

Life Group Notes 9/7/2025

Mark Warren Standing Firm Week 8

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 9/7. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnote speaks:

1. [On preaching the word: the Greek sense of "preaching."](#)

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

Pastor opened again reminding us that we come to learn by design. God has brought us together for a purpose.

1. What brings you to church each Sunday?
2. Have the last weeks been different?
3. What resistance to you meet with each Sunday? What compels you to come?

The message begins with a review. At the very end of his ministry on earth, Paul is writing his second letter to Timothy, his spiritual son, from his imprisonment in Rome. Timothy, with whom Paul traveled and planted churches throughout Greece, is now pastor and elder in Ephesus, a principal church in Asia very close to Paul, where he spent years in challenging ministry, that might have included an encounter with wild animals in the arena.

Pastor says, chapter four, where Paul closes his letter, is hard-hitting. "It seems," he says, "both urgent and timeless, reminding us that the decision to follow Jesus is not taken casually." It speaks of endurance, like running a marathon, and it speaks of a reward.

1. What do you see?
2. What do you remember from this series, leading up to today?

✠ **Jesus will one day judge how we lived with His truth.**

Look up 2 Timothy 4: 1 *I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom: 2* Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and encourage with every form of patient instruction.

1. What do you see?
2. How really is Paul's charge made "...in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus?" Where is He, Father and Son, as Paul writes this letter?
3. How imminent is the judgment?
4. Look at Jesus' warning in Matthew 12:34 "You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. 35 The good man brings good things out of his good store of treasure, and the evil man brings evil things out of his evil store of treasure. 36 But I tell you that men will give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." What do you see? What does this add to the concept of judgment?
5. Pastor Mark says, "That seems a little sobering, doesn't it?" Answer him.
6. He adds, "Stephen Covey's book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (on Amazon) offers this as one of the seven habits: 'Begin with the end in mind.' We need to realize that if every word and every action is going to be judged at the end of our lives, maybe we need to think about what we're doing with every word we speak and action we take today." Respond.
7. Does this change the way you speak to those around you? Explain.
8. Note, too, when Paul speaks of judging the living, he uses ζῶντας, *zontas*, a form of the word *zoe*, depicting eternal life. He's judging those having eternal life. What does that mean? (For example, what does Christ's judgment of Paul produce?)
9. Paul speaks in view of "his appearing...", that is, his imminent manifestation, "...and his kingdom." How does Christ appear? Can you explain?
10. How is His kingdom manifested? How do believers manifest Christ and His kingdom?
11. What is different about us?

✠ **We're called to preach with love, patience, and courage.**

With this judgment in mind, look specifically at the charge: 2 *Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with every form of patient instruction.* Pastor asks, "Is Paul only charging Timothy on the platform with this directive? Or is this meant for every single one of us?"

1. Answer him.
2. What is Paul asking Timothy to do?
3. Look at footnote 1, below. What does it mean to preach, in the Greek sense of the word. What does a herald do?
4. Is there a season to be a herald? Is there any season not to be one?
5. Do you need a platform to be a herald of what we know is ahead?
6. Are all, therefore preachers?
7. What are the three functions of preaching?
8. What does it mean to reprove?
9. How is that different from "rebuke"?

10. What do you think in this light? Can a Christian be passive as others err?
11. Pastor referred to the “speck vs. the plank in our own eye” principle, saying, “We are far too comfortable with the plank in our own eye.” Comment. Are we?
12. Has Jesus ever said it’s impossible to remove the plank from our own eye?
13. How do we know when it is gone? When can we start to help our brothers and sisters?
14. Does “Be prepared...” in verse 2 suggest we always speak? Or is it a call to be ready to speak?
15. What does “...in season and out of season...” infer?
16. Look at Proverbs 25: **11***A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.* **12***Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man’s rebuke to a listening ear.* What is “...a word fitly spoken?”
17. Have you ever been rebuked by a wise man? Do you have a testimony?
18. What does it mean to “exhort?”
19. Now look at Colossians 4: **5***Act wisely toward outsiders, redeeming the time.* **6***Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.* What is Paul telling the Colossians?
20. How well does this parallel Paul’s instruction to Timothy?
21. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul tells the Corinthians what the purpose of prophecy is: **1***Earnestly pursue love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy...* **3***But he who prophesies speaks to men for their edification, encouragement, and comfort.* **4***The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.* Compare the purpose of prophecy with the purpose of preaching as Paul instructs Timothy. What is the ultimate goal?
22. Go back to the last part of verse two above: How many forms of patient instruction exist? Do you have examples?
23. Do you have examples of failed “instruction?” What does not work?
24. Thinking in terms of Paul’s previous teaching from 1 Corinthians 13, what is the vital, necessary asset for any of this to work?
25. Can anything be accomplished without love and compassion?
26. Mark talked about the difference between throwing a lifeline to someone and throwing darts at them. Do you remember? Can you explain?
27. He said, “I am concerned that we each think of ourselves as preachers and heralds. We must *allow* the Word of God to be proclaimed from our mouths.” What does he mean?
28. Review again Hebrews 4: **12***For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* **13***Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight; everything is uncovered and exposed before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.* Who actually does the work of revealing, rebuking and exhortation, if we are careful with our words and in our heraldry?
29. Mark says, “The scripture does all the rebuking.” Explain.
30. Did you notice that the author of Hebrews speaks of us “giving account?” Connect this to what Paul just told Timothy, above.

