yield it all to you.”

Heavenly Father, as we prepare for this time, we come under the shelter of the blood of Jesus Christ for there is none other that gains us access to your throne room, there is none other that allows us the privilege of being forgiven, of being saved, of being restored, of being reconciled to you. So, heavenly Father, I pray during this time that as we prepare to stand, as we prepare to sing together, that the standing that happens in this room would not just be physically us on our feet but in our heart and in our mind, we would stand for you and whatever you have desired to do in our lives this day. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray. Amen.