

Sit, Walk, Stand

Philemon the first chapter, verse one, and I want to emphasize three things in verse one and verse two and then there are a few things in verse twenty-three and twenty-four also. *“ Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house... There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.”* First of all I want to emphasize the words: fellow laborers, fellow soldiers and fellow prisoners.

In the book of Ephesians there are three words that are emphasized. The first three chapters of Ephesians you will continually see this word over and over again, it is the word “sit”. In the next two chapters the emphasis changes and sit is no longer used, the word “walk” is continually used. “Walk worthy of the Lord... walking in the Lord... walk out your salvation...” Different sayings like that, and then in the last chapter the word “stand” is used. No longer “walk”, no longer “sit”, but “stand”. There is a book by Watchman Nee called “Sit, Walk, Stand”. I don’t think I have ever read it before, so if you have read it I will not be preaching on that. But there are spiritual positions that we hold. There is a spiritual position called “sit”. There is a spiritual position called “walk”. And there is a spiritual position called “stand”. And the believer must be aware of each position and I believe that these three words emphasize those particular areas: fellow laborer relates to working and it is a position of walking. Fellow soldier is someone who fights as a soldier and it relates to standing. Then fellow prisoner relates to sitting. You do a lot of sitting when you are a prisoner. Those positions are emphasizing these different things in that he says, “Greet, so and so, my fellow laborer.” There is a lot of confusion in the church because people grab one aspect or another. Either they grab “sit” or “walk” or “stand.” Either they grab fellow laborer, or they grab fellow soldier, or they grab fellow prisoner. And this is where you get so many diversified ministries, because people are always grabbing a part of a truth or a full truth in itself, but there are other things that must be added to that. You find people that are fellow soldiers and there are a lot of scriptures to support that because certainly the scriptures say we are fellow soldiers. Certainly the scriptures say, “Stand”. There are those who are always out doing the work of God and they are fellow laborers. They emphasize that we must walk. The name that comes to my mind is Martha. Martha was a worker. She was a fellow laborer and she was working away. And I believe that we much hold that position too. But then there are others who are always Mary. There are always those who want to sit, those who are a captive a prisoner of Jesus Christ. But all three are true.

The way to get balance in our life is to search the whole bible for the whole truth. That is one reason I do not like for this church to receive tags such as a “word church” or a “deliverance ministry”, because none of those are emphasized. We do deliverance around here, we believe in fighting the enemy. We know all about binding and loosing, we understand that we have an adversary and that we have our place. But that is just part of

the truth and that is not our main emphasis, though in any one service you probably will hear that. We believe that we need to be actively involved. We believe in commitment, tangible commitment, being fellow laborers. We believe in the walk, not just out fighting, but the walk that we have in Jesus Christ. We believe that it is more than a heart commitment. The bible says that we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, not just our spirit. So there is a position of walking in the Lord and walking this thing out and being actively involved, and being called a fellow laborer. And there is also a time to sit at the feet of Jesus, where you are that captive of the Lord Jesus Christ. There may be times where you are in a sitting position – you, personally. God deals with a church body as a whole in a general manner. He may be dealing with the church generally as a fellow soldier, but He also deals with you as an individual. And you at that time may be having a personal dealing of the Holy Spirit to sit at His feet. That is ok, that does not mean that you are out of wack with the body, it means that you have your personal relationship, but overall you are being dealt with in the realm of the whole. However if you are not careful and you happen to be one who is personally in a fellow soldier position and God is moving in the church in a fellow soldier position and one of your brothers or sisters happens to be personally in a sit position and they are sharing what God has shared with them about sit, you might (if you are not just real full of the love of God) judge that person and say, “You are out of wack with the body.” Or, “You are out of wack with what’s going on.” Can you see all these things are so simple? But the church really does not know a lot of these things. And once we begin to lay things out and see them in the scripture and look at them, you can see, “Yeah its ok for somebody to be having a different dealing in the Spirit at the time without me having to judge them.” This should be an area of comfort for some of you who sense that maybe the body is in a warfare position or a sit position and you are not there. It does not mean that you are totally out of whack with the body and God and you have left God. And you feel like it’s obvious that everybody’s in this position and I am not. We feel like that, “Everybody in the church is in this position and what’s wrong with me God?” Nothings wrong with you just settle down, God is dealing with you, you are in the palm of His hand, and no man can pluck you out. He will never leave you or forsake you. The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Truth will come and abide with you forever. You are ok; He is dealing with you in a specific manner. Let Him do His job and quit getting all freaked out about it. You will sail through that time and enter into another time and somebody else will be in another position. Just keep the love of God.