✠ **The world may chase “feel-good” messages, but we must stay grounded in God’s Word,**

Continuing with Paul: **3**For the time will come when men will not tolerate sound doctrine, but with itching ears they will gather around themselves teachers to suit their own desires. **4**So they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

1. What is our responsibility if our friends refuse the lifeline? Be specific.
2. Can you distinguish between those rejecting lifelines and those dodging the darts?
3. How? To whom are our neighbors listening?
4. What is Paul talking about when he says people have “itching ears?”
5. Think in terms of our own choices today of which “news feed” to listen to. Does it apply?
6. In what way is Paul’s warning aimed at us today?
7. How can you know that you are not turning aside to myths?
8. Review last week’s message from 2 Timothy 3: **1***But understand this: In the last days terrible times will come. 2For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, 4traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5having a form of godliness but denying its power. Turn away from such as these!* What kind of ears do these people have? What do they listen to?
9. Do you know of any who have turned aside to myths?
10. Look at what Isaiah says in 30: **10***They say to the seers, “Stop seeing visions!” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us the truth! Speak to us pleasant words; prophesy illusions. 11Get out of the way; turn off the road. Rid us of the Holy One of Israel!”* Who talks like this today? What are they seeking?
11. What are they not seeking?
12. What is our response to them? On whom do we focus?

✠ **Each of us has a ministry to fulfill—and a race to finish strong.**

Returning to Paul: **5***But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but to all who crave His appearing.*

1. What do you think? Do these verses speak only to Timothy? Or to us as well?
2. Explain. In what ways are we sober? (Mark says, “We are alert, clear headed and grounded in truth.” Can you think of any other aspect?)
3. What hardships/difficulties/pain/suffering do we endure?
4. Look at John 16: **33***I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!”* How are we supposed to endure hardships?
5. Pastor says, “Where there is no need for endurance, there is no need for faith.” Explain.
6. James 1 says, **2***Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature*

and complete, not lacking anything.” How does this buttress Pastor’s claim in question 5? What does any test ever show?

7. Does God need the test? Or do we need it? Explain.

Next Paul says, “Do the work of an evangelist.”

1. What work does an evangelist do? Is that your job?

2. Who shared the good news with you? Was that his job? Explain.

3. An old Charismatic chorus goes like this, “Break my heart for what breaks yours...”

Mark says that is the heart of the evangelist. Explain.

4. How does this message differ from throwing darts?

5. What is your ministry that Paul is calling you to fulfill?

6. If you do not know, how do you propose finding out?

Paul continues, “6For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but to all who crave His appearing.”

1. How does Paul know what’s soon to take place? What is different in this imprisonment?

2. React to Paul’s self-assessment. How are you doing?

3. What stage are you at in the race? Ask the hard questions.

4. Are you keeping the faith? What do you see ahead?

5. The “crown of righteousness,” *stephanos*, is not that crown, *diadema*, that is passed on through generations of royalty. In modern terms, *stephanos* is the trophy won at the end of the race. Explain the difference.

6. Look up James 1: 12 *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown (stephanos) of life that God has promised to those who love Him.* How in tune are James’s words here with Paul’s? How does one win the trophy in James’s view.

7. The 24 elders of Revelation 4 cast off their crowns/*stephanos* before the throne where the lamb and the ancient of days are seated. In that sense, who wins this race?

8. Looking at verse 8, above, what do you crave most?

9. Imagine Jesus manifesting Himself here, now, at this moment as you read this or discuss it. What changes?

10. Can this moment be craved?

✠ **Mark’s conclusion.**

This moment is real. It is not illusion. It is a race, and the judgment is imminent. He is going to look at every word and every deed. Truth must be preached, and you are all truth’s heralds. Allow the Word of God to preach. (Give Him your voice.) Encourage, exhort, reprove and rebuke, comfort and edify. Endurance is required. Hardship and disappointment can be expected. Have a plan, but let God be God. Look to the crown/trophy/*stephanos* that awaits you. Feel it in your grasp. Paul’s final exhortation to Timothy allows us to say, “Keep our eyes on the prize. Let’s fight the good fight. Let’s finish the race. And let’s do this all out of love.” Mark says, “The world needs us. But the world doesn’t need us to look like the world. The world needs to see us as we pursue Jesus.”

