

## Stand, Stay, Abound

### I Corinthians 15:50-58

#### I. INTRODUCTION: I

- I. **2** What is the greatest motivation in the life of a Christian?
  - A. The desire for a better life here-love, joy, peace, etc.?

**Gal. 5:22-25:** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”
  - B. The desire for God's approval (Heb. 11:6)?
  - C. Perhaps it is as simple as the desire to do what is right (**2 Tim. 2:15:** “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”; **2 Pet. 1:5:** “...add to your faith virtue...”).
2. All of those thoughts should certainly motivate us, but the greatest thing that propels us forward is the opportunity to live beyond our mortal-end.
  - A. Once we have discovered that God's plan provides for life after mortal death, we should desire to never miss out on this one great opportunity.
  - B. **3** Paul speaks of our great hope in I Corinthians 15 (esp. vv. 50-57).
  - C. Then in verse 58, he immediately speaks of how this great hope should motivate us (**I Cor. 15:58:** “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”).
    - (1) Paul describes the work-ethic it takes to gain the victory; to realize this great hope.
    - (2) Let's consider Paul's three points (in I Cor. 15:58) which describe our motivation.

#### II. DISCUSSION:

- I. **4** Stand steadfast: Paul first says that to realize our hope we must “be steadfast...”
  - A. Steadfast, as a word, is one of those that is fading away from common usage.
    - (1) We very rarely hear it spoken outside of the discussion of certain Scriptures.
    - (2) Knowing this, perhaps we do not appreciate its meaning.
    - (3) Vine says “steadfast” (*hedraios*) “denotes ‘seated’ ...metaphorical of moral fixity...”; Paul uses this word three times in his epistles (I Cor. 15:58; 7:37; **Col. 1:22-23:** “...present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...”).
    - (4) Steadfast carries the same meaning as words like: resolute, persistent, and committed.
    - (5) Knowing this we could read verse 58 as, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast (resolute, persistent, committed...)”.
  - B. The goal of achieving a home in Heaven requires “total commitment” (working on my PhD).
    - (1) This commitment requires us to leave our old life to seek a new life (recall Abraham).
    - (2) When we put on Christ in baptism “we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:1-4).
    - (3) It is a “new” life-created according to a way of living that pleases God (Eph. 4:17-32).
    - (4) It is a life of “changed citizenship”; of life-being like Christ:

**Col. 3:1-10:** “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”

C. That commitment requires total obedience to God’s will, in all that He expects.

- (1) Giving ourselves to the doing of His will (**Matt. 7:21:** “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”).
- (2) Every day we must give ourselves completely to the understanding and application of God’s Word in our life! (**1 Tim. 4:13, 15-16:** “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ... 15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”).
- (3) We must have a steadfast willingness to both “hear” and “do” the word of God (James 1:17-22: **v. 22:** “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”).

D. Our commitment must always be to continue living God’s will without wavering or going back (**Lk. 9:62:** “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”).

- (1) Paul had that steadfastness in his life (1 Cor. 9:24-27):
- (2) The Hebrew writer expresses these thoughts of steadfastness (**Heb. 2:1-3**); and that we must not go back to the old life again (**Heb. 10:35-39**).
- (3) Let’s heed Paul’s admonition:  
**2 Cor. 7:1:** “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

## 2. Stay immovable:

A. To express it in other terms, to be “immovable” means to be “righteously-stubborn.”

- (1) Most people just float through life and are blown by the “winds of society” (unanchored).
- (2) Christians certainly need to be flexible, but there are definitely times we need to be truly stubborn; especially when it comes to our involvement in the truth of God’s Word.
- (3) When we discover the truth, as Jesus promise we could; we must not let it go-because the truth alone can set us free:

**Jn. 8:31-32:** “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”

B. There are many ideas of men that are trying to move us (postmodern world philosophy).

- (1) The world is chock full of false-teachers and their false messages; we must be very careful not to fall for them:

**Eph. 4:14:** *“that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”*

- (2) The winds of false doctrine can be powerful winds to resist; we must stand against them.
- (3) The trickery of men-we must be careful not to fall for their tricks (esp. postmodernism):

**Acts 20:29-31:** *“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”*

- (4) The brethren in Galatia had fallen for another message (Gal. 1:6-7).
- (5) In that place Paul warns us not to receive any other message (Gal. 1:8-12):

**Gal. 1:8:** *“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”*

- C. There are also lusts, trying to corrupt us like the temptations of this world, trying to draw us back (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

- (1) The pull of the world is very strong and sometimes hard to resist.
- (2) For example, Demas was faithful to Christ for a time (Col. 4:14), but then the world pulled him back in (2 Tim. 4:10).
- (3) We need to put on the whole armor of God to stand against all of these destructive things-to stand against the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6:10-18).
- (4) Having done all to stand, we stand! Because of this hope we will be immovable from truth.

### 3. Always abounding:

- A. Is your life providing you with “enough”?

- (1) In our society we are typically afforded “more than enough” scenario for most areas of life; especially material things.
- (2) But material things cannot lead us to our victory (Lk. 12:13-21; parable of the rich fool).

**Lk. 12:15:** *“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*

**Lk. 12:20-21:** *“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ 21 ‘So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.’”*

- B. We need to seek to “abound” in our spiritual pursuits.

- (1) We are to bear fruit to God (Jn. 15:1-8; Gal. 5:22-23).

**Jn. 15:6-8:** *“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”*

- (2) We know that God, and His promised victory, are more than worth all the effort we can give and we need to see that worth (Matt. 16:26).
- (3) Knowing this we must “abound in the work of the Lord” in the sense that we give God:

- (a) Our whole heart: **Mk. 12:30:** “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment.”
  - (b) All that we are: **Rom. 12:1-2:** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
  - (c) Our complete devotion to His will: **Col. 3:17:** “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”
- (4) Paul describes our abounding “in the work of the Lord”:
- Col. 1:9-14:** “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”
- (5) Does this passage describe your (mine) “work in the Lord”?
- (a) Regardless of what the world may think of our “work in the Lord” it is worth it!
  - (b) Regardless of how “measurable” the results of our “work in the Lord” may appear from a human perspective it is worth it!
  - (c) Our “labor is not in vain in the Lord”!

### III. Conclusion:

1. What is the single greatest motivation in your life?
  - A. Is it the opportunity to live beyond our mortal-end with our Creator-God in a home prepared for His faithful?
  - B. More than anything in this life, we should all want to find the way to God.
  - C. God has not left us in the dark; He’s given us His plan that provides for victory over death.
2. If we follow His plan He guarantees the victory will be ours (“your labor is not in vain in the Lord”).
  - A. Stand with God, stay with God, and grow in His will; keep your sights on Heaven!
  - B. Seek a life that is “steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.”
3. Does that accurately describe your life? Are you heading Paul’s admonition?
4. If not, heaven will never be your home! You will never hit a target you don’t aim at.

Adapted from a sermon (*Stand, Stay and Grow*) by T. Sean Sullivan.