Differences without Division

I feel like the Holy Spirit wants me to share that again at this point. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of operation, but it is the same Lord. There are different kinds of manifestations in the Spirit, but it is the same Father over all. There is room in the body of Christ for differences without division, but there is one “gift”, I use it in this term although it is not a gift, though each person ministers in a different gift, yet we all can move in the love of Christ. Love is for everybody, love never fails. So if love motivates you and love is not just a feeling. I think of Charles Finney, a great evangelist in the eighteen hundreds that won literally thousands of people to the Lord, he wrote a book called, “Love is not a special way of feeling” and I like that. It is

not a special way of feeling. Love is a spirit, it is a heart condition that desires others to be lifted up and blessed. "For God so loved the world..." He so desired it to be out of the mire, lifted up and blessed, "that He gave His only begotten Son." This is love; to edify one another, build up one another in love. If we always remember that, love never fails; your gifts sometimes will not operate. The body sometimes will be in one area and you will be in another, we don't have to fall apart. And we don't around here but we need to maintain this. We need constantly keep that before our eyes so that anytime the enemy comes in and starts putting people down, that is when we need to be lifting them up.

We are fellow laborers, we are fellow soldiers, and we are fellow prisoners. I am reminded of the scriptures in Nehemiah, chapter four, verse six, "So built we the wall and all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work." Fellow laborers, we are fellow laborers and that means that we are elbow to elbow building the house of God. Remember when they were building the wall there were two things that was going on, and hopefully all three. They were all fellow soldiers, fellow laborers and fellow prisoners. They were with one hand building the Kingdom of God, building Zion and with the other hand they were holding the sword. They were in spiritual warfare, they were aware that they were a fellow laborer with one hand. They were aware that they were a fellow soldier with this hand. And I believe that their heart condition in them all was that they were fellow prisoners with Jesus Christ as He had put them in that situation. They were very much captives. All their enemies had them surrounded round about, but they were not defeated.

The People had a Mind to Work

The people had a mind to work and there is this aspect of building up the Kingdom, and everybody as their part and everybody is a laborer in that. And then over into the area of the fellow soldier. Let's look in first Thessalonians. What does a soldier do? He fights, he is in warfare. If you are just working in the Kingdom of God and not aware that we are in a warfare, then you probably are not really doing a whole lot over all. It sounds funny, but there are people that don't know they are in a war. There are bombs bursting over head, but there are people like that. First Thessalonians the second chapter, verse eighteen, "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us." Now look at chapter three verse five, "For this cause when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you and our labor be in vain." Now look at chapter five, verse three, "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of salvation." That relates to the whole armor of God which relates to what purpose? "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may stand against the wiles of the devil."

There is a Warfare

So here obviously the Apostle Paul is in a warfare. Now they are people that say, "If you know Jesus and you really are born again, you don't have any problems with the devil. If you really know your position in Christ." Apparently the Apostle Paul was yet in a carnal state, because he is talking about Satan hindering him from doing the work of the Lord.

