

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 24, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“Taking A Stand”
2 Timothy 4:1-5

We are living in tough times. Anyone who doubts that is either completely out of touch or blindly optimistic. Human depravity is at every turn. False solutions are deceitfully veiled as truth. Humanism has reached an all-time high. Promises are quickly broken and commitments are both shallow and fickle. In the words of the Apostle Paul, “difficult times” are upon us. How does the Christian cope? What are the techniques that spur us on and keep us stable? But even more than that, how do I make a difference in the midst of it... the day and age in which we live? How can I really have an impact in a world gone mad? The Apostle Paul’s final words of counsel to his young protégé in the ministry, Timothy, offer us both counsel and wise advice in times like these.

I. OUR TIMES... DIFFICULT AND DEPRAVED

We need not look far or hard for an accurate analysis of the world in which we live. There are at least two places in which we can turn to get a critical estimation of our times.

2 Places to Look To Get A Critical Estimation of our Times:

- 1. Look at the day and age in which we live** – In recent times the events of society have defied past imagination. With current trends, that which seems startling and bizarre today will be upstaged by something worse twelve months from now. The contrast is perhaps most noticeable when one looks back several decades to the times when the following were inconceivable:

6 Inconceivable Evidences of Our Times That would Not Have Happened A Decade Ago:

- (1) Movies and Entertainment** – There would never have been on film or television what is now considered a regular diet. Nudity, violence, graphic sexual content are daily paraded before our eyes during prime time television viewing or in the movies.
- (2) Public Safety and Security** – Except in a very limited number of places in large cities, people were once safe on the streets both day and night... not any more. It’s not safe to even run in the Boston Marathon anymore in broad daylight. Last

week a man attempted to abduct a women in the HEB parking lot in broad daylight in Kyle, Texas.

- (3) **Print Journalism** – Magazines and newspapers were vehicles of interesting and informative journalism, rather than lewd, sensual, and violent exposes that usually express opinion rather than reporting the news.
- (4) **Governmental and Legal Agencies** – The law was respected, uniformed police officer treated with honor. Agencies of government were view with reverence and dignity. Now they are often viewed with distrust, as corrupt and often considered not to be trusted... viewed with disdain. Perhaps some segments of our society still view law enforcement with respect and honor, but there are pocket areas of larger cities where it is unsafe for a police office to enter.
- (5) **Crime and Punishment** – Punishment of criminals was encouraged and the rights of victims were honored and upheld. Not so today. It often seems that the rights of criminals are held in highest regard and the rights of victims are trampled on and often not considered at all.
- (6) **Marriage and the Family** – Marriage vows were upheld and children were valued... not abused. Today marriage is being redefined. Co-habitation has become more prolific than marriage vows and children are abused from the moment of conception by abortionist and if they are lucky enough to see life for many children it become a life of abuse and neglect.

Observation: *Let's face it, we have come upon harsh... hard to deal with... savage... fierce times!*

2. Look at the warning and estimation of our times given in Scripture –

¹But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was. ¹⁰But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” -2 Timothy 3:1-13 (NJKV)

Again, we looked at this passage of Scripture as we began our study last week. The word translated as “perilous” (difficult) is a vivid term meaning “harsh, hard to deal

with or handle, fierce, perilous, painful savage.” The root term is used in one other place in the New Testament in **Matthew 8:28**, describing two men who had demons, and is translated there as, “exceedingly fierce or violent.” *“²⁸ When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.”* Ours are exceedingly fierce or violent times. From the description Paul gives us of the types of people and behavior associated with these perilous or difficult times (2 Tim. 3:1-13) we can draw several conclusions about those times... our day.

