

What Do You Stand For

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 6/29/2013

These are indeed difficult days. We see almost every institution of society falling apart. The credibility of our government is in shambles. Our economy and our unemployment outlook defy solutions. You would think that by now we would have our education system working correctly.

There is little respect for the Constitution of the United States. Our leaders lie to us. Slowly but surely our national blessings are eroding away.

Do you often find yourself saying that another one of your favorite products is no longer to be found on the store shelves?

Worse yet, does it seem that there is little or no justice in the courts?

There is a movement within the Church of God to water down the Doctrine of Jesus Christ and to subvert Justice for the brethren.

Isaiah 59:

14 *Judgment is turned away backward, and **justice stands afar off**: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter."*

Hosea 4:

1 *Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land."*

What about some of the other institutions that once made America great? Like marriage and the family? The list could go on and on – but which of these is **trending better** and which is getting worse day by day. Without God in the picture – we are going down faster than most people realize.

Sadly, the Church of God is not far behind this evil world. Jesus said it would be like the days of Noah when He returned. What did He mean?

Genesis 6:

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

What about faith, morals and religion? In America today, even these stalwarts of society do not rank as highly as they once did.

God – and all He stands for – is being systematically removed from law, Congress, the Courts and our schools. Even the Presidency opts for the Muslim Brotherhood while **cancelling** the National Day of Prayer to give thanks to God for this great country... Chaplains in the military are forbidden to invoke God's name – while secretly praying for God to give them victories.

The sad truth is that America has fallen so far behind in manufacturing – and being able to utilize our own technology that we could not win another major war.

God is breaking our strength. Now, here's a question that strikes close to home: What about your own value system? What is important to you, Brethren?

What do you stand for?

What, if anything, would you die for? If you do not stand for anything in particular, could that indicate the serious problem of standing for nothing?

God prophesied of America and the Israelitish nations in these last days.

The **Holy One of Israel**, Jesus Christ Himself, singles out the sins of national leaders, the justice department, our religious and church leaders, and all the way down to the man in the congregation.

Isaiah 1:

- 1** The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
- 2** Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.
- 3** The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Modern Israel has **again** forgotten their Creator God.

Isaiah 1:

- 4** Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.
- 5** Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

The whole head is sick means that from the President all the way down to Congress and the Supreme Court and the common man on the street – they are all morally sick and sinful men. They reject God and all that is Godly. They are crooked and perverse in their thinking – and their every action demonstrates their weakness. There is no soundness in them.

Isaiah 1:

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Men fail to take a stand when they lack faith.

Jesus asked the question:

Luke 18:

8 *Will I find faith when I return?*

And the strange thing is that He does not answer the question for us.

That's because **it is up to us** as to whether or not there will be any faith on earth when Jesus returns. But, as we continue in Isaiah, God does describe where we are headed if we continue the course we are on.

Isaiah 1:

7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, ***as overthrown by strangers.***"

Since, according to this Scripture, it does not look like attempts to secure our borders will be successful – perhaps it is time to **stand for something**.

What do you stand for?

Who among us are willing to bear ridicule and reproach that comes when a person **stands for the truth's sake**?

We have all heard the old adage: For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing. When we fail to take a stand for God's Way, we **hamper** the **progress** of the plan of God. That is a sad state of affairs.

Not only that, we jeopardize our own salvation.

Some will say, "You take too much upon yourself – God does not expect such stellar performances from us." **Yes, He does.**

God has called us specifically to achieve certain goals.

The question "What do you stand for?" is one of the most important questions a man can ask of himself. The vast majority of people just go along with the status quo.

Standing for something means you have a legitimate purpose in life. It suggests that you actually believe in **God's Plan** – and you believe in yourself and the goals you set out to accomplish each day.

A man who is aware of his worth will refuse to take "**no**" for an answer and defend his honor even in the face of hostile criticism from opponents.

