

Discussion Questions for Sunday, May 10, 2015

Peter: A Living Hope - Standing Firm in Christ, Pt. 4 (1 Peter 5:12-14)

1. Pastor Mike's favorite Mother's Day quote comes from the book "Shadow of the Almighty", the life and testament of missionary martyr Jim Elliot...that his widow Elizabeth Elliot wrote in 1958, a couple years after he and three other missionaries were killed by the Auca Indians in Ecuador. Next to the Bible this book was the most influential for him as a new believer. One of the fruits of Jim's first year of college was a new appreciation of his home and parents. Read and discuss the following:
"This is the spring of my 19th year. Slowly I've come to realize that my arrival at this point is not of my own efforts, nor merely by the sure ticking of this winged racer call Time, but by the quiet, unfelt guidance of a faithful mother and a father-preacher who has not spent so much time rearing other people's children that he hasn't had time for his own. "My calendar says Mother's Day with Father's not far off. And so the people will pause for a few hours to honor those for whom children's day comes 365 days a year, those who dare not interrupt their labor of love to seek that honor. The florist shops will bustle, there will be a flurry of carnations, and the following Thursday it will all be forgotten until another May rolls around. I too, cause they're not with flowers, for such are fast fading sentiments for the immutable devotion of true parental care. I am grateful to you and to our mutual Father, who has loved us all with a love unknowable."
2. Review the 8 attitudes necessary for standing firm in Christ seen in 1 Peter 5:5-14.
 - a. Submission to God and others (5:5-6a). When you acknowledge God's authority, it counteracts an independent spirit.
 - b. Humility before God and others (5:6b). Acknowledging God's greatness defeats selfish pride.
 - c. Active Trust in God (5:7). It counteracts doubts and self sufficiency, Because all our sin was cast on Jesus, we can cast all our cares on Him!
 - d. Watchful Care. (5:8). 2 verbs...be sober & be watchful. Disciplined thought life and balanced priorities.
 - e. Firm Resistance. (5:9a) (6 key activities based on Eph. 6:10-20. Renew...Allow God to renew your mind via Prayer & God's Word. Reflect...on the negative impact to others that will be affected if you do not resist. Consequences. Relate...Gospel-changed Relationships...Friends/Mentors...people lovingly and firmly holding you accountable. Resolve...decide what you will do in a given situation BEFORE you get into it. Rebuke...VERBAL REBUKE OF THE

ENEMY – Jude 9 Run...Run away from the situation physically if needed. Like Joseph with Potiphar's wife. We are to flee unrighteousness. 2 Tim. 2:22. How do you run away from sin mentally? Good idea from Shane McFarland: Do or think about something else!)

- f. Solidarity in Suffering. Your brothers and sisters through the ages and the world are going through similar things.
 - g. Hope-filled Worship, because of what has promised He will do in glorifying us.
 - h. Faithful Love. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). How does the Faithful Love of God inspire and enable our own?
3. Talk about "standing firm" in "the true grace of God" (the gospel message so clearly seen in 1 Peter). What does that mean? If I'm standing firm in something it's the something that is holding me up. The something is the object of my trust. I need it to stand firm in Gospel truth.
Standing firm in Christ is something every believer should want to do. What every believer should trust God for. What every believer should eagerly and actively aspire to base on God's indicative actions... What he has done in Christ in saving us and in process sanctifying us, we are told imperatively to act upon the indicative truth. So that we... Stand firm in the true grace of God.
4. Talk about how standing firm starts in your mind, as an attitude. We live in a time where the lines have been blurred between reality and fantasy. Between objective truth and subjective feelings. Atheism is on the rise. Persecution is increasing. Mindless living. Mindless Christianity. Review the following passages:
- a. Ps 32:8 I will teach you, counsel, do not be like a horse or mule that don't understand. Not knowing isn't an option. Is. 1:18 let us reason. Jer 4:22 foolish people know Me not, no understanding. Hosea 4 God's people destroyed for lack of knowledge. Phil 1:9 pray that your love may abound in real knowledge and all discernment, approve what is excellent. 2 Pet 1:5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge.
 - b. God wants us to know and understand the objective Word of God, not driven by subjective feelings. THINK. Your MIND matters. Battle for your mind.
 - c. How the Bible describes the minds of UNBELIEVERS: Senselessness and ignorance characterizes the unregenerate mind.
Rom 1:28 depraved.
2 Cor 4:4 Blinded.

Eph 4:17 futile, empty.
Col 1:21 alienated from God.
Rom 8:5 mind of the flesh, warped mind.

- d. How the Bible describes the minds of BELIEVERS:
 - 1 Cor 2:16 Christ-like.
 - Rom 11:1-2 renewed.
 - 2 Tim 1:7 sound mind, solid.
 - Phil 4:6-7. 2 Cor 10:5
 - Your thoughts must be captive to obey Christ.
 - e. BIG question, why should we take this so seriously?
5. Bottom line 1 Peter question: How has God used this book to transform your life and increase your love for Jesus, others, and reaching the world with the gospel?