

# Here I Stand

by Thaddeus Barnum

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of standing for the truth, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the need for revival and mission in the church.*

**Duration:** 32:19

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 22:33-34, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 5:29, Romans 10:17, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:8-9

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his personal experience of growing up in a traditional church and then encountering a vibrant and alive church at the age of 15. He wonders about the change that occurred and explores the key principles that have marked the church throughout history. These principles include Christ alone, scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone, and to God be the glory alone. The speaker then focuses on the passage in Acts chapter five, highlighting the transformation of Peter from his denial of Jesus to becoming a bold preacher of the gospel. The sermon emphasizes the importance of mission and warns against falling back into old patterns of powerlessness and distraction.

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## Transcript

Almighty God and Father, without you we are unable to come to this gospel. Please, O Lord, send forth your Holy Spirit and open your word to our hearts that our eyes might see, that our ears might hear, that our lives might be changed out with the hearts of stone and in with the hearts of flesh filled with your Holy Spirit, to be empowered for the day that you've given us. For we need you, Lord.

Be exalted, Jesus Lord, here in our midst. Open your word. Amen.

Good morning. I want to, in the remembrance of this 250th anniversary, I want to call your attention to this passage in Acts chapter 5. And I do this because it is such a remarkable moment. Remarkable because this is Peter.

This is the Peter that we knew back in the gospel of Luke on the night of the Passover, before the moment of Gethsemane, where he said to Jesus, Lord I will go with you to prison. I will die with you. And of course in the hour of testing he could not stand and he fell away.

What changed him? What made the difference for him? How is it possible now he's taking this stand? And he is. He's being persecuted by the rulers and the elders of Israel. He's been preaching Jesus.

They've told him not to. And yet he cannot but speak the words with which he's been given and to bear testimony. And so they imprison the disciples, the apostles, and as they imprison them, you'll find this in Acts and chapter 5 and verse 20, an angel comes miraculously, opens them out of prison and says, go preach the gospel.

Go and preach all the words of this life. Go. And this of course infuriates the rulers and they imprison them again.

They grab them. They take them and stand them in front of the council. We told you not to preach in this name.

And the strength is upon, the strength is upon Peter. We must obey God rather than men. I ask you what happened to him? What made the change between what happened before Pentecost, what happened the night of the Passover, the Last Supper, and now what's made the change? And now I say this by saying I bring testimony myself to you.

I grew up in church. I grew up in the Episcopal Church. It was quite normal, quite average, quite common.

It's all I knew. But then when I was 15 years old, I went into a church. It was completely different.

It was alive in the Lord. The preacher thundered the words of the Bible. The Spirit of God was there.

My heart was convicted. The people sang to the rafters exploded. That there was a sense of love and joy upon the hearts of the people.

And I couldn't tell the difference. What's going on here? How could this change be from the church I knew to the church that this is? What is this change about? And yet that is the story down through the ages. That is the story that bears the mark in church history.

Because what happens is this, is that the world becomes strong in our midst. The world in its lusts and its greed and its pleasure and its immoralities. And the church finds itself listless and asleep, corrupt and without a gospel.

And what always ends up happening is a small group of people begin to pray. They begin to seize the promises of the Bible. They begin to pray for the Spirit of God to visit the church again, to bring the church alive.

Go back in your church history, read the Reformations, the Awakenings, the Revivals, and you're going to find this is how it happens. This is how the Spirit of God suddenly awakens the people. They became born again in Christ.

They become alive in the Spirit. The church goes back out into mission, and the world becomes changed by it and because of it. We are celebrating our 250th, yes, but 500 years ago next month is the celebration of the birth of the Reformation.

When Martin Luther, that Catholic priest, went and nailed the 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Chapel, and the Reformation was born. What happened? Well, this man was a priest. He began studying the Scriptures, the Spirit of God.

Again, he thundered in the soul of Luther and opened the Bible so that Luther would testify he was reborn in Christ. And he began to see that the gospel here was not the gospel being preached in the corrupt church that was over them, and he rose as a prophet in his day. It was time, yes, to confront the Pope straight on.

This little German priest, to confront the Pope? His concern was the milkmaid, the common person, the plow boy, didn't have the Bible in their hands, in their common language, and didn't have the gospel penetrating their soul. And he wanted his nation, he wanted the world to be rescued. Open the gospel doors again, and the Reformation was born.