The weak are too afraid to stand up for anything because they are scared to voice their opinions in the face of **resentment** or, worse yet, **hostility** from others.

The smug will call you a **trouble maker** and the timid among us will believe them - saying that you are a trouble maker.

Being true to God's principles and being genuine in keeping His Law are imperative in life - and required for eternal life.

Answer this question for yourself, brethren: Does Jesus ever expect us to compromise His Principles for the sake of expediency?

"A man who won't die for something is not fit to live."- That was said 50 years ago by Martin Luther King Jr.

It is important to be a straight shooter and talk by making a point. There are "so called" church leaders who steadfastly – to this day - refuse to stand up against the heresy of the trinity.

There are "so called" church leaders who are systematically watering down doctrine and replacing it with a fun and happiness gospel.

We are called to **take that stand** each and every time there's a choice to be made between doing what is right – or supporting the wrong.

Despite our fear and insecurities or the possibility of public scorn, or following the crowd into the lukewarm waters of moral mediocrity and self-defeatism – we are obligated by God to take a stand.

Every time we do **not** take a stand – it **is** a decision. Every decision we make sets the course for the rest of our lives – for good or for bad. Either we build upon, or create a right foundation strong enough to build a life on – or not.

So, “What **do you stand** for?”

Because of my stance against false teachers and false preachers – I get letters like this all the time. I’ll leave out the names:

“...our local minister along with a man from the TV program unfairly suspended a faithful member, who we knew, from Church attendance. Our friend was treated unjustly and improperly. Because of the outcry to HQ from the loyal members of our congregation against our unjust minister, the President of the church organization came here and held a meeting with our local elders in this area over the improper behavior of our minister on this and some other things. We are disappointed and discouraged because our local minister was not dealt with in a right and proper manner – and absolutely nothing was said to clear our friend’s name after he was unjustly maligned. So, we have an unconverted man for a minister, and majority of people have no idea what took place.”

Brethren, I am taken aback by how often it has happened. God’s people are unjustly harmed – and they have no recourse on earth – because the political corporate organization’s President is a corrupt man.

The headquarters man supported the sinful local minister and smeared the innocent member. It is a trend and a common practice. All the headquarters men **care nothing** for the harmless victims of this atrocity.

And, I’ve been hearing from other **ministers** who have also attempted **to take a stand for Godliness** – only to find themselves on the outside, as well.

1 Corinthians 11:

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they **which are approved** may be made manifest among you.

God says that if you wish to be **approved of** by Him – you had better decide **which side** of the heresy to take a stand on. God is **sorting out** who will stand for Right and Truth – and who are modern day Pharisees – supporting headquarters – because that is where their bread is buttered.

That's where their friends are. That is where they are known and comfortable.

Which part of "Come out from among them and separate your selves from them," is ambiguous (2 Corinthians 6:17)?

God says, "I will receive you" if you separate yourselves – not if you just say that you wish it were different at headquarters.

Brethren there is a great sin in the church and it is this: **Church policy dictates that the political corporate organization must be protected above everything else.** [To the ruin and demise of the faithful brethren.]

One leading evangelist back in the days of the Worldwide Church of God said at the time: "The people can be 95% right – and Mr. Armstrong can be 95% wrong – and God will come down and support His apostle."

That evangelist was beginning to teach the brethren to look to headquarters – whether it was **right** or **wrong**.

This sinister cancer of a practice began back before Herbert W. Armstrong died. I do not know if Herbert Armstrong was complicit in that thinking or not – **I certainly hope not.**

We teach people to look to God – directly. Build your relationship to God – not through any man or organization.

Brethren, listen to me: God does not support political corporate organizations no matter what... whether or not they are **Right or Wrong**. God does not work that way.

James 4:

17 Therefore to him that knows to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

That is a basic sound Biblical principle of God.

