

Stand: Persevering as Faithful Exiles

1 Peter 5:12-14

Mercy Hill Church | July 12, 2026

Big Idea: God enables us as His people to persevere by rooting us in His grace, surrounding us with His family, and sustaining us with His peace.

1. Stand Firm (v.12b)

- (cf. Col 4:12, Eph 6:13, 2 Cor 1:24, 1 Cor 15:1, Rom 11:20, 5:2, John 8:44)
- Stand in the NT
 - Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may **stand** mature and fully assured in all the will of God.
 - 2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you **stand** firm in your faith.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you **stand**,
 - Romans 11:20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you **stand** fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.
 - Romans 5:2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we **stand**, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- Imperative (Command) but also continual – “continue to stand,” “remain standing”
 - Opposite of “stand” = to fall, topple, be moved or pushed/pulled away...
- **Stand Firm - Stay Rooted**
 - Staying grounded, planted – not falling or drifting away
 - Like a tree without deep roots or a boat without an anchor – when the storms come, it’s not going to stand...but fall or pulled away by wind or tide
 - Sometimes this falling or drifting comes suddenly, but more often than not, it’s a gradual drifting
 - **Hebrews 2:1** “...lest we drift away from it.”
 - “Drift” in the Greek used for boats or ships that gradually, slowly drift away from the dock or port
 - Sometimes even our feet we can be divided – not having both feet planted...one foot on, the other foot off...shifting weight back and forth between what we’re standing firm on.
- *What are we to stand firm in or on?*
- **Stand Firm in the Grace of God ("The Gospel")**
 - Not stand firm in...
 - ...in your obedience to God and His Word
 - ...in how good of a person you are
 - ...in your knowledge of the Bible and correct doctrine
 - ...in your good reputation among others and what others think of you
 - ...in your ministry, the different ways you serve and lead
 - ...in your feelings about God
 - ...in the fact that your parents are Christians
 - ...in the fact that you’ve been baptized
 - But stand firm in the grace of God = “I have written briefly to you...”

- Everything the Apostle Peter has written about in the letter:
 - God's electing love (1:1-2)
 - New birth (1:3)
 - An imperishable inheritance (1:4)
 - God's protection (1:5)
 - Christ's precious blood shed on the cross (1:18-19)
 - Forgiveness from sins (2:24)
 - Future glory (5:10)
 - ...and more
- The Grace of God, in summary = the Gospel – the amazing news of what Jesus has done for us, most visibly demonstrated on the cross
- Grace = we didn't and we don't deserve it. It's not about us, it's all about what God has done for us...
 - So this command to stand isn't a command to stand and work your way to God, but rather a command to stand and rest and trust in what God has done for you (and me and us) through Jesus!
 - Entitlement
- To stand firm in the grace of God is to keep planting the full weight of your life on who God is and what Christ has done, refusing to trust anything else more.
 - Standing firm in grace means continuing to trust God's favor in Christ more than your feelings, your circumstances, or your performance.
- Put your full weight on grace, the Gospel
 - Not stand on both...
 - Christ and career
 - Christ and our savings and/or retirement account
 - Christ and family
 - Christ and our reputation
 - Christ and our political allegiance
- *But why don't we? Or perhaps why do we have one foot standing on the grace of God and one foot standing on something else?*
- Perhaps part of the reason we're not standing firmly in the grace of God is because we're not convinced it's (entirely) true...
- **Stand Firm Because The Gospel is True**
- Apostle Peter highlights "this is the TRUE grace of God"
 - Perhaps for some of us, whether consciously or subconsciously, we're hedging our bets, we're diversifying our portfolio so to speak – so we have one foot planted in the gospel, while the other foot is planted on something else.
 - True – not just one of many truths, but THE truth
 - Jesus says, "I am THE way, THE truth and THE life" - not "I am A way, A truth and A life."
 - While it may sound politically correct or tolerant to think or say, "All religions are the same or similar," to think or say that actually reveals a level of ignorance of the core beliefs of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, etc.
 - 1) Faith & Reason (Evidence)
 - Perhaps for some of us, there's no solid reason to stand on the gospel – we think it's just about blind faith – and so it feels like we're standing on a house of cards
 - "Faith is trust based on evidence, not blind belief"

