

Standing Still, Going Forward

Joe Slater

The Israelites felt boxed in at the Red Sea. Mountains loomed in both sides with the water ahead. Pharaoh's host was closing in behind them. Where could they go? As they had done before and would do again, the people complained, blaming Moses for leading them to disaster.

“Do not be afraid,” Moses exhorted them. *“Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord”* (Exodus 14:13). Not long ago they had witnessed the Lord's power over Pharaoh and his idols in ten plagues that devastated the land of Egypt. Oh, how quickly we forget!

There is a time to stand still. But two verses later God ordered Moses to *“tell the children of Israel to go forward”* (14:15). But wait! “Forward” led straight into the water! No worries – the Lord will simply part the water. You'll go through on dry ground. Problem solved!

We, too, must stand; and we, too, must go forward. *“Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”* (Ephesians 6:13). As a soldier must stand and fight, so we must engage in spiritual warfare. The Lord fought for Israel (Exodus 14:14), and He will fight for us too!

Yes, we must stand – but we must also go forward! Even the great apostle Paul acknowledged that he had not yet “arrived.” *“But one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:13b-14).

The goal is up ahead. Let us stand still (remain calm), stand fast, and go forward! Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armor on!

Tearing Down Satan's Strongholds

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:3-4, ESV).

A man who wanted to be a missionary to a certain country did research to discover what the people in that country needed the most. What he learned was that all people had five desperate needs. He labeled them as The Five Universal Truths.

1. People need more in life than material affluence and social improvement.
2. People have an emptiness in life that riches and power cannot fulfill.
3. People have a cosmic loneliness and need for love.
4. People have a universal sense of guilt.
5. People have a universal fear of death.

He decided that these five truths were Satan's stronghold that captured and held men in his power. Then he thought about John 16:33 where Jesus said, *“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”* Christ is the One who has conquered Satan because He offers solutions to each of these problems.

Christ is the One who can bring joy and happiness to people in spite of their circumstances. Jesus opens the door to God's love and companionship. He takes away the guilt that people feel over their sins. He erases the fear of death with His promise of a glorious life in heaven with God.

Jesus is the freedom from Satan's stronghold. God's Word *“brings people to their senses and lets them escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured to do his will”* (2 Tim. 2:26). And we are the ones who snatch them from the fire of hell through the preaching of the gospel.

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)

FIXING THE WORLD

Isaiah 32.17 “And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.”

I read that a couple of psychologists were now advocating a simple two-step approach to mental health: 1. Get over it. 2. Stay over it. This is just too simplistic. As a culture, we are too much in love with the system of the complaint. Much of the complaining that we hear today pertains to that which we have no control.

I suppose that if you asked ten different people to suggest ways to fix the world, you would get ten different answers. None of them would be fool-proof. All of them would be intriguing and creative. Yet we would still be in need of getting things fixed.

Most of us have experienced trying to repair one of those small kitchen appliances that we are certain we can fix. My last attempt was with a Keurig Coffee Maker!

Isaiah's solution to this dilemma is to be an “oak of righteousness.” How does a person do that? By preaching the good news to the poor, by love and justice, binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming freedom to the captives, releasing prisoners from darkness, proclaiming the year of the Lord. Isn't this what Jesus came to do? As people who wear the name Christian, should we not do the same?

This world is broken. We cannot fix the whole world. Jesus does not expect us to do everything. He does expect us to do what we can, where we can, when we can. There are multitudes of people in this broken place who could use a dose of good news, who need some help now and then.

When we serve others we serve God, and when we serve God, we are blessed.

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