5 Indicting Conclusions from Scripture Concerning Our Times:

- (1) **It will be harder to walk with God (vv.2-5) –**
- (2) **It will be more difficult to keep marriages strong (v.6) –**
- (3) **The activity of the enemy (Satan) will be hard to handle and fiercely powerful (v.8) –**
- (4) **It will be far more threatening for men and women to stand for the things of God in the arena of society (vv.11-12) -**
- (5) **Crime, immorality, temptation, and heresy will surge (v.13) –**

Question: *Given the perilous and critical estimate of our times what are to do? How do we make a difference and have an impact? Well, to begin with we much “take a stand”! We must be willing to stand!*

II. OUR CALL... WHAT WE DO AND DO NOT MEAN BY “TAKE A STAND”

When we begin to talk about Christian’s taking a stand, a whole host of images can begin to be conjured up in our minds... especially given today’s world and portrayals by current day media outlets that often portray Christians and religious groups who “take a stand” in such a bad or negative light... and many times it may truthfully be warranted.

Negative Portrayals of Christians and Religious Groups Who Take a Stand:

1. **Militant Islamic groups overseas** – Protest in Muslim controlled counties like Egypt, Lybia, and most recently Benghazi were protest turned violent and eventually led to the killing of our US Ambassador and several military personnel. The secular media today has a tendency to view all religious protests today by these pictures of radicalism and extremism be they Muslim, Jewish or Christian. Because this is the way the media present all “religious” protest we may too view all those who “take a stand” as “radical” or “extremist.”
2. **Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas** - The **Westboro Baptist Church (WBC)** is an American independent Baptist church known for its extreme ideologies, especially those against gay people. The church is widely described as a hate group and is monitored as such by the Anti-Defamation League and Southern Poverty Law Center. It is headed by Fred Phelps and consists primarily of members of his large family; in 2011, the church stated that it had about 40 members. The church has been actively involved in actions against gay people since at least 1991, when it sought a crackdown on homosexual activity at Gage Park six blocks northwest of the church. In addition to conducting anti-gay protests at military funerals, the organization pickets other celebrity funerals and public events that are likely to get it media

attention. Protests have also been held against Jews and some protests have included WBC members stomping on the American flag. The WBC is not affiliated with any Baptist denomination, including the two largest Baptist denominations, the Baptist World Alliance or the Southern Baptist Convention, both of which have denounced the WBC over the years. The church describes itself as following Primitive Baptist and Calvinist principles. This group's gross and often un-Christian behavior that is picked up and portrayed in the media as "hate speech" (which it is) has definitely cast a disparaging view on all Christians who may stand up and/or take a stand on any number of issues that they feel violate Biblical standards.

3. **Anti-Abortion Protests Turned Violent** - Anti-abortion violence (or pro-life violence) is violence committed against individuals and organizations that provide abortion. Incidents of violence have included destruction of property, in the form of vandalism; crimes against people, including kidnapping, stalking, assault, attempted murder, and murder; and crimes affecting both people and property, including arson and bombings. Anti-abortion violence is most frequently committed in the United States, though it has also occurred in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, and often associated with Christian groups who protest against abortion. G. Davidson Smith of Canadian Security Intelligence Service defined anti-abortion violence as "single issue terrorism". A study of 1982–87 violence considered the incidents "limited political" or "subrevolutionary" terrorism.

In the U.S., violence directed towards abortion providers has killed at least eight people, including four doctors, two clinic employees, a security guard, and a clinic escort. The most recent was in May 31, 2009 when Dr. George Tiller was shot and killed by Scott Roeder as Tiller served as an usher at church in Wichita, Kansas. Roeder was an active abortion protestor who took a strong stand against abortion and considered himself a part of the "Army of God." Anti-abortion protests turned violent have also been credited with 17 attempted murders, 383 death threats, 153 incidents of assault or battery, and 3 kidnappings committed against abortion providers in the U.S. and Canada since 1977. Since 1977 in the United States and Canada, property crimes committed against abortion providers have included 41 bombings, 173 arsons, 91 attempted bombings or arsons, 619 bomb threats, 1630 incidents of trespassing, 1264 incidents of vandalism, and 100 attacks with butyric acid ("stink bombs").^[12] The *New York Times* also cites over one hundred clinic bombings and incidents of arson, over three hundred invasions, and over four hundred incidents of vandalism between 1978 and 1993.

