**Standing on Solid Ground**

Since the advent of the Church, there have been people who have tried to spread false teachings about what it means to be the people of God. Paul considered these misleading and deceptive. He warned Christians to be careful what they believed to be true. He brought to light the importance of standing firm on the simple truths of the Gospel.

 The world tries to water down the Gospel, and even spread false truths alongside it. Being aware of this is not enough. We have to make a choice to stand firm on the Truth of the Gospel.

Even some churches have attempted to water down the gospel so as an appeal to the world. All that can be accomplished by such a vain appeal is to pervert the church from being the Lord’s church into a worldly church. To a church that is unrecognized by the Lord. To a church that He didn’t die for!

Although many of these churches might mean well, they end up getting trapped into altering God’s plan for the church into something that looks more worldly.

What ends up happening is an eroding of the Lord’s message.

The Lord’s church is to be different, to be set apart, to be reliable and to remain stable throughout an ever changing world.

We must not make the mistake of offering the world the world! Jesus offers a new and better way. We must not do any less!

John 15:19**, “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”**

Romans 12:2, **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”**

 The world’s logic can be very enticing. The reason for that is simple. They appeal to our human nature and are a reflection of our own desires! However**, they will not provide us with the abundant life Christ came to bring.**

 We must get into a pattern of standing firm on the Gospel message. When you hear something deceptive or false, declare it as such and keep returning to the Word of God.

**Scripture:** Colossians 2:8**, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.”**

### Introduction

 Since the beginning, the Christian faith has been on a collision course with the culture around us. The values of the world do not align with the values of our faith. The priorities of the world do not align with the priorities of our faith. The world of man is not seeking the same things as the kingdom of God.

If we are remaining faithful to the Gospel message and not trying to water it down, we shouldn’t be surprised when we experience conflict and tension. Instead, we should see the conflict and tension as confirmation that we are doing the right thing.

**Illustration:** Have you ever been out on a hike or a walk and gone through a “rough patch.” You know the kind where every time you put your foot down you’re not sure if you’re going to roll an ankle or find solid ground. Like a hike at Hocking Hills or Nelson ledges. My favorite is trying to walk through ice covered snow. Any given step could send you airborne.

These types of perilous adventures are very much like walking through life trying to depend on worldly wisdom. You’re never quite sure you’re going to land on solid ground as principles and values are constantly shifting, changing and even flipping.

However, what we learn from Jesus is to trust in the eternally consistent teachings of scripture.

If you have a Bible with you, turn with me to Colossians 2:8. I want us to read these words of Paul together.

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”

In this one verse, Paul warns us about the world’s logic and values. He calls us as believers to stand firm on a different set of values, those of Christ. But even when we choose to stand firm on the things of God, we will still be faced with the values of this world.

**How do we know when something we hear is worldly? How do we know when something we hear is Godly?**

**How do we know when we are being led astray, or worse, being held captive by worldly principles and teachings?**

As we progress through this morning’s sermon I’d like to draw your attention back to the illustration I brought up a few minutes ago about going through a “rough patch.” Regarding worldly principles and teachings I said, *You’re never quite sure you’re going to land on solid ground as principles and values are constantly shifting, changing or flipping.*

This is an important lesson to remember; *Worldly values are inconsistent at best and deceivingly distructive at worst!*

**Point 1: Worldly values are inconsistent**

Let me help illustrate this point with something that we are all familiar with, one of the primary mottos of the world of man;

**Follow your heart.**

**Do whatever makes you happy.**

**In my old hippie days we used to say, “What’s your bag man?”**

These principles sound good enough, but the problem is they’re inconsistent, shaky, and contradict the teachings of scripture.

The word says in Jeremiah 17:9; *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”* The world says, *follow your heart,* but the Bible warns us the heart can be wicked, deceitful, and confusing. (Who can understand it?)

Jesus says in Matthew 10:39; *“Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.”* The world says that you need to make sure you’re happy no matter what but Jesus says we should lose our lives for His sake, His kingdom… where amazingly, we find deep abiding joy not a fleeting sense of happiness that the world offers.

The heart is inconsistent, always changing, falling in and out of love with any number of things. Worldly happiness is an ever moving target from one day to the next.

