

STAND FIRM

“After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized. One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.” (Acts 18:1-11)

In the Scripture that we read there are several names mentioned like Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Justus, and Crispus. And we may ask this question: Who is among those names have done good things to God in serving Him? All of them they have done great things to God and all of them they served God wholeheartedly. But we want to emphases on two characters here and they are:-

1- Crispus: He was a Jewish and the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth City. Paul went to the synagogue to preach the gospel to them. Paul testified to them that Jesus was the Christ, *“But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” (Acts 18:6)* The Jewish refused the message of Paul; they did not accept the gospel message, but the ruler of the synagogue Crispus accepted that. Crispus was the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, that was his work, and if he would accept Christ the first thing that he would loss, he will loss his job and the source of his income. But Crispus took the right decision and accepted Christ as Savior and Lord over his Life. Indeed he and all his household got baptized. Baptism means to be crucified with Christ and burry the old life with Him, and to rise with Him to a new life. Crispus being a Jewish when he accepted Christ he had to renounce and leave his previous tradition and custom. He needs to leave his people and to be united with the family of God, the believers in Christ. That would jeopardize him and even make him exposed to threats and persecution, but he did not afraid because Christ became his first importance.

What about you? Can you stand firm as Crispus? If people do not believe in Jesus, don't look to them, you believe. If others they don't want to leave their parents tradition and get Baptize you follow Christ and accept to be Baptize. If others they don't apply the Word of God in their lives you accept the Word and apply it in your life. *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (James 1:22)*

2- Paul: Apostle Paul was sent by the Lord to the city of Corinth to preach the gospel their. But as he landed there he went as usual to the synagogue and tried to reason with them to persuade the Jewish and the Greeks that Jesus is Christ. But what was the outcome of his preaching to them? The Jews opposed Paul and did not accept the message. Not only that but they became abusive to him; they became a source of threat toward him. Therefore he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, *“Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” (Acts 18:6)* Paul as he was opposed he decided to go to the gentiles. Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus he responded to the message, and he and his household got Baptized. Even with this Paul was little bit afraid and discouraged but the Lord comforted him with this Word: *“One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” (Acts 18:9-10)* The Lord spoke to Paul and encourages him to keep on speaking. Truly Paul after he received the Word of God he stood firm. *“So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.” (Acts 18:11)* What we learn here that not everyone has faith and not everyone will believe when we preach. As well not everyone will obey the Word of God when we teach. But that should not be the reason for us to stop reaching new people and teach them the Word of God. We need to stand firm. Therefore:

A- “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,” (Ephesians 6:13-14) Our battle not against people but against devil, so we don't need to be intimidated if the people would not listen to the teaching, we need to continue in our mission and reach others.

B- “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13) We need not to be afraid, God is with us; He will fight the battle for us against the enemy, *“The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” (Exodus 14:14)*

C- “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58) All what we do for the Lord we will be rewarded for it; our labour in the Lord is not in vain; there will be fruit out of it.

My Dear and Beloved: *“So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.” (2 Thessalonians 2:15)* As we *“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me -- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:9)* As you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried but rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your encouraging Word to me, help me to persevere and stand firm to continue to do the work that you entrusted to me. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*