He is saying, "I send somebody to you lest the tempter tempt you and our labor be in vain." He said, "Listen, we need to put on the whole armor of God." And this is just one book. There is a war, we are soldiers and there is a battle. We have got to be vigilant, be sober for your adversary goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And if he couldn't touch you, if he couldn't lay hands on you, there would be no reason for God to say, "Be sober, be vigilant, put on the whole armor of God." There is a battle, there is warfare and we are not ignorant of that here. And that is one thing Paul said, "For we are not ignorant of his devices." But there are churches who are only laboring for God and don't know that we have got to be fellow soldiers also. If we do not get these three aspects down and we just center on one, we will be like all the other churches and be out of balance. Anything that is out of balance kind of shifts and is not stable. But we want to have the balance of the whole thing. We say around here, "We preach the full counsel of God." If it is in the bible we preach it. We do not make any qualms about it; we do not try to fit into anybody's image. We don't necessarily have to have certain tags hanging off of us. When we meet people and they ask, "What denomination are you?" "Well we just love Jesus." "What church do you go to?" "That's not important I just love Jesus." That is what they did to John the Baptist. They asked him, "Are you Elijah?" He said, "No." They said, "Well are you that prophet." He said, "I am not that prophet." And they said, "Well who sent you then?" He said, "That is not important." And they said, "Well what are you?" He said, "I am just the voice of one." And they are going, "Who is this guy?" They just kept pushing and pressing, they wanted credentials, and they wanted tags. And the less tags we have the better. We have a name, not a tag. And His name is Jesus. And it is our heart only to glorify Jesus Christ. And if we spend our "sojourn", our time on this earth and we fail to have a heart that glorifies God, I don't know that I want to face the Savior. But I do know that one day I want to hear those words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant" out of the mouth of Jesus. And I will just say, "I didn't do anything! I just wanted to glorify you."

A False Balance

But you might have someone who is out of balance and is only a fellow laborer and he will stand there and say, "Bless God I am ready for my wings. Bless God I built great big complexes and ministries galore. I was really something special. I am a fellow laborer." And Jesus will say, "Depart from me. I never knew you." That is possible. I am not saying that everyone that is out of balance is going to hell that is not it. But I am trying to show you that when they are out of balance there is a possibility, the bible says, "A false balance is an abomination to God." That is pretty clear; it is a false balance, something that is not on kilter. You say, "Is anybody perfectly balanced?" Probably not, but there are those who are striving to keep in balance with the Lord. Because to me when we are imbalanced there is one that is going to be seen and glorified. It is like when we move off center, Jesus moves off center and something else moves on center. And that would be us. And I have told you before and I say it almost every service, it is not my name and it better not be your name I hear a bunch about. It better be the name of Jesus. How terrible if we do not desire with all our hearts to glorify Jesus. If I allow, maybe I don't initiate it but if I allow you to run around and lift up my name, and I allow it, that is just as bad in my opinion as if I told you to go do that, or if I wanted you to do that. I should stop that

and say, "Wait one minute. It is Jesus that we are here for." And the same goes for you, if people say, "Oh brother so and so..." You say, "No sir, the angel of the Lord told me to call it Jesus. It is Jesus." There is some real danger if you are not real careful.

If I or you could be used as a vessel to lift up Jesus, how wonderful! That would make my eternity. Fellow laborers, we have our part. We do not just let God do it all, we are workers together with Him - fellow soldiers. In Thessalonians, the great apostle Paul that never had any problems said more than once that the devil hindered him at some times. There is warfare, and then the third one, fellow prisoners. The first three chapters of Ephesians is sit, just sit at His feet, and just sit in His presences, to just sit seated in Christ in heavenly places. The next two chapters is walk. And then the last chapter is stand as a soldier against the enemy. But there are three that say sit. Two that say walk and one that says stand. That means that most of us probably sit a whole lot more than we walk or we stand. We have to sit three times more than we stand or we won't stand. We have to sit in the presence of the Lord. We have to, as Mary sit at the feet of Jesus. We have to sit in the Word. We have to love the Lord, this is our personal thing. This is not so much a church thing. We are fellow laborers, there is the body, but my friends individually we have to sit more, because if we are not sitting then all the walking and the laboring that we are doing is in vain. And there will be very little standing going on, because the first wind, the first storm that comes, if you have not been in the presence of Jesus, it is going to bowl you over and you are not going to be able to stand. We need to sit at His feet.

Let me temper this again, you do not stay there forever, you do not just sit at the feet of Jesus. I would love to just go off in Bavaria, I am thinking of that picture I have. Or just go somewhere in the mountains and find me a beautiful cave with crystal stalactites and search the bible and seek His face. But there is a time when I need to get up and start walking. And there is a time that I have to stand. Can you see the divisions in churches? Can you see where they get their ideas from? They are scriptural, they will fight you tooth and nail, and "This is in the scripture!" And they believe it with all their heart and they should. It is not that you are trying to get them off of what they believe unless you are a stander and they are a sitter. "You need to stand." And they are saying, "You need to sit." If they would listen to each other they would be ok. But one is trying to get that one over here and this one is trying to get that one over there. Quit trying to convert everybody to your way of thinking. Let's just convert them to Jesus. I think Jesus is Lord enough to handle us.

