



Life Group Sermon Notes

“Stand.”

Ps. James Lowe - March 20, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What is something you own that was inexpensive, but is very valuable to you?
- Who is someone for whom you are willing to make great sacrifices? Why?
- Who do you know that is someone you admire for their life of integrity and conviction?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Psalm 1:1-6 ESV *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

This passage describes the contrast between the person who follows God and the person who does not. The person who follows God listens to what God has revealed and lives according to it. He isn't listening to all the other voices and opinions that swirl about in society, or even among friends and family. She isn't moved by the broader culture, even if the laws and practices of the society hold to a different way than the ways of God. The person in pursuit of God will prosper, while those who turn away from and against God will ultimately perish. Immortality and resurrection life in the presence of God will only be given by God to those who seek him and honor him.

Who are those who stand for God today? Are you one of those persons? As our nation continues to stray further and further from God's revelation, will, and ways, it becomes both more challenging and more important for those who know God to stand for God, boldly and unashamedly.

John 11:45-57 ESV *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples. Now the Passover*

of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

Jesus stood for God like no one who ever came before him or after him. The religious leaders were threatened by him, fearing the loss of status, privilege, and power. They also feared the repercussions that could come upon their nation if the crowds were to follow Jesus and revolt against the oppression of their Roman rulers. It is the same today in an even broader way. Jesus often is perceived as a threat to our way of life. His stand for God and his claim and command upon our lives calls for radical change. He must be lord of our lives if we are to honor his claims and commands. But this means change and often the loss of things we consider desirable or comfortable. But Jesus will not change his standards. He stands for God and walks in his ways. He calls all who would follow after him to likewise commit their lives to also stand for God and to walk in his ways through the strength and grace supplied by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 21:1-13 ESV Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

When Jesus took his stand in the face of threatening opposition which sought to do violence to him, he did not rely on his divine power which he could have exercised to destroy his opponents. Instead, he came humbly into Jerusalem, choosing to ride on a lowly beast of burden as a symbolic act indicating the spirit of his approach. Though he stood strong for God and didn't flinch or compromise, he came in a spirit that still sought reconciliation and redemption. He is the same today as he reaches to all who are not in right relationship with God.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- Discuss the ways in which you do well to honor the Lord in terms of how you live your life in front of other people.
- Discuss the ways in which you don't do so well in honoring God in terms of how you live in front of other people.
- Discuss how you can change to increase the measure of how you honor God in your life.

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God to bring deeper conviction into our hearts to wholeheartedly desire to live consecrated lives that consistently honor Christ in all we do and say in front of other people.
- Ask God for greater courage and wisdom to live Christ-honoring lives before all people at all times.
- Ask God to show you who you can encourage to take a bold stand for Christ, and how to best encourage them.