I would suggest to you that the same kind of revival would have happened in 1960s, the early 1960s. The Spirit of God began to move upon the mainline denominations. He began to fall upon the church, and in all kinds of ways that were beginning to bring denominations together, the Spirit of God began to move in what was called, would be called, the charismatic renewal.

The word charismatic simply means that when the Spirit of God came, the charis, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were being manifest. Gifts that you find in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. You find in 1 Peter 4, Ephesians 5, Ephesians, Ephesians 4, you're gonna find them.

Romans 12, the gifts of the Spirit being manifest in the church, upon the people. And all kinds of names rose up in those days. We were blessed to have a father for us named Terry Fulham, Chuck Irish, many people rose up in those days, and one of them happened to be a man by the name of Chuck Murphy, Sr. at St. Bartholomew's in Nashville.

He and his wonderful, Bible-believing, powerful wife, didn't it? Her name is Anne. They became a witness as well, strong and mighty in those days. Back here at All Saints, there was a group at the end of the 70s, a group of women, the early 80s, that were praying for that same revival here at All Saints, for the Lord to come and bring renewal, for the Lord to awaken this church.

And in 1982, Chuck and Anne's son, named Chuck also, Chuck Murphy, Jr., his wife Margaret, their three daughters, he became the rector of this church in 1982, a son of the renewal, a son of the revival. And suddenly, the Lord began to move. We began to hear phrases I never grew up with, Episcopalians saved.

This was extraordinary. I'd never heard of such a thing. People were coming to know Jesus.

The Bible was being proclaimed. The Spirit of God was falling. This is when the healing service began, and up came the buildings.

In 1983, it was the school. In 1998, it was this sanctuary. In 1992, it was the Draper Wing.

In 1996, it was the Axe Building. Up went the buildings, and in came the people. And the Lord began a deep work, a profound work of renewal here, so much so that pastors and churches from all over began to say, what's going on in 29585 that Chuck loves to call Hooterville? Hooterville.

For us Yankees, we had to look that up in the dictionary. We didn't know what Hooterville was, but little 29585 on the coast of South Carolina, here it was. People were trying to find out, and these weekends began called vestry, visiting vestry weekends began here in this church.

Three times a year, people would come all over, finding out what's going on. One of Chuck's amazing gifts in his teaching is he loves to give handouts. And I've warned the staff, if you want this handout, it'll be waiting for you Monday morning, 6 o'clock, 9, 30.

But Chuck used to give a handout that was essential to the understanding of these things because it marked the very heart of the Reformation. When the Reformation was born, it was built on five principles, and those principles are these. Very quickly, Christ alone, Scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone, to God be the glory alone.

Christ alone, once again, to Him to whom the church belongs, head of the church, the firstborn from the dead. To Him belongs the supremacy, first place in all things. For in Him, all things hold together.

Jesus Christ, head of this church. Number two, the preaching of the Bible is the Word of God. For all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for the training in righteousness.

Point number three, that when the Word of God is preached, faith comes. Romans 10, 17, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ. And when faith comes, grace comes upon the soul.

The Spirit of God begins to move. We become convicted inside us of our sins, knowing what we have done by grace. We are saved through faith.

And that's not of ourselves. It's the gift of God, not as a result of works that no one should boast. This is the gift that comes upon the Christian.

You suddenly realize you're washed, you're forgiven. Grace has come. And when that grace has come, you suddenly want to live to the glory of God alone.

Oh, dear friends, this is the wonder of what Chuck began to hand out. These same basic principles, he took us back to Acts 2. We need the power of God, the Holy Spirit. We need that rising up, the preaching of the Word of God, the convicting of the Holy Spirit upon us as Jesus Christ and Him as Lord is preached, always center stage.

And we find ourselves washed in baptism, brought into the fellowship of the apostles teaching, the breaking of bread, the fellowship and the prayers, into our pastorate, into places where the discipling happens and the encouragement happens. And then we find signs and wonders and miracles and awe and this unbelievable gift of generosity that comes out of it, worship in spirit and in truth, the empowerment of God the Spirit. And out went the handouts.

And people began to realize it is possible to see Pentecost recovered in our day. If it's happening in 29585, it can happen to us. It can happen to us.

