



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “A.D. Series: Stand”

Ps. James Lowe - April 26, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

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

- Who is someone who helped you in a special way make it through a tough time?
- Compassion involves action taken to help another. What moves you to compassion?
- How do you respond to fear when you know something needed but unpopular needs to be said?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

Acts 1:4-8 (ESV) *And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

The Spirit is given to endue believers in Jesus with power to be witnesses to his crucifixion, death, resurrection, and promise to return. Believers are to be emboldened to speak to others what God has done. This boldness and power is needed for the benefit of others coming to faith, and it is also needed in light of the opposition that often arises to God's truth and God's ways.

Acts 4:5-13 (ESV) *On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.*

Today across the world Christians continue to experience significant persecution. Approximately 200 million Christians are under serious persecution in approximately 60 nations across the world. Where there is courage from the Spirit of God, there continues to be a bold verbal witness to Christ even in these nations. Our parent ministry, Every Nation, is ministering in several of these nations, and regularly receives reports of great courage and spiritual fruit in these places.

America needs the same Spirit-empowered witness to Christ in our workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods. Our culture has gradually and progressively silenced the church from proclaiming the Gospel. Christians have either bought into a false belief that we should not speak of Jesus in many public settings, or have become intimidated to boldly speak of Jesus. The Spirit of God wants Jesus made known! It is our responsibility to make him known, and therefore our responsibility to hunger and seek after the empowerment of God's Spirit.

With the Spirit's empowerment we can stand strong and true in the face of anything just as the early Christians did!

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

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

- In what settings do you find it most difficult to speak about your Christian beliefs?
- When was the last time you sensed the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to talk about Jesus?
- How has the Holy Spirit helped you in the past to talk about Jesus to others?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

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

- Pray for God to fill us afresh with the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for new courage, insight, wisdom, and words to speak to others about Jesus.
- Pray that God will provide healings, prophecies, and miracles through us to bless others as signs to confirm the truthfulness of the Gospel.