One such incident took place right here in Austin, Texas on April 25, 2007 (tomorrow). A package left at a women's health clinic in Austin, Texas, contained an explosive device capable of inflicting serious injury or death. A bomb squad detonated the device after evacuating the building. Paul Ross Evans (who had a criminal record for armed robbery and theft) was found guilty of the crime.

Such violent protest, often from professing Christian groups, can cause Christian who "take a stand" to be viewed with suspicion and labeled as "hate speech" and "radicalism."

How do we, as Christians, handle such disparaging view of Christians who take a stand up against our call and need to “take a stand” as believers in order to impact our world?

The Problem With The Phrase “Take A Stand”: These are 3 critical issues that must be successfully addressed and dealt with before we can accomplish what Scripture calls us to in “taking a stand” and really making a difference in our world.

1. **Remember that some will interpret the phrase, “take a stand,” as a militant call to be oppressive or hard hearted –**
2. **Realize that some hear the phrase, “take a stand,” as being absent of grace –**
3. **Recognize that some use the phrase, “take as stand,” as an excuse to be sole issue Christian –**

Observation: Christians are often views from the perspective of what we are against rather than what we are for... in other words, from a negative perspective rather than a positive. We must strive not to be a one dimensional Christian, but balanced in our approach to a lost world... holding out the word of truth, “Thus saith the Lord...” and the love of a God who gave His only Son for that world (John 3:16) Be balanced... not compromising, but balanced.

4 Initial Thoughts On How We Should Take a Stand:

1. **Take a stand cautiously (1 Corinthians 10:1-13, focus v.12) – 1 Corinthians 10: 12** says, *“¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”*
2. **Take a stand redemptively (Colossians 4:2-6, focus vv.4-5) – Colossians 4:4-5** says, *“⁵ Walk (if you are walking you are standing) in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”* What does that mean? Making the most of the opportunities to win them, to lead them to Jesus, to lead them to their redemption and salvation.
3. **Take a stand reconciliatorily (2 Corinthians 5:1-21, focus vv.18-20) – 2 Corinthians 5:18-20** says. *“¹⁸ Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”*
4. **Take a stand divinely (Ephesians 6:10-20, focus v.10) – Ephesians 6:10** says, *“¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”* Notice how many times in this passage in Ephesians 6, Paul tells us to stand... 4 times, but notice that it must be in Him. Only take a stand when and where God takes a stand and only in Him. Always stand in Him and on His Word.

III. THE STAND... CLEAR AND CONCISE (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For

the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” – 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (NKJV)

How do we walk with God in times like these and really make a difference? How do we rear our families? If alone, how do we maintain our purity? How can we stay balanced and determined to live for God in a world rapidly bound for hell? In succinct fashion, the Apostle Paul helps us answer some basic questions. In fact, he “charges” us “before God and the Lord Jesus Christ” about these matters.

