

Reference: 1 COR 15:1

Church: GRACE Date: 04/17/11

Standing in Christ

Purpose: To encourage God's people by reviewing all the ways in which the Bible says we stand in Christ.

1. Introduction

The Bible talks a lot about posture - interesting study

Can learn a lot from the stance people adopt at various times

Posture can be very indicative of someone's relationship to God

Struck recently by the different ways Christians are said to stand

We use the word in a lot of different ways ourselves

Someone has standing

Someone takes a stand - "Here I stand"

Someone stands up under difficulty

Someone is the last man standing

We will look at 4 ways in which God says we stand in Christ

- We stand in God's sight
- We stand in God's presence
- We stand in God's warfare
- We stand in God's Judgment

2. Standing in God's Sight

This is first and most important of all, all others flow from this

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

Romans 5:2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

To stand in God's grace, to stand in the Gospel

What does it mean?

To have standing before God - it is our position

To be justified; to be accepted by Him For Jesus' sake

To have the position of sons & daughters, of priests

To have His smile upon us

To be admitted to His service, to be commissioned in His army

To have a right to enter His presence and to live!

Before we came to know Christ we had none of these things

We had a very different position

We had no standing before Him

Psalm 5:5 The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.

We were born as outcasts - as lepers

We had no access to God, no sonship, no priesthood, commission

Our sin had ruined us and made us repulsive to Him

His eyes could not bear the sight of us

His anger burned against us - we were all children of wrath

And then He changed our position:

Psalm 40:1-3 I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. 2 He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. 3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.

Here it is! Here is the Gospel, the grace in which we stand!

We were down in the pit of destruction - our position

We were stuck fast through sin

We were sinking in miry clay (what does a bog smell like?)

But God drew us out! Jesus Himself came into the pit to rescue us

He set our feet on a solid rock - gave us a firm footing

Now we stand! We are not sinking, not fainting now.

And Who is this Rock on which we stand? It is Christ!

It is His blood shed for our sin, His righteousness credited to us!

On Christ the Solid Rock I stand! All other ground is sinking sand

Now God smiles on me! Now I'm His child! Now I'm accepted!

I stand in His grace, I stand in His Gospel, I stand in Christ!

What is your position this morning?

If you are a believer, you are standing in God's sight!

Lift up your head! Admire the view! Smell the clean air!

Feel the Solid Rock that supports you, makes your steps firm

But if you have not believed, you are still in the miry clay!

You are sinking down and down into the pit of destruction

The stench of your sin is all God can smell

Soon you will be altogether lost. Understand your position!

The more you struggle to be free, the more you will sink

Only Christ can pull you out of the pit and make you stand

Cry out to Jesus to save you!

3. **Second: Standing in God's Presence**

We thought last year about the Privileges of Priesthood

(1) Access to God, (2) Eating From the Altar

Here is one that embraces both - Standing in God's Presence

The angels do this

Luke 1:19 The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

The Old Covenant Priests did it

Deuteronomy 10:8 At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to serve Him and to bless in His name until this day.

There are many such references

And as New Covenant Priests, we also stand in God's presence

It means to worship & serve Him acceptably, by His appointment

We could not do this before - we had no right, no access. Why?

Our worship and our service were unacceptable because of our sin

Those who minister before God must be holy:

Psalms 24:3-4 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.

All our attempted service could do was provoke His anger

But now in Christ we are made to stand in His presence:

Zechariah 3:1-7 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. 4 He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." 5 Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by. 6 And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, 7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.

Like Joshua, we now stand to serve Him, to worship Him!

Like Joshua, we have the hope of eternal service in Glory

That is what we are doing this morning:

All our ministry is made acceptable in Christ

All our prayers rise as incense in His presence

They have a fragrant aroma before Him!

That is what we must do with all our lives - serve and worship

All true believers worship and serve God with their lives

Living Sacrifices - evidence that we stand in His sight. Do you?

4. **Third: Standing in God's Warfare**

Ephesians 6:11-13 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm, therefore.....

See how many times "standing firm" is used here!

And it is used another 10-12 times elsewhere in the NT

It means to prevail, to endure

We use the verb a lot in the context of battles and conflicts

To take a stand: to set yourself against the enemy,

To stand your ground - not give up territory to the enemy

To stand up under the enemy's onslaught - not be knocked down

Used many times in the NT

Philippians 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

1 **Thessalonians 3:8** for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

We could not do this before - we were not even in God's army!

We were the cannon fodder of Satan - his pawns

He used us to achieve his wicked purposes

It didn't matter to him what happened to us

Provided we did something to defame or demean God

But now we are in the Lord's army!

Like the dry bones in Ezekiel's day, we have been brought to life

We have been made into an "exceedingly great army"

We have a helmet, a sword, a shield, a breastplate, footwear

Our Captain leads us out against the enemy

His banner is unfurled over our heads - and it is love!

And we will most surely prevail in this warfare!
 No power in hell can stand up against this army, these weapons!
 Are you on God's battle field this morning?
 Do you want to strike a blow for your Captain?
 There is no true believer who does not willingly enlist
 This is also evidence that we stand in God's sight. Do you?

5. Standing in God's Judgment

There is a final standing that we shall do as believers
 We shall stand on the Day of God's Judgment
 Jude 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,
 We shall be summoned before Him
 Books will be opened and the Judgment will begin
 The page will be turned to the account of your life, believer
 But it will be an account of perfect righteousness - Christ's
 It will be a record of the perfect keeping of God's Law - Christ's
 He will examine all our lives from top to toe
 But all He will see is what Christ has done!
 And He will smile upon us and say
 "Well done, good & faithful servant!"
 And we shall stand fully justified before Him
 His perfect love having driven out all fear
 And we shall receive all that we are hoping for now
 The salvation of our souls!

*Bold shall I stand in thy great day
 For who aught to my charge shall lay?
 Fully absolved through These [B&R] I am
 From sin and fear, from guilt and shame*

The reward because we have stood in His sight, service, war

But it will not be so for you who haven't stood in God's sight
 Who never turned from sin, trusted Jesus & were accepted in Him
 For you who never stood in His presence to worship and serve
 Who never put on the armor and stood by the Captain to fight
 Why would you expect to stand then?

Psalm 1:4-6 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

How could you possibly stand in That Great Day?

The lost will be crying out to be hidden from His all seeing eyes
 Revelation 6:15-17 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Every week you are warned from this pulpit

Every week you are invited, urged, encouraged to come to Christ

The only Way to stand - to have clean hands and a pure heart

Every week, life and death, heaven and hell are described

Every week you are pleaded with to choose life

How will you stand in the Judgment without Christ? How?

6. Conclusions - Are You Standing?

When God makes us alive in Christ, we stand in His sight

He does this so that we might:

- stand in His presence to serve and to worship Him
- stand in His warfare in the armor He supplies

Preach the Gospel, Live Holy, Worship God, Defend Truth

- stand (most certainly) on the Day of God's Judgment

Rejoice, believer, that we stand in His sight to serve and to fight!

But it's not enough to think we are Christians, to think we stand

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

We must worship & serve, must fight now if we would stand then

Our worship & service, our fighting, are evidence we shall stand

Re-dedicate yourselves in his priesthood and His army now

Serve Him, worship Him, fight for Him here and now

And we can know for sure that we shall stand then;

Our Master is well able to make us stand!

And if He is not your Master, come to Him now, for the first time

Serve Him, worship Him, fight for Him, Stand firm in Him!