Romans 12:

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

When were these clear Biblical principles replaced with a headquarters devotion? Brethren, at our baptism we counted the cost – or we should have. We were told that the time would come when we would be persecuted and reviled.

Well, that time is arriving – it is here. Jesus was persecuted. The Prophets of old were. Everyone who takes a stand will be persecuted for righteousness sake. It is the only way into the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 5:

- 10** Blessed are they which are **persecuted** for **righteousness' sake**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11** Blessed are ye, when men **shall revile you**, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
- 12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

God says "Do not equivocate."

Luke 16:

- 13** No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

God never supports the unjust man over His righteous people. I know, we thought we would be fighting our battles out in the world – not in the Church of God.

Isaiah 66:

- 2** For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

God never supports the politically astute and wielders of power over His faithful children. When the people suffer – God takes note.

Brethren, remember this – God's true people are always in a small minority (Luke 12:32). And you, Brethren, will not be thanked for **taking a stand** for God's way.

Jesus and His true disciples were never a part of the organized religion of their day. They were persecuted the outcasts – as was Paul – plagued by those from headquarters at Jerusalem continuously – everywhere he went.

1 Peter 4:

- 12** Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:
- 13** But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Brethren, consider this also: God is sorting things out. More and more these political corporate organizations – which are not following the Principles of Jesus Christ – are falling apart and being scattered.

Now is the time to **take a stand** for what is right in God's eyes.

If you do not **take a stand** when God shows you the impropriety of their policies and actions – soon it will be too late to **take a stand**.

One lady wrote an email saying "... there is so much injustice like this in the church - and it is not right. First of all, I believe that if there is a righteous minister in the church - HE SHOULD TAKE A STAND AGAINST SUCH INJUSTICE."

Another lady in the church wrote to me last week about trying to get her minister to take a stand. She wrote, "I talked to my local minister for quite a while trying to get him to see what is going on in our politically corrupt organization. But all my local minister keeps saying is that we have to follow God and not look to any man – and that there are wolves and tares among us. The last thing I said to him (this lady said) was, "Yes, there are wolves, but when these men are in the top positions of power in this organization, and they are going in the wrong direction, we cannot follow them right over the cliff."

Brethren, the mistake that her minister is making is that he is too weak to take a stand.

He is closing his eyes to Leviticus 5:1 where it says that when you know about a wrong situation and you do nothing about it - God holds you to be just as **guilty** as the perpetrators.

Leviticus 5:

1 And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; **if he do not utter it**, then he shall bear his **iniquity**.

That is like her local minister saying, "I know that there are tares and wolves in the leadership - but this organization pays so well, with so many perks that I will help and support them in their false teachings and practices."

God requires us to take a stand against evil. God knows that it is a difficult battle. God describes it as our Christian battle that we have of choice – but to **stand and fight**.

Ephesians 6:

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, **to stand**.

Brethren, the question we are asking today is “**What do you stand for?**” These verses tell us that God has been preparing us for this day of Battle. And these verses that direct us to take a stand should be read this way.

Ephesians 6:

- 14** and having done all, **to stand, stand therefore.** [Take a stand], having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- 15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- 16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- 17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

I always like to look for a section of Scripture that may have been the inspiration for Paul's writings - just to know where Paul was coming from when he said and wrote the things that he did. Paul had Isaiah 59 in mind.

I wrote back to the lady who shared her account of what had happened in her area with the unjust practices and ungodly decisions from the headquarters of the political corporate organization.

This section of Isaiah is describing the end-time Laodicean condition of the Church of God.

Isaiah 59:

- 14** And judgment is turned away backward, and **justice stands afar off:** for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.
- 15** Yea, truth fails; and he that departs from evil makes himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment.
- 16** And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.
- 17** For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.
- 18** According to their **deeds**, accordingly He will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies.

God will certainly be looking to see who follows His advice to **Take a Stand.**

There is a new world coming. A wonderful World Tomorrow. It will be a world that is vastly different from what we see around us today. It is going to be a world so different from what we see about us today – that we would not even recognize it – if it were shown to us.