3 Things We Are To Do:

1. **Make the Scripture our standard** – Paul says in **verse 2, “Preach the word!”** In difficult times that standard is easy to shove aside. When in need, almost by instinct we gather together the latest writing from the best men and women of our day and implement their finest thoughts. But we do this at the expense of overlooking God’s time-honored directives. Books are helpful if we’ve sought the counsel of Scripture first. What we seek first is telling of our standards!
2. **Be persistently on the alert** – Notice the first part of **verse 2** again, **“² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season...”** Christians of faith need to think critically in contrast to the trend to think sloppily and liberally. God’s Word is inerrant, infallible, trustworthy, and relevant. The advice, “be ready...” means to “be at hand, to have an alert mind.” If we don’t, it’s only a matter of time before we get sucked into the world system and we backslide. If you don’t think so just notice what is taking place in the “Christian” church today, where a whole host of clearly denounced, decried, and condemned behaviors and practiced are being not only embraced but openly accepted and practiced (co-habitation, sex outside of marriage, divorce and remarriage issues, homosexuality, etc.). We wonder, sometimes today, how we got to the place we are where these things are being taken into the church and endorsed by mainline Christian leaders! We have not made ourselves ready in season and out of season... in other words we have not grounded ourselves and immersed ourselves in God’s Word to the point that we do not deviate from it! It has worried me and concerned me for years, how Biblical illiterate the church really is today, by and large. It takes the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit to keep a life seasonally ready.
3. **Take a stand** – Standing is exercised in such activities as those mentioned in the last part of **verse 2, “...Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching...”** when each is appropriate. But, they must not be performed apart from the intent to instruct with great patience (redemptively). **Taking a stand involved our saying, “I will do right, whether anybody else in my entire area does right.”**

The question is “why”... why are we to do it... why are we to take a stand? In his own words, Paul not only gives advice, but he support it with reasons. Look at it again (2 Tim. 4:1-5), **“^dI charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be**

ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;* ⁴ *and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.* ⁵ *But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*” – 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (NKJV)

Observe the word at the beginning of verse 3... “for...” Why should we ² *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching...*” Paul says “for” or “because” of these reasons...

2 Biblical Reasons Why We Should Take A Stand:

1. **Because truth is rejected** – Paul says in the first part of verse 3, “³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...*” In other words the time will come (and now is) when the “truth”... the Word of God... the “sound doctrine” of God’s Word will be rejected and not held to. That is why you and I should be willing to take a stand. We should always stand on the side of truth... even when it is not popular and may invoke criticism and ridicule.
2. **Because lies are supported** – Notice the second part of verse 3, “*...but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers.*” Thus, there is the development of an accommodating theology. Teachers of this kind are available in abundance. In contemporary times these teachers can come from the ranks of entertainers, athletes, professionals, or musicians – any whose life-style is a marked by godlessness. They’re skilled in the art of rationalization and misinterpretation.

A Necessary Perspective: *Stability is the badge of Christians in an unbalanced and often insecure world. If you are the individual who has determined that his life-style will be in accordance with the Bible, then most likely you will find yourself the only one in your sphere of influence. But doing it God’s way result in reward. As Hebrews 11:6 says,* “⁶ *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*”

4 Ways We are to Take A Stand: Verse 5 tells us the way to get through difficult times that call us to “take a stand.” Notice verse 5, “⁵ *But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*”

1. **Take a stand calmly** – The term “*watchful*” (NIV “keep your head”) (NAS “be sober”) literally means “calmly.” Don’t be caught off guard. Don’t be surprised. Be rational, calm, prepared.
2. **Take a stand patiently** – Paul says “*endure afflictions*” or “hardships.” In other words he is telling us, “It’s not going to be easy!” It is probably going to cause some misunderstanding and negative reaction from the world and more directly from your personal world... those around you. You are going to have to “endure,” be patient.
3. **Take a stand diligently** – Then Paul says it like this, “*... do the work of an evangelist...*” Like an evangelist must diligently hold to the truth, continue on

diligently to try to win them... so must we when we take a stand. We must be diligent to hold to the truth, unswervingly.

4. **Take a stand thoroughly** – Paul closes out the 5th verse by saying, “...*fulfill your ministry.*” Don’t cave! Don’t give in! Don’t give up! Finish the task.

IV. **THE IMPACT... PURE AND PRACTICAL**

The world we’ve described needs Christians... genuine believers who will take a stand. God uses such ones of His to influence their surrounding world. In what ways? Here are four.

4 Ways God Uses Christians Who Take A Stand To Influence Their World:

1. **Being unique makes a impact –**
2. **Being pure provides a model –**
3. **Being consistent keep us stable –**
4. **Being committed give us determination –**