

Week 6: Standing Firm in a Changing World

“Faith That Endures”

Main Scriptures: Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Matthew 7:24-27 Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

Big Idea: Faith is proven when we remain faithful through difficulty.

Introduction: When Everything Around You Changes

We live in a world that changes constantly.

Culture changes.

Opinions change.

People change.

Circumstances change.

What is accepted today may be rejected tomorrow, and what was once rejected may become normal.

But here's the good news: **God doesn't change.**

And because God doesn't change, we can have a faith that doesn't have to change every time life gets difficult.

Anybody can have faith when everything is going well.

It's easy to say, "God is good," when the bills are paid, the family is healthy, the job is going well, and prayers seem to be getting answered.

But what happens when the storm comes?

What happens when God doesn't answer the way we expected?

What happens when we face disappointment, loss, uncertainty, temptation, or opposition?

That's when our faith gets tested.

Faith isn't just what we say when things are good.

Faith is what we hold onto when things are hard.

1. Trials Reveal the Foundation of Our Faith

Matthew 7:24-25 ESV

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

Jesus didn't say the storm wouldn't come.

He said the storm would come.

The difference between the two houses wasn't the storm.

Both houses experienced the storm.

The difference was the foundation.

One was built on rock.

One was built on sand.

And sometimes we wonder, "Why am I going through this?"

But perhaps the better question is:

"What is this revealing about what I've built my life on?"

Trials have a way of exposing our foundation.

If our faith is built on circumstances, our faith will rise and fall with circumstances.

If our faith is built on people, eventually people will disappoint us.

If our faith is built on feelings, there will be days when we don't feel anything.

If our faith is built on success, what happens when we fail?

But if our faith is built on Jesus, **we can stand when everything else is shaking.**

The storm doesn't determine whether the foundation is strong.

The storm reveals it.

Psalm 46:1-2 ESV

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way..."

We may not be able to control the storm.

But we can determine where we build.

2. Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

Hebrews gives us the answer for how we keep going when life gets hard.

Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith..."

Notice what the writer says:

Looking to Jesus.

Not looking at the storm.

Not looking at everybody else.

Not looking at how far we still have to go.

Looking to Jesus.

Sometimes we get discouraged because we're looking in the wrong direction.

If you constantly look at the problems, the problems will become bigger.

If you constantly look at people, people will disappoint you.

If you constantly look at yourself, you'll see your limitations.

But when you look at Jesus, you remember who He is.

Jesus is still Lord.

Jesus is still faithful.

Jesus is still Savior.

Jesus is still healing.

Jesus is still providing.

Jesus is still coming again.

Our circumstances may change, but Jesus doesn't.

3. Spiritual Maturity Requires Endurance

Hebrews says:

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Christianity isn't a sprint.

It's a race.

And it's not just about how we start.

It's about how we finish.

There are people who start strong but don't finish strong.

They get excited about God, but when difficulty comes, they walk away.

They serve when it's convenient, but disappear when it's difficult.

They praise when everything is going well, but question God when things don't go their way.

But spiritual maturity says:

"I'm going to keep going."

I may not understand it, but I'll keep going.

I may be tired, but I'll keep going.

I may have questions, but I'll keep going.

I may have been hurt, but I'll keep going.

I may have to walk through a valley, but I'll keep going.

Because my faith isn't based on how I feel today.

My faith is based on who Jesus is.

Galatians 6:9 reminds us:

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

Sometimes the greatest victory is simply refusing to quit.

4. God Is Faithful Through Every Season

There will be different seasons in life.

There will be seasons of blessing.

There will be seasons of waiting.

There will be seasons of celebration.

There will be seasons of difficulty.

There will be seasons when we understand what God is doing.

And there will be seasons when we don't.

But God is faithful in every one of them.

Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV

“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

Your season may change.

God's faithfulness doesn't.

Your situation may change.

God's character doesn't.

Your feelings may change.

God's promises don't.

That's why we can stand.

Not because life is always easy.

Not because we always understand.

But because **God is faithful.**

5. We Don't Stand Alone

Hebrews 12 begins by reminding us that we are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses."

We're part of something bigger than ourselves.

There are people who have gone before us and remained faithful.

There are people sitting beside us who have walked through storms and kept serving God.

There are people in this church who have experienced loss, disappointment, sickness, financial struggles, family problems, and difficult seasons—and they're still here.

They're still worshiping.

They're still praying.

They're still believing.

That's a testimony.

Sometimes we need to look around and remember:

If God brought them through, He can bring me through.

We need each other.

The church isn't just a place we attend.

It's a family that helps us keep standing.

When somebody gets weak, we help hold them up.

When somebody is discouraged, we encourage them.

When somebody falls, we help them get back up.

Because faith that endures isn't just about standing by yourself.

It's about standing together.

6. Our Hope Goes Beyond This Life

Our faith isn't only about surviving this life.

We have an eternal hope.

As Pentecostal believers, we believe in the blessed hope of Christ's return and the promise of eternal life with Him.

Hebrews 12:2 ESV

“...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Jesus endured the cross because He could see beyond the cross.

There was a joy set before Him.

And that's what we have to remember.

This world isn't our final destination.

Our suffering isn't forever.

Our struggles aren't forever.

Our storms aren't forever.

Jesus is coming again.

And one day, every tear will be wiped away.

One day, there will be no more death.

No more pain.

No more sickness.

No more disappointment.

No more funerals.

No more heartbreak.

We will be with Jesus.

That hope gives us strength to keep going today.

The Challenge: What Is Your Faith Built On?

Jesus asked us to examine the foundation.

So here's the question for every one of us:

Is my faith built on Jesus—or on my circumstances?

When things go well, do I trust Him?

When things go wrong, do I still trust Him?

When God answers my prayer, do I worship?

When God seems silent, do I still worship?

When people support me, do I serve?

When people disappoint me, do I still serve?

When I understand what God is doing, do I trust Him?

And when I don't understand, **do I trust Him anyway?**

Because that's faith that endures.

Conclusion: Keep Standing

The world around us is changing.

But we don't have to be shaken by every change.

We don't have to chase every cultural trend.

We don't have to compromise our convictions just because the world changes its opinions.

We don't have to give up when life gets difficult.

We can stand.

Because our foundation is Jesus.

Hebrews 12:3 says:

“Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

Look at Jesus.

The Final Challenge:

Is my Faith built on Jesus or on my circumstances?

KEEP STANDING – Our Hope is in Jesus and He is Worth it!!