The world tomorrow will be one in which men **take a stand** for what is right and do what is right. Men will have principles – character – dignity – virtue – honor – and be worthy of respect. They will know right from wrong – and they will **choose** to do right.

Mankind was created for the purpose of reaching his fantastic potential. Man will have built within himself - the Godly Character and he will have learned to **stand fast**, and uphold the traditions which he has been taught, and that is the Gospel Truth.

The Bible contains many stories of men of faith – men who stood for what is right – men who would take a stand. We find hope and encouragement in men like young David who stood up – even when the entire army stood down – David took a stand.

David stood alone against the Philistine Goliath.

Young David **took a stand** against the huge uncircumcised Goliath. The fact that Goliath was uncircumcised meant that Goliath had no covenant with the True God. David was assured that God would give him the victory over Goliath because David was in covenant with God.

We like a story like that – we need stories like that. Character honor and valor – the things that make men – men. But where do we find that in today's world?

There is something in our nature that causes us to recognize men like that great prophet Daniel.

Daniel 6:

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought **Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions.**

The Bible is filled with examples of those who had to courageously stand alone for God's Truth in the onslaught of the enemy.

We have been called to be kings and priests in the Kingdom of God. We need to believe God's way of life in order to be able **to stand for it.**

Are we mature enough Christians to be able to live and stand for our faith? God is looking for a few good men who will **stand up** for what is right.

Stand up for what is honest and just. Stand up for what is wholesome and pure. Stand up for the Word of God and the truth of God. Don't you know that at the crucifixion – Jesus **stood alone**?

Matthew 26:

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then **all the disciples forsook him, and fled.**

Brethren, a famine of the Word of God is coming – because the world hates what Jesus stands for (Amos 8:11). It is a famine of the **hearing** the words of the LORD: No more sermons of truth – no more warnings to the wise.

Some in the early days of the Church – stood alone – they were the only ones in their areas. They were martyred – thrown to the lions – burned alive.

Who has that kind of character today?

Who takes a stand for what is right and what is true? Are we easily swayed – or, are we defenders of the faith, down to the last man or woman?

It is critical for us to learn to sift through the philosophies and actions of those who do not understand the **simplicity of Christ**, so that we can become more spiritually grounded.

God wants us **to stand** for His priorities even if we have to **stand alone.**

The simplicity and humility of Jesus is not attractive to this world.

Mankind, without the Spirit of God, cannot recognize a humble teacher – as Jesus was.

Our human nature suggests that bigger and bolder are best. We naturally, but **wrongly**, seek to associate with the powerful and influential.

Those who are worldly wise seek to have the biggest organization – even if they have to have one foot in the world. We are warned that that is **not** Godly wisdom. There is a right place to **take a stand** – and there is a **wrong** place.

1 Corinthians 2:

5 Our faith should **not stand** in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

God has called each one of us **individually** to be a part of His Church. We are not able to relinquish our free moral agency to another agency.

Too many people accept an outside dominion over their lives without hesitation and without question. And, as a result they are not able to make wise decisions **on their own** when heresy enters the Church. We have been warned about putting our trust in men.

Psalms 40:

4 Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

Christian maturity demands that we must develop the character **to stand for God's pure truth**, and not yield to anything else. Each Christian must have dominion over his or her own faith.

With a well-informed conscience, we are responsible to God directly. Let's conclude on a most promising and encouraging note.

When all is said and done, **God is with us** - so, we are not **standing alone**.

John 16:

32 Jesus said, "Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet **I am not alone**, because the Father is with me."

When we take a stand – that is when God is with us!

Jesus has assured us:

Hebrews 13:

5 I will never leave you or forsake you.

1 Corinthians 16:

13 Watch you, **stand firm** in the faith, live like men, be strong!

14 Let everything you do be done in Godly love."