And encouragement came upon this church. Now I must say to you, I was quite naive in those days, and I'll tell you why. It was happening in many denominations, many mainline denominations.

And I was convinced that this revival, this renewal was going to light fire and the denominations would be utterly changed. The Episcopal church, the Methodist church, yes, even the Presbyterians, all things are possible. But what we found was what we find here in our text.

The moment you rise up to preach the name of Jesus, you're going to find opposition. The moment you're empowered by the Spirit, you stand in Jesus' name who stood for us, you suddenly find opposition. So that Peter would have to rise and say, we must speak of what we've heard.

You tell us not to preach in the name of Jesus, but we cannot but speak. We must obey God rather than men. We must.

For Martin Luther, when he was challenged four years later after nailing the 95 Theses upon the Wittenberg Chapel door, he would rise in his day in 1520 and he would say these words at his trial, unless I'm convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other. My conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot, I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe.

God help me, here I stand, I can do no other. And suddenly that day was upon us. In the late 80s and 90s, there came this movement up to the surface in the Episcopal Church, renouncing the apostolic teaching.

In 1997, our own Dr. Schuller was at the Philadelphia Convention of all Episcopal bishops and delegates, and he watched front row seats, the founder of the New Anglican Missionary Society, the passion for mission across the world. He suddenly found that elected as the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church was a man, and I quote his words in an article he wrote just recently, a man not believing the apostles' teaching. The bishops who did believe the apostles' teaching became silent and did not stand, did not oppose.

They hid. It happened that our own T.J. Johnston, who was the associate here in those days, happened to be in Philadelphia vacationing, and he went over and talked to John Schuller and said to John Schuller, I cannot raise my child in this church. And John Schuller and T.J. Johnston came back to 29585 and went into Chuck Murphy, our rector's office, and said, something's got to change.

And these are the words that John Schuller used in particular on that day. If we wait any longer for the bishops to lead us out of this mess, we will be ashamed on the day of judgment. And so Chuck, our leader, John Schuller, T.J. Johnston, they began to call rectors of churches all over this country, especially the larger churches, to come to Pawleys Island right here in September of 1997, 20 years ago this month.

And they wrote a document that basically John architected called First Promise, because when a pastor was ordained, two promises were made. The first promise, we'd be loyal to the Bible, loyal to the gospel, loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this church has received it. Second promise, we'd be loyal to our bishops.

But if our bishops upturned the gospel, we'd have to upturn them, because you cannot not stand for the gospel. And pastors immediately signed it, and pastors immediately got in trouble with their bishops. Some deposed, some recanted from signing that document.

But a movement began right here, signed in the Axe building. A movement began right here. And the vestry of this church, oh my friends, they already knew.

The Spirit of God had already been moving on the vestry of this church. In 1995, in December 12, 1995, the vestry of this church passed a unanimous united vision statement that they believed was given by the Holy Spirit, and here's what it said, to become a people who risk boldly sharing the full counsel of God and bringing encouragement to the church and to the world. Can you imagine the audacity of a little seacoast

Episcopal church saying we're about to impact the world? And that's exactly what happened eighteen months later.

Here, on these grounds, it was time in our day to stand for the gospel. And Chuck, as John Shuler-Wells said in his article recently, reluctantly rose. He loves this church and wanted this church to grow.

And yet suddenly he was put on the platform to lead this movement. Now I have to tell you, in those days it was irritating to me, utterly irritating. People in the pews didn't understand what was going on.

They said, it's all church politics. Church politics. I don't like church politics.

This wasn't church politics. This was the enemy of our soul. We were not dealing with flesh and blood.

We were dealing with principalities, authorities, the powers of this dark world. You can read about it in the Bible. Always stealing the gospel and twisting, distorting.

That's what was happening. And the danger is the danger that Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1-7 that a spirit of timidity would come upon us, and that we would not stand. But God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, and of love, and of sound mind.

And out went these bishops in the Episcopal church preaching a new gospel. A gospel of the inclusivity of all religions, not just Jesus, all religions. And a gospel that opened the door to sexual freedom.

That the marriage between a man and a woman, that was out. The God of the Bible was out. There was a new day, a new freedom.