**Let’s be honest for a moment, how can we build anything stable off of these principles?**

As you think about that, flip over with me to Matthew 7:24-27. In this passage, Jesus is teaching His Sermon on the Mount. This is what He has to say about building our lives;

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and* ***does not*** *act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”*

Did you catch that? Jesus Himself is commanding us to listen and obey His teachings. When we do, we will be standing on a firm foundation. Out of the many values the world will throw your way, none will allow you to stand firm when the going gets tough. **They are shifting sands of inconsistency.**

So why are they so attractive? Why does it sound so appealing to follow my heart, seek out whatever makes me happy.

**Point 2: Worldly values are seductive**

Another word for seductive could be “enticing.” Either way, the truth is, many things and words the world tries to give us and tell us can look and sound very attractive when we see and hear them.

Believe it or not, the Bible even talks about this. Turn with me to 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

*“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”*

You see, Paul knew many people would spend their entire lives searching for a truth that lined up with their lifestyle. In addition, many people reject the truth in scripture because it contradicts their lifestyle. They receive something meant to bring conviction and ignore it as useless. Therefore, we have to be people who continuously fill our ears and minds with the only truth we can find in this world, and it is in the pages of scripture.

The Bible is full of practical life principles that enable us to live the ‘abundant life’ Jesus came to bring us. In John 10:10, Jesus specifically tells us this is the goal;

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

And what the world can’t fully destroy, it will seek to distract. The world will try to steal your time, treasure, and attention.

That’s why we have to stand firm on the word of God. That’s why we have to abide in Christ (John 15:5).

That’s why we need to have daily time in God’s word.

And as you learn how to point out the worldly values that don’t align with the kingdom of God you need to also spend energy pursuing the values that do align with the kingdom of God.

**Point 3: Allow the Spirit to guide**

It’s not enough to simply say “no” to the things and values of this world. We have to take it a step further and say “yes” to the things of God. Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to be a guide and a strength in this endeavor. Turn with me to John 14:17;

*“He is the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

Jesus invites us to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us “into all truth.” How do we do that? The Spirit lives through the word given to us. That word? THE GOSPEL!

Once we begin to follow God’s lead, we will be able to experience the best life possible. We will be constantly coming back to the only truth worth standing on at all, one that will never lead us astray.

It takes devotion and effort to learn to walk in step with the Spirit as you follow the teachings of scripture. There will always be temptations to veer off the path and go adventuring through the “rough patches.”

But again, those temptations are only temporary, much like the rewards they promise.

Abundant life is found in the kingdom of God. And the Holy Spirit has given a gift to help lead and guide the way. That gift? Again, The bible, the very word of God!

### Conclusion:

The world is trying to draw us into values that are inconsistent, seductive, and at worst...*destructive*. But today, we all have the opportunity to invite the Spirit of God to guide us into scriptural truth...we can do that by becoming open to the Word the one thing we can stand on, knowing it will remain firm.

The first step is to call out and recognize any false truths or principles you may believe in. I gave a couple of examples earlier, but for reference it would be things like;

* Follow your heart.
* Do whatever makes you happy.
* It’s my bag man and I’m doing it
* You can become anything you set your mind to. (No matter how much I want it I will never be the next linebacker for the Browns)

The next step is admitting how enticing and attractive some of these principles are. It does you no good to pretend like they aren’t… But it also does no good to think we can simply avoid the pervasive false teaching that is rampant in the world simply because we don’t like it.

And finally, we must trust in the Word of God to lead and guide us into and through the truth.

Will you choose to take a stand today, and every day, going forward?

Will you choose to trust the leading of the Spirit through the Word of God?

Will you make a daily commitment to scripture?

To any that have listened to this sermon this morning, whether here or on line, and have not as yet accepted the Lord Jesus into your life, won’t you consider doing so right now today!

Plant your faith and trust in the same solid ground that the cross of Christ was planted in. God wants you to become one of His children founded and based in His unchanging truths.

Jesus offers you a new and far better way to base your life on rather than the ever changing world.

He offers you peace and assurance in this life and an eternity in heaven. The scriptures teach us that we are to be baptized into Christ. We can aid you in that. All you have to do is ASK!

If you’re on line just contact us, if you’re in attendance come forward as we sing this song and be baptized into Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and be immediately added to His Kingdom!