

5-30-20 **NOW IS THE TIME TO “STAND FIRM and STABILIZE”**

Psalms 51:10: *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a STEADFAST spirit within me.*

During times of ‘fatigue,’ ‘stress,’ and even ‘attack’ it is vitally important that our spirits remain STEADFAST & FIRM.

When we are stressed and fatigued, we weaken, and we become susceptible to falling down. I remember times in my life, particularly with physical exertion AND after a duration of time, my arms and legs would become ‘rubbery’ and I felt like falling to the ground --- I had trouble even STANDING upright ... I needed something to lean against --- I needed water to drink --- even a bit of sugar ---- just to get me to the point of STANDING FIRM enough to begin to re-nourish and reset my balance and capacity... I NEEDED TO BE RESTORED!

I also weaken when I am buffeted by the waves of life --- they keep knocking me down or my knees buckle and my feet lose their footing ... I lose my balance and I teeter on the edge of being knocked over.

When our kids were young, they would stand in the waves at the beach or in the middle of a wave pool at a water park --- we’d see the wave coming AND WE KNEW that we had to “STABILIZE” & “STAND FIRM” ----

CAN YOU THINK OF TIMES THAT YOU MAY HAVE HAD SIMILAR SITUATIONS?

Friends, today --- after more than 6 weeks of ‘stay at home’ orders --- many people are struggling with STANDING FIRM --- the waves of life and the shifting sands under our feet have thrown us off-kilter.

Peter is writing from Rome in a time when Emperor Nero was unjustly persecuting and even killing the early Christians. In this time, Peter writes to the Christians in the land that we now know as Turkey. Peter writes through chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4 regarding the need to live Holy lives, exemplary lives, and lives of concern for others ... NOW in the climax of his letter --- Peter gives us his climaxing word --- STAND FIRM!!! And ALLOW GOD TO HELP YOU.

Today, we will consider what it means to “STAND FIRM” in our faith and think about ways that we stand against fatigue of life.

1 Peter 5:1-11: *To the Elders and the Flock*

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

⁵ In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”

⁶ **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ **Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. **Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.** ⁹ **RESIST HIM, STANDING FIRM** in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, **will himself RESTORE you and make you STRONG, FIRM and STEADFAST.** ¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS:

I. A Fisherman Becomes a Shepherd (verses 1-7)

II. The CORE Message of Peter (verses 8-11)

A. Beware of Your Enemy --

- Do not take lightly
- Seeks to Prowl around & Devour (like a lion)
- 1st century vs. today

B. So What Can We Do?

RESIST & STAND FIRM --- STABILIZE!

C. God will **RESTORE** you and make you --

STRONG, FIRM & STEADFAST

III. Applications for today:

A. WAYS OF RESISTING THE DEVIL & HIS DEVOURING WAYS:

1. WATCH OUT --- THE DEVIL PROWL & LURKS

2. RESIST

B. WAYS OF STANDING FIRM IN YOUR FAITH

DEAR GOD, YOU ARE THE CREATOR OVER ALL --- AND IN YOU I REST ---- PLEASE HELP ME TO BE "SMART" TO THE WAYS OF THE DEVIL --- AND THE FATIGUE OF LIFE. PLEASE HELP ME TO DISCERN AND RESPOND TO THE WAVES OF LIFE --- IN THE WORDS OF THE PSALMIST --- "PLEASE CREATE IN ME A PURE HEART, OH GOD, AND RESTORE & RENEW A STEADFAST SPIRIT WITHIN ME. I AFFIRM MY FAITH & TRUST IN YOU DEAR GOD --- I NEED YOU AND WANT YOU TO HELP ME. I WILL COOPERATE TO BE THE BEST THAT I CAN BE ACCORDING TO YOUR GOOD PLAN AND PROVISION FOR MY LIFE. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.