It was as if there was a false prophetic spirit that would lead this country to move against the God of the Bible and to embrace the sexual freedom. And out they went with this horrible new gospel, which if you carefully read 2 Corinthians 11, you'll find Paul calls these apostles are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading themselves as apostles, but they're not. Oh, dear friends, what a day that was.

By 1998, all the bishops of the Anglican communion met in London. And when nobody was bringing discipline to the Episcopal church for the horror of this gospel, where they openly denied the cross, openly denied the resurrection, openly denied the authority of Holy Scripture, the Anglicans from Africa who knew revival, who knew revival, they stepped up to the microphone and they said, we believe in Scripture alone, the authority of God upon the Scriptures, the Word of God to us. And it's in the authority of Scripture that we find sexual ethic being defined, that marriage is defined by God.

We oppose you. The Africans stood. And the Episcopal bishops, 80%, over 80% of the Anglican bishops worldwide signed that resolution.

But the 20% that didn't ran home here to the United States of America and they were furious, enraged. They couldn't put us in prison. No, no.

But I'll tell you what they did. They began to depose our pastors. Anybody who opposed them, they deposed.

And guess what they did? They began to seize our properties. I often say it this way. The Episcopal church left the gospel business and they went into real estate.

Under Chuck's leadership and the rector that followed, Terrell Glenn, who I think we'll hear from next month or early November, rose to the moment in the courts and by the grace of God, this property was secured. The Episcopal church couldn't have this property. But on August 1st, 2017, just seven weeks ago, the Supreme Court of South Carolina rose up against the Diocese of South Carolina and gave the verdict to the Episcopal church against us.

These Christians who stood for the moment, now the Episcopal church is seizing their properties. Yes, a rehearing has been put into motion, but it is quite possible that rehearing will not happen. It might.

It might not. And if it doesn't, my friends, these historic buildings that have belonged to the Christians for decades, for centuries, our Christians are going to be kicked out. Some have numbered that number somewhere in 23,000 Christians will be pushed onto the street because of what's happening today.

The Episcopal church will seize over 500 million dollars of property. It's okay. Because when you kick our Christians on the street, Jesus goes with them.

Spirit of God goes with them. You can push us down. You can kick us down.

But when the Spirit of God comes upon us, you can't stop us. You can't stop us. And that's why with the brilliance of the Anglican provinces worldwide, and in particular Rwanda and Southeast Asia, they saw this, that the Christians being kicked out had to be cared for.

They had to be pastored. They had to be strengthened. And so they needed godly bishops.

And what happened in January of 2000 is they consecrated a missionary bishop to, actually, a great professor from Pittsburgh by the name of John Rogers, a man of extraordinary integrity, and another man of extraordinary integrity, the rector of this church, Chuck Murphy. And Chuck gave us the gift again to restore the dignity of the office of bishop, which has a primary task of defending the gospel, defending the faith, restoring Christ alone, Scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone, to God be the glory. He did the most extraordinary thing.

Rather than becoming the leader of those who were coming out of the Episcopal church to be those who were not in the Episcopal church, he rose and said, no, no, we're not against them. We're actually for something. We are actually going to be called Anglicans who are in mission in the United States and in North America, because here's what we believe.

There are 130 million lost souls in our country. Our churches are going to go and win them to Christ. He put mission out there as the front, because inside of him, this vestry and this church had inside that vision statement, we are a people that risk boldly.

We are a people that share the full counsel of God. We are a people here to bring encouragement to the church and to the world. And now, suddenly there were 50 churches under his leadership, 100 churches, 150 churches, and there were clergy everywhere, 200, 250, 300, 350 clergy just bursting out.

And guess what Chuck would do? He'd bring out the handout, 6 o'clock in the morning, the handout, you'll get it. What did he do? He brought us back to Acts 2. He brought us back to the reviving power of the Holy Spirit upon the church that restores the Bible to the forefront, Jesus Christ and him alone being preached, where people are rescued from the darkness and brought to light, and clergy were suddenly hearing, Christian leaders were suddenly hearing the vision, the power to risk boldly no matter where they were

going. And it was Chuck who was then put on the founding board to create what is called now the Anglican Church of North America.