1. What strikes you?
2. Is your assignment clear? What is it?
3. How do you give Jesus, the Word of God, your voice?
4. What will your trophy say?
5. What contrast do we make as we walk in this world? Explain.

The rest of the story:

Read the end of this chapter: ***9**Make every effort to come to me quickly, **10**because Demas, in his love of this world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. **11**Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is useful to me in the ministry. **12**Tychicus, however, I have sent to Ephesus. **13**When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.*

***14**Alexander the coppersmith did great harm to me. The Lord will repay him according to his deeds. **15**You too should beware of him, for he has vigorously opposed our message.*

***16**At my first defense, no one stood with me, but everyone deserted me. May it not be charged against them. **17**But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message would be fully proclaimed, and all the Gentiles would hear it. So I was delivered from the mouth of the lion. **18**And the Lord will rescue me from every evil action and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever.*

The final verses in this letter demonstrate the depth of the relationship between Paul and his co-workers. Historians and students see this as further evidence of the veracity and accuracy of the claims of authorship and authenticity. We know several of the friends Paul mentions. Timothy certainly knew all of them. Demas was with Paul and still standing with him still when he wrote Philemon from prison. He apparently abandoned Paul and went back to Macedonia, where Philippi and Thessalonica are found. Titus, who, according to this, is on the northeastern shores of modern day Greece, in Dalmatia, ended up as overseer of Crete. Luke, who is only background in his own narrative in Acts, is prominent here, as Paul's sole remaining companion, thereby proving his existence and his claims to intimacy. Paul's reference to Mark ends the story of what looked like the first church split in Acts 15, where Paul refused to take Mark with him because he turned back on their first journey, so Mark and Barnabas went their separate ways to Cyprus while Paul and Silas returned to the lands that Paul had previously visited and eventually Europe. Tychicus was a companion of Paul's when he left Ephesus in Acts 20, traveled with him, and was sent with messages to Titus, the Colossians and to Ephesus. Paul forgot his cloak and parchments in Troas, the western Asian seaport where he once got the vision of a Macedonian, and from which he departed to first reach European shores. Timothy is instructed to come to him through Troas, gathering his cloak and parchments.

The reference to Alexander is disputed, as to which Alexander Paul refers. There is an Alexander who seeks to help Paul in the Ephesian riots in Acts 19. There is no evidence that he then turned on Paul, but Paul refers to an Alexander in 1 Timothy 1, who, with Hymenaeus, had "rejected [his teaching] and thereby shipwrecked their faith." Paul says he, "handed [them over] to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme."

In terms of being delivered from the jaws of the lion in this letter, the literal nature of the claim is not as strong as his claim to the Corinthians, where he said he "fought lions." The

Greek term there is the word actually used for the gladiator that fights wild beasts. In this case, Paul might be using a well-known proverb from Proverbs 20:2 *The terror of a king is like the roar of a lion; whoever provokes him forfeits his own life.* It is known he appeared before Caesar. Paul's courage here evokes his own powerful claims from Romans 8:35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* 36 *As it is written: "For Your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."* 37 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* 38 *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,* 39 *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Follow up application:

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
2. Ask, "Will this decision honor Jesus when I stand before him?" Write down your thoughts.
3. Answer this: What assignment has God given you? Write it down. How do you fulfill it?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Footnotes:

1. **On preaching the word: The Greek sense of "preaching"**—The Greek word used here preaching is the verb κηρύσσω, *kerusso*, which means to proclaim, to preach or to herald. In English, the word "preaching" evokes negative connotations that are not evoked in the Greek sense. A herald announces the arrival of a dignitary, a king or a prince. The Greek speaks to the announcement of a divine truth. *preaching by a herald sent from God*" (BAGD, "declaration," TDNT, 3:703). To "gospelize" (2097 /*euaggelizō*) stresses the *victory* of God's Gospel-message in the *totality* of His "good news." If we see ourselves each as heralds sent before the soon-coming king, our own misgivings to "preach" might be resolved.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (Scripture—Copy the scripture. / Observation—Write what you see. / Application—Write what God is saying. / Prayer—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: 2 Timothy 4:1-2
Tuesday: 2 Timothy 4:3-4
Wednesday: 2 Timothy 4:5-8
Thursday: Matthew 12:34-37
Friday: Proverbs 25:11-12
Saturday: Colossians 4:5-6
Sunday: 1 Corinthians 14:1, 3-4