

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 4, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

STANDING ALONE

“Standing Alone When Opposed”

John 17:15-19, Romans 12:1-2, Joshua 24:13-18

JUST FOR REVIEW - Remember when we started with this study we set some goals for ourselves as we seek to “stand alone” in a world that definitely outnumbers us and usually opposes us... a world that often antagonistic to the ways of Christ. It's hard to stand alone and respond with redemptive grace rather than react with defensiveness and perhaps protectionism.

3 Goals to Keep in Mind in Standing Alone:

- (1) That we seek to *be balanced*... avoiding fanaticism.
- (2) That we aim to be *positive*... avoiding that which is needlessly negative.
- (3) That we be *victorious*... avoiding defeat.

GROUP WORK – Read the following passages and answer the questions below for each passage.

- (1) Matthew 26:45-56
- (2) Mark 14:53-65
- (3) Mark 15:1-5
- (4) Luke 23:18-25
- (5) John 19:17-24

Questions for thought:

1. Was Jesus opposed?
2. Who would you say opposed Jesus?
3. Why do you think they opposed Jesus?
4. How does this relate to our being opposed?

Christians are opposed: (it's Biblical)

- (1) We are opposed by Satan – 1 Peter 5:8-9
- (2) We are opposed by the world – John 16:33, John 15:18-19
- (3) We are opposed by man – Matthew 10:17-22
- (4) We are opposed by our own heart – Jeremiahs 17:9, Mark 7:20-23

Perhaps the thought of standing alone is a bit frightening to you. Standing alone is not living alone... having little or no contact with the world about us. God is not asking us to be isolated, but insulated while surrounded by a world marching to a different drumbeat. Standing alone is survival strategy. There is a war going on. It was declared in the Garden of Eden and has continued to grow in its intensity. Our enemy has not laid down his battle weapons – he clutches them more tightly now than ever before. Satan's battle is carried on by a variety of allies, usually unseen. Those opposing forces are hard at it day-in and day-out... in homes, on campuses, at the office, and in the churches. Wherever we are, the battle is active. If you are not

aware of it, chances are you're being defeated by it or fighting on the wrong side. The battlefield is on the earth, but the heart of the battle is in the mind. Thus, that is where the strategy for winning must be developed. In the mind battles are either won or lost, hence Paul's words in Romans 12:2, "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of you mind...*"

I. CRUCIAL QUESTIONS REGARDING THE WORLD

The battle we face is between the beliefs and life-style of the world system and those of Jesus Christ. The Christian is a transplanted alien who – at the time of rebirth – took on a new address... heaven. As aliens we must understand some basics of this world that are antagonistic to us.

3 crucial questions regarding the world:

1. **Who is behind them?** (1 John 5:19) – John tells us in 1 John 5:19, "We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one." In other words, the opposition – when traced back to its ultimate origin – leads right into the lap of the wicked one, Satan himself. When we imbibe his system, we take up the marks of that system as well.
2. **What are its objectives?** – Lets recall them from our previous study. These objectives have become idols at whose feet modern man worships.

4 worldly objectives:

- (1) **Fortune** – It's emphasis on prosperity.
 - (2) **Fame** – It's emphasis on personality and popularity.
 - (3) **Power** – It's emphasis on authority and control.
 - (4) **Pleasure** – It's emphasis on sensuality (all acts feasting our entire range of senses).
3. **How are these implemented?** – The system's strategy is out in the open where it can be seen by all. Its appeals are to excesses and are both direct and familiar. Each fosters the worship of a particular god.

4 gods of this world:

- (1) "Get rich!"... the god of **materialism**
- (2) "Be popular" ... the god of **egotism**
- (3) "Take control"... the god of **intellect and wit**
- (4) "Have beauty"... the god of **physical attraction**

II. PRACTICAL SITUATION FACING BELIEVERS (1 John 2:15-17)

These brief statements describe the battle in great measure.

4 statements that describe the battle:

1. We live in a world of **opposing standards** -
2. We face a world that has an **aggressive strategy** -
3. We either **adopt** it or **reject** it -
4. If we reject it, we must be **equally aggressive** -

III. ALTERNATE STRATEGY FOR THE BELIEVER (Joshua 24:14-15)

Joshua became for us a safe model to adopt. He was a man of wise power and authority living in an alien world. The same activities must govern us that governed him and those surrounding him. The strategy is this:

Strategy for standing alone when opposed:

1. **Recognize that the Lord God is supreme (v.14a)** - Key phrase: *"Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth..."* (KJV) He alone is the One we are to serve. Four words shape this responsibility:

4 key words:

- (1) **"Fear"** – This means to hold God in reverence. The enemy is cynicism (doubt, scorn, contempt, pessimism, negativity, suspicion, skepticism)
 - (2) **"Serve"** – It suggests activity and involvement. The enemy is passivity (apathy, unresponsiveness, inaction, inactiveness, nonparticipation)
 - (3) **"Sincerity"** – This equates with honesty and integrity. The enemy is hypocrisy (insincerity, pretense, duplicity, two-facedness, falseness, double-standards)
 - (4) **"Truth"** – The term implies sticking with God's Word. The enemy is ignorance (unawareness, inexperience, illiteracy, unfamiliarity, obliviousness, witlessness)
2. **Reject all opposing philosophies and disciplines (v.14b)** – Key phrase: *"And put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord."* (KJV) These philosophies don't always wash themselves in paganism... they may be "mildly" secular, yet equally devastating. Philosophies mature into well-entrenched habits which demand radical action to arrest. We must stop them before they take shape. In order to safeguard ourselves we must constantly ask the tough questions:

4 tough safeguard questions to ask yourself:

- (1) "Am I doing this only for the right purposes?"
 - (2) "Why do I keep spending my time here...doing this?"
 - (3) "Does this activity support or weaken my faith?"
 - (4) "Does this friend help or hinder my walk?"
3. **Realize that many others will not agree with you (v.15a)** - Key phrase: (Joshua speaking to unsympathetic folk) *"And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve."* Observe that Joshua was not crusading for his plan. He was, however, taking issue with his surrounding critics. He didn't even attack those who did not carry out his strategy in their own homes and lives.
 4. **Repeat and review your standards often (v.15b)** - Key phrase: *"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* Joshua was a vigorous and courageous spokesman who refused to be intimidated by standards (or lack of them) held by the opposition. Joshua set the place in his family for standing alone. Perhaps for his family members, standing alone came more naturally because of their father's example.

IV. WARNINGS FOR THE HEART

When standing alone in the presence of opposition, keep in mind three things:

3 things to keep in mind for standing alone when opposed:

1. It won't be **easy**... or **sudden** – Don't kid yourself in to thinking that you can handle it... that it's not that hard... that you are above falling and falling hard. Remember, *"Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18)*
2. **The number one problem will be consistency** – If we are not consistent in our walk as believers we set ourselves up for attack from the opposition. A believers must consistently prepare himself to stand strong through a devoted prayer life, careful study and exposure to the word of God, the encouraging fellowship and support of others believers, and of course a consistent and committed daily walk with Jesus Christ.
3. **If you don't start now, you probably never will** – Christians cannot be procrastinators when it comes to their life as a believer. We can't put off daily living it! Christians can't go on vacation in their faith. It just won't work. The Christian life is a daily walk... a daily struggle... a daily commitment... a daily battle. If you don't go ahead and get engaged in the fight you most likely never will, and you'll never grow past the beginning point of your faith and you will surely live in defeat.