And now the churches all these years later number 1,000 churches across this land, with not just two provinces of Rwanda and Southeast Asia, but nine provinces. No, no, a great movement was born. And in that Chuck gave the fundamental principles that would be at the very heart of this movement.

And that principle was this, that we would be a people where mission was everything, where Jesus is everything, where the gospel is proclaimed, and the renewing, reviving power of the Spirit will help bring us to life. Mission at the heart of this new work. But with it I believe he gave a very strong warning, that the church not fall back into old patterns, that one more time we become powerless and distracted and weak, unable to stand.

And I believe that that warning is still here today for us. Why is that? Because we need to have that handout given to us again in our day, because now it's our day to stand. Because if we don't stand, our kids will not know how to stand.

Friends, the world is growing darker. I don't need to go in this at all with you. Can you not see it? Can you not see the world? It's intoxicated by its lusts, pleasure, immoralities, greed.

It's everywhere, and it's capturing not just the world, it's capturing the church. The church which is now bent on entertaining its people and easing down on the full counsel of God so that we can get them back and entertain them. The church has grown weak in our day.

And as long as we Christians don't make a ruffle, the world has no problem with us. But the moment we get down on our knees and begin to pray for revival to come, for the Spirit of God to move again, we begin to stand in the name of Jesus, we begin to let the Bible speak through us and let the Spirit of God testify through us, my friends, there is persecution, marginalization, suffering. Oh yes, it's right here.

No wonder they imprison them. It's been happening since the days of Cain. It's been happening to the prophets.

It's happened to our Savior. It's happened to Stephen as he was preaching. It's happened down to the centuries.

There were more martyrs in the last century than all centuries combined because there is a move to stand for the name of Jesus. I tell you, the devil is still at work. His best work against us is to divide those who belong to Jesus.

And he has divided us. Since the Reformation, there are now over 30,000 different denominations. And the world laughs at us because we as Christians don't know how to love one another.

We have felt division in our own midst, with brothers and sisters in Christ. Where strife and jealousy, where pride and arrogance, where conflict and dissensions come among us, and we divide from each other. We go back to what Clay preached here two weeks ago on forgiveness.

We go back to what Rob preached two weeks, uh, last week about forgiveness. And we do all that we can in the name of Jesus to forgive and to reconcile and to bless. And what a powerful witness Rob has been in bringing that message to us to always be a people of blessing.

But there are some divisions among us that we cannot in our own flesh resolve. We need to pray and ask the Spirit of God to come upon us and revive us, that we might bear with one another in love, so that we might have the power to eagerly maintain the unity of the Spirit in a bond of peace. That comes from God.

It comes from a movement of the Holy Spirit upon us. That's how our divisions heal, that we might be together. That's how our divisions heal, that we might rise up and know, oh, we need the fires of Pentecost again.

We need the thunders of the Gospel again. We need Jesus Christ preached in our churches. We need the testimony of the Spirit of God warming our hearts and filling us with an awareness of our sin, cleansing us, giving us a new heart, a new spirit, and raising us up to be a mighty, mighty church, ready to fight the battle in His strength in our day.

It's taking a stand that we cannot do on our own, but it's time to take a stand. Friends, do you know what I'm talking about? Have you been with friends where you've compromised the Gospel? Have you been with friends or times when you know you should stand and speak, but you're ashamed, you don't want to spend the cost, you don't want people to misunderstand you, you become quiet, you become timid. In your character, in your conduct, in your words, your conversation, in your compassion, you shrink back.

I understand. It's time to confess it. Today is the day we've got to confess and say, if we are ashamed of Him and His words in this adulterous and sinful generation, He will be ashamed of us when He comes in His glory.

And the only way that can happen as a difference is the Spirit of God comes upon us. We need a revival. We need the Lord to come and visit His church again.

We need that handout. We need Chuck to take us back. Oh, the wonderful legacy he gave, the legacy that Terrell gave, the legacy that Rob gives.

We need to go back to the foundations. We need to recover every day and remember who we are as a people because, dear friends, this is our hour. This is the time in this dark world for the church to rise.

Beg God to come, the Spirit of God to move upon us. It is our hour to stand. And so I beg you, pray for it.

The Pentecost might come and restore us and revive us. Are you willing to do that with your life? Are you willing to do that with your life? Lord, make it real. Lord, make it so.

Let us stand and confess our faith.

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