It’s Time to Take a Stand

Laity Address Ephesians 6: 10-13

May 2013

Bishop Johnson, members of the cabinet, laity and clergy and visiting friends: Good afternoon.

I’ve often heard it said that a person who doesn’t stand for something will fall for anything. We live in a time where taking a stand has become unpopular. To claim absolutes with regard to salvation, morality, and God’s word is no longer fashionable. We live in a world that just wants everyone to go along to get along. But it is in this very time, in this world, that the church of the living God must be prepared to climb up on top of the Rock with our mind made up and take our stand. The preservation of our community, indeed of our world, may very well be dependent upon the church being willing to be the church, in season and out of season.

In Ezekiel 22:30 God said, “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none”.

Church: We live in a day where the foundational truths of God’s Word are being challenged by men and women who once stood for the truth. We live in a day where morality is nothing more than by word, and standards of righteousness have been reduced to each man doing what is right in his or her own sight.

This is a spiritual warfare and the only agency on the face of the earth that is equipped to wage this spiritual war is the church. So where in the world is the church? Where are the men and women who will step up and stand in the gap for the salvation of the city? Where is the voice crying in the wilderness? Where are the men and women that are willing to take up their crosses and follow Jesus? Where are the pastors and the laity who sincerely seek to know Christ in the power of His resurrection, in the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable even unto death?

It’s time to take a stand. It’s time to be the church. It’s time to fill the gap. It’s time to put on our armor, get up out of the pews, and reach out to those that are un-churched in the community.

Having Done All…

Listen to the words from Paul… what Paul tells us in verse 13. First He says, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that, ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all…

Let me share with you seven things we must do:

First: Preparation:

We have to take up and put on the whole armor of God. We are not prepared for the battle simply because we attend a church. We are not prepared just because we’re religious folk. To fight this good fight of faith we have to take up and put on the armor of God. This means that we have to engage in preparation. It means that we are people of prayer. We are people of the word. We are people of worship. It means that we prepare our hearts in prayer. We prepare our minds in the word. We prepare our spirit in worship. We prepare, we bend our knees and yield our spirit. We prepare. We pick up and we put on before we even think about engaging the enemy in this spiritual warfare.

Second: Determination:

There must be preparation, and there must be determination. Paul said,” and having done all” We must determine to do all. We must be determined; we have to have our mind made up that we will not turn back, look back, or go back. Our preparation is only to be exceeded by our determination to be what we’ve been called to be.

Determination will get us up to where we need to be, even when everything in us tells us not to go there. Determination turns our preparation into our destination. Jesus was determined to carry out his mission. When Satan tempted Jesus to waver in his mission, Jesus said, it is written. That’s preparation plus determination. When Peter responded to Jesus’ words concerning his own death by saying, “Not so Lord”, Jesus said, “Get thee behind me”, When he was in the Garden of Gethsemane and his spirit was willing but the flesh was weak, Jesus said, “Not my will but thine be done”.

Preparation plus determination will take you to your destination.

Third: Dedication:

But there is one more thing. In verse 11 it says, “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Then again in verse 13, “wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. We must have engaged in the preparation, we must move with determination, but we stand against the wiles of the devil in our dedication.

We are dedicated to our Lord. We are dedicate to our call. We are dedicated to the commission that defines our mission. Dedication will keep us at our post even when others have grown battle weary and sprit worn. Dedication is the bowing of our will to God’s will. Dedication is an affinity to a higher cause and a greater power.

In the last days, in the evil day, it is going to take people of preparation, people who have put on the whole armor of God. It’s going to take determination, refusing to run with the world. And it’s going take dedication to the will and Word of God.

Fourth: Stand:

What are we preparing to do? What are we determined to do? What are we dedicated to doing? To stand. When others have fallen, to stand. When others have wilted, to stand. When others have folded, to stand. To stand against the flood of worldliness that is sweeping across our country and is knocking on the church doors. To stand in the gap for the city that God’s judgment not destroy it. To stand for what is right, even when it is not politically popular. To stand up for the unborn babies and children in our schools. To stand up for the marginalized and disenfranchised. To stand up for morality in our homes, justice in our courts, and fidelity in our marriage. It’s time for the church to stand in the gap or our world is in trouble.

Fifth: In power:

And when we stand, when we stand in the armor of the Lord, when we stand as His ambassadors on earth, we are not standing like a bunch of scared rabbits before pack wolves. We are standing in power. The power of the strong belt of truth to gird up your loins. The power of the breastplate of righteousness to protect your heart and keep your desires pure. The power of the shoes that is able to speed you on as you preach the Good News of peace with God. The power of the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. The power of the helmet of salvation to protect your mind. And the power of the sword of the spirit-which is the word of God.

These are evil days, and it’s time to be the church. If all we want to do is build another building, if all we want to do is just be another steeple on the block, if all we want to do is build our own little kingdom, then let’s not waste God’s time and the people’s money. But if we are ready to stand, then it’s time to stand in power.

Sixth: In Passion:

To stand in the evil days, in days when the world will resist and ridicule the righteous, then it’s going to take passion for the Word of God and for the will of God. A passion that will put it all on the line, but will not recoil or retreat in the face of the onslaught of the enemy. Because we know that even when the enemy comes rushing at us like a flood. God, will raise up a standard. We love God too much to run. We love the lost too much to refuse to stand in the gap. We hate the devil too much to let him have one soul without a fight. We will stand in the gap for our children. We will stand in the gap for our neighbors and friends. We will fight the good fight of faith with an unwavering passion for the kingdom of God.

Like the mother who stood up to the mountain lion, and withstood the bites and scratches of the lion, we must be willing to go into battle for the souls that Jesus died for. It takes a passion that will give birth to compassion.

Seventh: In Persistence:

Jesus said that if we want to follow him we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily, and follow him Luke (:23) If we are going to be the church that stands in the gap, then it is not going to happen in one day, one revival, one day, or even one year. We are going to have to get up every day, put on our armor, take up our cross and stand. Our children may try our patience day after day, but that’s all right because we’re going to stand. Temptation will come, but we will be standing.

In closing: We will be standing on the Rock. We will be standing on the firm foundation of faith founded on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And when the storms have come and gone we’ll be standing. When the kingdom have risen and fallen, we’ll be standing. When nations have come and gone, we’ll still be standing.

We will be still standing is because we have made preparation by putting on the powerful armor of the Lord. We will be standing because we have got determination to keep on keeping on. We will be standing because we are dedicated to our God, His Word and His Will. We will be standing because if we want no else will, and souls will slip into eternity without God or His Son.

It is time to stand, church! It is time to shine a light that cannot be hidden, it is time to declare a truth that cannot be denied, it’s time to be the church that we have been called to be or pack our bags and go home.

It’s time to stand in power, in passion, persistence, it’s time to stand Let me encourage you to change the channel and get a new picture of yourself. It is time to see yourself as Micah saw himself when he declared “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall, I shall rise, when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be my light. It’s time to take a stand.