



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon Sermon Series  
Supports Session 5: Joy Through Peace  
Sermon Title: Stand Firm  
Passage: Ephesians 6:10-20

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### Connection to Philippians 4:1-9

The believers in Philippi were not the only fellowship called to stand firm amid a sinful culture (Phil. 1:27; 4:1). Paul also instructed the churches of Galatia (5:1), Ephesus (6:14), Corinth (1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13; 2 Cor. 1:21,24), Colossae (4:12), and Thessalonica (2 Thess. 2:13,15) to stand firm. Since this instruction is widespread, this danger of compromise was part of the daily pressure Paul felt for the churches (2 Cor. 11:28).

### Introduction/Opening

Occupying the high ground is preferred when in battle. In warfare the high ground is easier to defend than lower elevations. Also, surveillance of enemy positions is better from the heights. In historic battle, the occupants of high ground were attacked to neutralize their superior position. Defensive effort was necessary to stand firm on the prized site. For believers, standing firm on their high ground of salvation requires a spiritual battle to be waged with spiritual resources.

### Outline

1. Challenges will be open, and hostile.
  - a. Paul experienced physical attacks. His initial stay in Philippi included an undeserved beating (Acts 16:23). In Lystra Paul was stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19).
  - b. Jesus warned since He had been persecuted, His followers would be as well (John 15:20).
  - c. The cross is the ultimate unveiling of hatred and physical attack on God by evil.
  - d. Animosity will be unleashed through human attacks. Satan tempts susceptible humans to do these physical actions for him.
  - e. From the cross, Jesus was merciful to His persecutors, knowing the evil one had duped them. (See Luke 23:34.)
  - f. In the face of violent persecutions, Jesus charged the church at Smyrna to be faithful even unto death, promising to grant them the “crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10)
  - g. Open attacks come as human hosts are led by the evil one to write, speak, and physically attack the ones that are perched on the high ground of salvation in Jesus Christ.

2. Challenges will be camouflaged and subtle.
  - a. Just as potent as the direct physical attack is the indirect refined assault. The subtle design is not to topple all at once but to affect a slow, almost imperceptible move from the high ground toward the descending slope and then a step-by-step descent from the height.
  - b. Paul warned that Satan had schemes to accomplish his ends. Paul warns of the devil's evil "schemes" in Ephesians 6:11. (See also 2 Cor. 2:11.)
  - c. These heights are not lost in a single stroke but by decades of creeping in the wrong direction.
  
3. How to stand firm
  - a. A marvelous promise exists in Ephesians 6. Since believers are living in the "vast strength" of the Lord, they will not lose. However, they must not venture into the hostile and subtle challenge of evil without the armor of God.
  - b. From time to time in a football game a player will lose his helmet during a play. The spectators groan knowing the potential for injury. Likewise, we should fear that our families or we would operate in our culture without our spiritual armor. Armor does no good if not worn.
  - c. Much has been written about this requisite spiritual armor. The basics are adequate to protect every disciple and ensure victory.
    1. The belt of truth (v. 14) and the sword of the Spirit (v. 17). This armor is gained through daily devotions, group Bible study, and attention to Bible-based sermons.
    2. The shield of faith (v. 16) is like a bulletproof vest in a hail of bullets fired from a menacing devil. Faith grows through prayer (v. 18) and carefully placed daily dependence upon God, not men.
    3. Sandals or footwear (v. 15) provide traction on the slippery slope of a misinformed culture with ill-conceived values.
  - d. We are under attack. After we begin our spiritual journey, our growth and advance is not automatic. We must seek after God and not allow our precious faith to deteriorate through neglected exercise of our faith.

## Conclusion

Many of us have played "king of the mountain." Whenever a load of dirt arrived for a lawn or flowerbed, we would play on the little hill until it was spread. One of us would claim the top of the heap until another shoved us off. The high perch was never claimed for long until another came to claim the top. Something more serious is being played in our day. It is a contest for the souls of humanity. To serve the Lord and establish powerful churches, followers of Jesus must stand firm in the truths we have been taught and cling to the righteous obedience that points others to Jesus.

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