Conclusion

All of these positions are important, to sit, walk and stand. To be a fellow soldier means what? What can we glean from this tonight? One is that if you are not aware of the battle or you are not aware of the weapons, if you are not aware of the spiritual warfare, or all the ways to be involved in it, you need to get proficient in the armor. Two, if you are not aware that you are a fellow laborer, meaning this is not Jesus and His audience. Jesus is not coming back for His audience. He is not coming back for the audience of Christ. He is coming back for a body, fellow laborers. Everybody is a laborer and has their part. We have all kinds of outreach here and I could not do it all myself, it is because God has

added people. We have a body. We do not have an audience and if you have not found your place, if you have not recognized that you are a fellow-laborer yet, it is time to learn it because we are moving on. There is going to be a time of growth and it will be too late to try and get it together. This congregation, this part of this body, there are others yet, Jesus said there are others that are going to come. But this part has to be like a glove that the rest of it slides into. We can not be fidgeting around and they come in and say, "What is going on here?" We have got to have it together by the time they get here. And we have to have enough ministries and ministers to handle it when they come in.

Fellow-laborers and fellow-prisoners, I like what the Apostle Paul said. He is sitting in jail and he said, "You all pray for me, I am God's ambassador in bonds, but though I'm bound, the word of God is not bound!" And that is a good attitude. Because there are times when you stand, when you fight the enemy and it seems like nothing is happening. There are times when you labor and it does not seem like you have been getting anywhere and it seems like you have been put in prison, it is like you have been put in jail and you can not do anything but sit quietly. Like the Apostle Paul must have the first time that he was thrown in jail, "Oh God get me out of this place, there is a gospel to be preached around the world, there are people that need healing, what am I doing sitting in here, break this thing wide open." But he spent most of his ministry in jail. You may not be aware of that; most of his ministry was behind bars. Sometimes God has to force us to sit because we have got so much zeal and love for him. And so we become His prisoner. And we say, "Devil, I rebuke you. Your bars bend back in the name of Jesus!" And nothing happens. You walk around saying, "What is wrong?" And finally the Apostle Paul is sitting there saying, "This is dumb, I could be ministering around the world. I don't believe this, well, dear church of Corinth..." And he sits there and he writes the bible! He did not know it, he did not know what he was doing and he writes the bible, god's prisoner. Sometimes God locks you in and there is nothing you can do but sit.

"Be Still and Know That I Am God"

One example in the Old Testament - they came out of Egypt rejoicing and shouting and everything was great and all of the sudden they got to the Red Sea. And there is this sea in front of them and mountains on every side and the Pharaoh and his army charging at them. The enemy is just coming in and they are saying, "Get us out of here, we're trapped!" And the word was, "Be still." There is a scripture that says, "Be still and know that I am God." There is a time when he says, "Take up the sword and hit the devil." But there is a time where he says, "Stand still and see. You just stand there. Right now do not be a fellow-laborer, do not be a fighter, just rest, just sit for awhile." And if you do not sit and I do not sit, then God will see to it that we sit. I'll throw you a little curve here in closing, David said, "In his mercy He hath afflicted me. Before I was afflicted I went astray" (Psalm 119:67). There are times when God will allow the enemy to break your leg so that you will lay there in that hospital bed with nothing else to do but read your bible. You may not believe that but God wanted that to happen more than He wanted you out doing. Well actually His first choice was not to break your leg, but for you to get in the Word because you loved Him and because you knew what was right, but sometimes in His mercy, he allows things to happen because we are so busy we will not just sit down

and love Him, we will not just sit down and search the Word. We will not just honor Him. The best time I had tonight so far was just before service and I went in the prayer room and I sat down. The Holy Spirit just seemed to move on me and I entered into a short, sweet time of worship time with the Lord. And it was so precious. But see that was just a little time. You have to sit three times more than you stand.