

STAND STILL, STAND FIRM AND STAND UP

By John Gagliardi



Two of the Scriptures that never fail to intrigue me as I read them, are Exodus 14: 13 and 2 Chronicles 20: 17. Both say essentially the same thing: ***“Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord...”***

What I find challenging is that both Scriptures, on one level, seem to be saying that we can just **stand still**, lie back in comfort and do nothing, and God will do it all for us in some hyper-spiritual Shangri-La. Yet how does that gel with other Scriptures that tell us to **fight** the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6: 12) and to **wage war** and pull down strongholds with the mighty “weapons of our warfare” (2 Corinthians 10: 3 and 4).

Are we to stand still? Or are we to fight? The answer to this seeming conundrum is *both* - we are to fight by standing! When God tells us in Scripture that we are to “stand still”, that “standing” is not a passive, laissez-faire standing, but instead an active, expectant, faith-fired and persistent standing.

It is the kind of standing we read about in Ephesians 6: 11, 13 and 14 - “Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the wiles of the devil ... Therefore take up the whole armour of God , that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand**. **Stand** therefore ...”

As is my habit whenever I come across challenging Scriptures that need some elucidation, I went to the original source languages for an explanation. And although the Hebrew word to “stand still” in each case is slightly different (“yatsab” in Exodus 14: 13 and “amad” in 2 Chronicles 20: 17), both have a very similar meanings in English - to **abide**, stand fast, stand firm, continue, endure, be employed and to establish.

Very different from the superficial “do nothing” meaning in the English (although some versions do translate it as “stand firm” rather than the “stand still” of the more traditional renderings). The standing we are to do, far from being passive and inert, is to be active and potent - indeed, the best word I can find to describe this “God-kind” of standing” is ***“abiding”***.

Interestingly, when I went on-line to a popular thesaurus, and looked up “stand still”, the first synonym listed was “abide”! To “abide” means to “...wait for, await, watch for ... to endure, sustain ... to stay, remain, continue, to have one’s abode, to dwell, to sojourn ... to remain stable or fixed in some state or condition.”

Jesus Himself invites us to “abide” in Him ... to “stand still” with Him. He says: *“Abide in Me, and I in you ... He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit ...If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you”* (John 15: 4, 5 and 7).

The English word “abide” is the Greek “meno”, which means to stay, continue, endure, remain, stand still, stand firm, tarry (starting to sound familiar?). By “abiding” - standing still, standing firm - we are obeying Jesus, and putting ourselves into the very active and Biblical role of bearing “much fruit” (John 15: 16), thereby both glorifying the Father and becoming disciples of Jesus (John 15: 8).

So, far from being told to “put our feet up” and take it easy, we are in fact being told to move into a position of actively abiding in God, and bearing fruit. Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches - without Him, we can do nothing. He “prunes” us - shapes and disciplines us - so that we can bear more and more fruit (John 15: 2 and 5).

We are to be the “good soil” that brings forth multiplied fruit - “he who hears the Word, and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13: 23). The first command God gave to mankind in the beginning was to “be fruitful and multiply - fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion...” (Genesis 1: 28).

Hardly an invitation to passivity and sloth! Instead, when God tells us to abide in Him - to “stand still and see the salvation of the Lord” - He is telling us to stand in faith, to continue and remain fixed and stable, to stand firm, stand fast and to stand up! To go and bear fruit, to multiply that fruit, and with integrity and excellence, take dominion in our marketplace and our culture.