- Throughout Scripture God calls his people to faith, but that faith is not without reason or evidence – and in His grace and mercy He often reveals Himself and gives “evidence” or proof of who He is sometimes in miraculous ways:
 - When God calls Moses He reveals and proves Himself through burning bush, Moses’ staff that transforms into a serpent, Moses’ hand that becomes leprous and normal again (cf. Exodus 3-4)
 - When Jesus calls the fishermen Simon Peter & Andrew, James & John to be His disciples – the miracle of an amazing catch of fish (cf. Luke 5:1-11)
- God can and does – perhaps not always in “miracles” but sometime through “coincidences” and through reason and other evidences for our faith in Him
- Recommended Resources: Books like *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, *Reason for God* by Timothy Keller, *Case for Christianity/Christ* by Lee Strobel are all popular common books you can find even at your local library
- 2) Distorted View of Christianity
 - Perhaps for some of us, we aren’t willing to stand firmly on the gospel because we have a distorted view of Christianity
 - Quote: Tim Keller, NYT bestselling author and founder and pastor Redeemer Presbyterian Church in NYC, who passed away several years ago, once said: "Most people I meet have rejected a version of Christianity that I would reject too."
 - Whether through the media, social media, etc. we can get a distorted view of Christianity
 - Pastors & scandals - sexual misconduct, abuse of power, embezzling money, etc.
 - Prosperity (health & wealth) gospel – “name it and claim it”
 - Legalistic Christianity and “worldly” Christians
 - Christians & politics – on both the left and the right, misrepresenting or distorting what the Gospel is and what the Bible says
 - Something as simple as being cut off on the freeway aggressively by an SUV with a bumper sticker with a Bible verse on it => distorted view of Christians and Christianity
 - [A general, wise principle in life is don’t take the worst example(s) as the primary representative of a group...]
 - Read the Bible for itself, allow God’s Word to be the best representative of what Christianity is about.
 - Make sure you have a true grasp of what and who Jesus is, what Christianity is about...
- 3) If Christianity is True, It Will Withstand Scrutiny
 - Meant to be examined with an open mind and with humility
 - The Bible opens itself up to be tested, tried and examined
 - **Gospel of Luke 1:1-4** Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ **that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.**

- **1 John 1:1-4** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
- Explore, read, ask questions – whether it’s your first time visiting a church or wanting to know more, or perhaps working through some questions or doubts...
 - If newer, check out the Consider Jesus (Next Steps) booklet
 - Even if you’ve been a Christian for a while – address those questions, doubts, etc. so that you can stand firm...
 - Middle or high school student - growing up in the church – explore those questions, address those parts where you’re not certain or have doubts – so you can stand firm in faith!
 - If you're not a Christian, what is preventing you from taking that step of (reasonable) faith?
- The Apostle Peter concludes this letter with this command, imperative – an exhortation to stand firm in the grace of God (the Gospel) because it’s true!
 - One of my favorite verses in all of Scripture, and in many ways, one of my life verses is
 - John 6:66-69 ⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,** ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

2. **Stand Together (vv.12a, 13-14a)**

- (cf. 1 Pet 1:13, 4:7; 2 Tim 4:5, 1 Cor 16:13, Col 4:2, 1 Thess 5:6, James 4:7, 1 Pet 4:12)
- Apostle Peter writing to communities of believers scattered throughout modern Turkey area (cf. 1:1-2)
- A call to stand firm – not just individually but collectively; as a community
 - “Peter’s readers are to stand firm, but they do not stand alone” – stand together
- Mentioning specific names at the end of the letters (epistles) was common throughout the NT
 - Can be easy to see these names as the credits at the end of a movie or a TV show – skip or click “next episode” – or seen as less important...
 - Acknowledging important people!
- **Stand Together Knowing You're Not Alone**
 - Solidarity
 - The apostle Peter wrote this letter to remind them they are not alone. They are to stand together – being reminded of fellow believers from afar supporting them
 - “By Silvanus” - Silvanus (aka Silas -- Silvanus = formal Roman (Latin) name, Silas = familiar (Greek), shortened name (e.g. Elizabeth - Liz, Andrew - Drew, Charles - Chuck, Michael - Mike)
 - Sent by the Apostle Peter to deliver (and possibly read) this letter to these Christians facing persecution – physically present with them.
 - Some discussion whether Silvanus helped write the letter with/for Peter – but regardless, consensus that Silvanus carried and delivered the letter (cf.

Phoebe in Rom 16:1; Acts 15:23 - Silvanus was also previously chosen as one of the men to carry the apostle's letter from the Jerusalem council to Antioch)

