

Stand Fast in the Faith – 1 Cor 16:13-14

Introduction – As we consider a new year and the continued growth of our church in the midst of our world, it would behoove us to consider our own particular situation as a church. Now some 20 years old, we must prepare ourselves to “pass the baton” to another generation. With multiple families in multiple stages of life (both physically and spiritually), this doesn’t happen in one fell swoop. But there will come a day when it will become clear that another group, a younger group, and Lord willing a more mature group than we were, will make up the leadership and milieu of Trinity Church. Are we preparing well? Are they preparing well? Are we all consciously thinking about it? What things should come to mind?

EEF Beginnings – We discovered the wonderful doctrines of grace and a gospel with a backbone. Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth and is to be declared to all nations as such – there isn’t a square inch of this world that is not under His absolute Lordship. And many other truths: biblical view of the home and the necessity of a Christian education, the promises of the New Covenant for our children, the concept of Covenant Renewal in our worship service, the militant and corporate work of skillfully singing the Psalms and the biblical hope for the gospel in this age, all this with “practical Christianity,” including confession of sin, forgiveness, getting rid of bitterness, personal devotions, love and respect in marital relationships.

The Text – *“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.”*

The Doctrines of Grace are some of the most humbling truths of scripture known to man. Apart from the independent work of God, there is no hope at all for any individual. Man was created in God’s image but this means we fell from a great height and our condition is terribly desperate and hopeless. This doctrine humbles us greatly, but it also equips us to stand against the world with great confidence.

The Meek Shall Inherit the Earth (Matt 5:5) – Humility and meekness are not synonyms for weakness. Moses was the meekest man on the earth and took down the super power of his day, led a million and a half people over the course of forty years, and brought them to the edge of a new Promised Land. In contrast, the broad evangelical and mainstream church has given away most of what was recovered in the Reformation; the church today is lost in her arrogance, twisting these doctrines and her view of man in relation to God.

The Necessity of Humility – Unless we are humbled before God, we cannot stand up to anybody who seeks to resist God. We continue to defy God in the “little” ways we want to and then wonder why we cannot stop the God-haters around us from defying His law. “Why won’t they listen to us?” we lament.

Exhortations for All – In order to pass on the faith and in order to implement the faith as our own in the next generations, these exhortations are critical for the church.

Watch – You were asleep and something woke you up and startled you; you are looking and listening with deep attention – that is the use of this Greek word. The culture is getting bolder and bolder and the church is getting more and more compromised in doctrine and practice. We need to watch with understanding in light of the Word.

Stand Fast in the Faith – This means to persevere and persist, to keep standing and therefore to lose no ground. It means to build upon the creedal advance of the historic church, to give yourself to good teachers and good teaching and then apply the truth into your new situations. And “standing fast” is not standing still; the advance of the kingdom is the work of standing fast.

Be Brave – Literally (and this becomes more and more politically incorrect), this is “play the man,” or “be a man.” Fathers, church-men, what are we doing to embody this command? What are we doing to stand against our egalitarian culture and equip our boys and young men? (More non-PC language warning): Women are far more willing for men to be men than the men are. Connected to this, we must catch the lie from our government and culture that we are a nation of individuals and not families (Roe-v-Wade is a central manifestation of this lie). Christian wives: the culture around your husband hates husbands, hates fathers, hates masculinity, and hates men taking responsibility. Pray for your men. Young women: don’t even think about marrying a man you don’t respect as a spiritual giant; for be sure of this: he has a fight ahead of him.

Let All Be Done in Love – All of this strength must be manifested for the purpose of serving and not for self-centered, personal gain or getting your way. Love in the context of faith is keeping God’s law from the heart and especially towards others and their betterment.

The Next Batch of Young Men – The culture of the world is coddling our boys who are staying home, playing games, pursuing their own careers and pleasures with no concern for building a kingdom as Christ has called them. Marriage? Family? “Put them off as long as possible” is the mantra. Some brief quips from *“Thoughts for Young Men”* by J.C. Ryle:

“What young men will be in all probability depends on what they are now.”

Beware of the dangers of Pride, Love of Pleasure, Thoughtlessness, Contempt for the Church, and Fear of Man’s Opinions.

“Resolve now to shun everything that proves to be an occasion for sin.”

“Get a clear view of your own sin” and, most importantly, “Know Jesus.”