- **Stand Together Being Encouraged & Encouraging One Another**
 - "She who is at Babylon" = church in Rome, where the apostle Peter is most likely writing this letter from
 - Babylon = the great power, oppressor; exiles – OT reference
 - Rome = where there was also persecution going on – they are experiencing similar things – an aspect of encouraging and being encouraged by one another
 - Greeting from (John) Mark – apostle Peter's "spiritual son."
 - Same John Mark who as the source of conflict between Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey...same John Mark whom later Paul said was a faithful coworker in the Gospel...same John Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark w/ Peter.
 - "Sends greetings" -- being thought of, prayed for, etc.
- **Stand Together in Love**
 - Turns attention back to the local church, the local body of believers
 - "Greet one another with the kiss of love"
 - Apostle Paul:
 - Romans 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.
 - 1 Corinthians 16:20 All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.
 - 2 Corinthians 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.
 - Jesus
 - Luke 7:45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet - Jesus speaking to Simon Peter
 - Luke 22:48 but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"
 - Different cultures and countries - being careful of not reading our own cultural values and perspectives into Scripture:
 - Similar example: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Middle East, North Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, parts of Asia - boys, young adult men, or even men might hold hands in a non-romantic way. Widely accepted, platonic cultural norm of friendship, brotherhood.
 - Cultural context: kiss as an expression of love – not romantic or sexual love
 - NT Scholar Craig Keener notes how male friends could embrace and kiss without sexual connotation in 1st century Greco-Roman culture, even in Jewish culture (cf. David & Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20:41)
 - Kissing as a sign of friendship, respect, family affection, loyalty, greetings or goodbye, etc.
 - Loving God only mentioned 1x in 1 Peter (1:8) , loving one another mentioned 4x: 1x Love God:
 - 1 Peter 1:22 - Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,
 - 1 Peter 2:17 - ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- 1 Peter 3:8 - Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.
 - 1 Peter 4:8 - Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins
 - The reminder to stand together in love in the midst of difficulties and persecution
- Why the call to love? In the midst of suffering, difficulties, easier to isolate oneself, focus on me, myself, and I

3. Stand Peacefully (v.14b)

- Not standing firm together with fear or anxiety -- but peace
 - **John 14:27 - *Peace*** I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. ***Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.***
 - **Phil 4:6-7 – *do not be anxious*** about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ ***And the peace of God***, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds **in Christ Jesus**.
- Stand Peacefully In Christ
 - Peace from Christ vs. Peace in Christ
 - **In Philippians 4:6-7** – “...in Christ Jesus.”
 - **John 16:33** - ³³ I have said these things to you, that ***in me you may have peace***. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
 - Peace in the midst of persecution and difficulty...as they persevere as faithful exiles. Not peace in the absence of difficulties.
 - **Rom 5:1** – Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
 - **Eph 2:13-18** - ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ ***For he himself is our peace***, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
 - Reconciliation with God || Reconciliation with one another
 - **Col 3:15** - ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.
- Peter doesn't end by wishing these suffering Christians an easy, comfortable life. He knows the harsh reality and challenges of following Jesus in a broken, sinful world. Instead, Peter wishes them peace. Not because persecution is ending. Not because their circumstances have changed or will change — they haven't.
 - But because they are in Christ.
- Biblical peace isn't the absence of storms; it's the presence of Christ, it's the abiding in Christ, being united or connected with Christ through faith.
 - It's the standing firm in the grace of God & standing together
- It's the deep assurance that because you have been reconciled to God, you belong to Him, you are held by Him, and one day He will make all things whole.

- That's peace (*shalom*). It's not simply calm. It's the confidence that, even in a broken world, God is restoring everything through His Son – and one day, when Christ returns, all things will be made right and brought under His judgment.
- In other words, *may you experience the wholeness, security, and settled confidence that come from belonging to Jesus, even while you continue to suffer in a broken, sinful world.*
- Eye of a Hurricane Illustration:
 - Having lived on the east coast in New England for 4 years, my knowledge of the seasons, weather and storms grew exponentially. In particular, learned about nor'easters and hurricanes
 - Being the clueless Californian, when storms came in New England, I thought they were hurricanes – but I kept on hearing this term, “nor’easter.” When I watched the news I kept on thinking, sounds like a hurricane – storm cyclones of wind, rain, and possibly snow.
 - Nor’easter are tropical storms powered by a clash of cold air from Canada and warm, moist air from the Atlantic Ocean – with a cold core – can bring snow
 - Hurricanes are tropical storms formed just from the Atlantic Ocean – with a warm core
 - But the unique difference is that nor’easters, for the most part, do not have an “eye” (center) of the storm – while all hurricanes do. What’s unique about the eye of the hurricane?
 - At the center of the hurricane, the “eye,” it is completely calm! In fact, if you were standing in the eye of the hurricane, you could potentially see blue skies and the sun while being surrounded by a round wall of clouds and storm...
- Standing peacefully in Christ = Eye of a hurricane = picture of calm and peace in the midst of a storm vs. a nor’easter where there is no eye and calm.
 - Which storm better describes your life: A nor’easter or a hurricane?

Reflection Questions

- What are some things people tend to build their lives upon? As a Christian, how would your life be different -- what would it look like -- without the gospel, God's grace?
- If you're not a Christian, what is preventing you from taking that step of (reasonable) faith?
- Are there areas where you have or are tempted to place one foot on instead of the gospel? Why?
- Why do so many Christians (and people) try to go through life (and its difficulties) by themselves? When have you been personally tempted to pull away from the church (community) instead of leaning more into it? Why?
- How have you personally experienced (or seen in others) the peace which comes from Christ? In what areas of your life currently do you need more of God's peace in Christ?
- Parent Corner: How are you helping (and praying for) your child to stand/stay rooted in the Gospel? Does your child see and believe the importance of the church (community) or do they see it as an individual activity? How are you personally being an example of these things to your child?