

Sit, Walk, Stand - Part 4

by Gareth Evans

Gareth Evans emphasizes the importance of understanding our position in Christ as foundational to spiritual growth and maturity in his sermon 'Sit, Walk, Stand - Part 4'.

Duration: 8:37

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 2:6-7, 2 Timothy 2:15, Hebrews 5:12-14, James 1:22, 1 Peter 2:2

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Maturity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the doctrine before practicing it, focusing on the privilege of our position in Christ and the need to grow in maturity rather than expecting instant spiritual maturity. It shares a powerful story of a man who strayed from his faith but eventually returned, highlighting the importance of nurturing and feeding young Christians in their faith journey.

Transcript

The way we should live out our precepts. Doctrine preceded practice. First three chapters are very clearly doctrine, ending up with the therefores.

Chapter four starts with therefore. Based on what I've taught you, therefore. Many ways you can divide this book up.

And I don't know if you've done Bible studies in your church in the book of Ephesians, one could ask you what emphasis you made. And there'd be nothing wrong whatever emphasis you made unless we actually had Paul to say, this is my emphasis. Because I think in the word of God, there are many emphases we need to hear because God, the Holy Spirit, has a different emphasis for each one of us.

But what I'd like to do for the next 20 minutes is just talk about the emphasis that is most impacted my life. I've always wanted to go on with God. I've always had that quiet prayer, Lord, I want to know more of you.

There has never been a long period of time where I did not again make that renewal of my commitment to seek more and more of God. There have been quiet times, there have been dry times, there have been valleys in my life. There has never been a time of backsliding where I deliberately chose not to go on with God.

There have been times of dryness, but there have been many times of hunger for more and more of God. I remember being given a book by Watchman Nee, who was a man who knew what it was to rejoice in prison experiences, just like Paul. He spent many years in prison, and out of the prison experiences of this Chinese man came some wonderful, wonderful teachings, some marvelous books.

The Normal Christian Worker, for example, The Normal Christian Life, which makes most of our normal Christian lives very, very suspect. But he wrote a little book, about 70 or 90 pages long, called Sit, Walk, Stand. No book other than the Bible has impacted my life so much as that book.

I'm not a bed reader, I do not sit in bed reading normally, but for some reason I was in bed reading that book. It's his commentary on the book of Ephesians. And I read it, and I got to the end of the book, and I was so excited I went back to page one, I started again, I got my pen out, and I started marking in the book references and comments, because it impacted me in such a tremendous way.

It taught me for the first time the privilege of my position in Christ. And I'm convinced since then, I've been a school teacher, I later became a pastor, I am utterly convinced that one of the essential things you and I need to know first in our Christian walk is the privilege of sitting in Christ Jesus. I can think of so many stories, I'm sure you can.

I remember Don and Brian Teed, a young man in Swansea, South Wales, who had the tragedy of seeing their older brother charged with murder. And they knew about it, they had been involved with him in petty burglary. And one night they were with their brother in a pub, and the TV came on about a woman's body being found in a post office, she'd been beaten to death.

And Brian and Don turned and looked at their brother, and they knew that he was the one who had done it, because they knew that he planned to burglarize this home. I believe a portion of the story about Brian and Don came to the Lord, and I knew them both very well. They attended Swansea Bible College, which is the college founded by Rhys Howells, you may have heard of Rhys Howells, many of you.

Swansea Bible College, it still stands there. But because of their association with their brother, they were both very good looking boys, they were both very able speakers and talkers. Within weeks of their conversion, they were in Bible school, and they were out every Sunday preaching.

People wanted to hear their testimony, people wanted to hear their story. Youth for Christ in our city was very, very large, we had well over a thousand people come out once a month to Youth for Christ. Immediately Brian Teed was up the front, leading and speaking at Youth for Christ meetings.

It went on like this for about two years, and suddenly Brian disappeared. And the next thing we heard was that he was living with a woman in the south of England somewhere, he had just turned his back on God and on the things of God. What a tragedy.

I was leading a youth work at the time, I was a young school teacher, and I guess I'd seen the signs, this young man was being promoted so much. You know, we have a habit, don't we, of promoting sports stars and people who've had remarkable testimonies of conversion from drugs and alcohol and crime, and we want to hear the story, and we promote them so much. It's hard enough when you promote pastors and put them on pedestals, how much harder it is for these young men to carry it when the church builds them up.

And Brian just fell off his pedestal. We went overseas, came back many years later, Anne and I attended a meeting in Birmingham, a big rally, and on the way back we stopped off at a motorway little cafe, and we were having maybe fish and chips, and I look across and then across the other side of the room I see Brian Teed. This is 15, 20 years on.

So I went over to his table and he had a couple of friends with him, and I said, hi, Brian Teed, isn't it? He said, yes. I said, do I know you? I said, well, you probably don't remember me, I said, but 20 years ago when I was in Swansea University, I remember you, in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Swansea. Oh, yes, he said I remember you, and we sat down, we started talking, and I was hoping simply to have a gentle witness to this man that even though we'd known he'd fallen, that he was still loved and I understood.

He started crying, and he said, Gareth, he said, I've been in the wilderness for so many years, but last night, nearly as the morning, I gave my life to Jesus Christ again. He said I was at home and I knew the emptiness of my life, and I knew that I needed to get back to that joy I'd experienced as a young man for just that brief two years. He said, I gave my life back to Jesus, and so today, he said, I came to this rally just to get back into fellowship with God's people.

But please, he said, don't tell people back home in Swansea that you saw me, because I don't want to go through the same thing as I went through before. When young couples have a baby, they would be very, very surprised if the baby got up as a one-week-year-old and started running around the house, wouldn't they? Why is it we expect baby Christians to be on their feet, walking and running and doing the work of the gospel? I have led youth, most of my life, led youth work, and of course, on the Anastasium, working with young people, and I'm thrilled to see so many young people here. Sam shared with me, our teachers came back to the Lord about two months ago, Sam, about two months ago.

I expect Sam to dirty his diapers, brothers and sisters, and I have learned not to point a finger at young Christians when they fail and fall. I learned a little lesson years ago as a young Christian, and it was this, that God does not expect me to be successful, but he does expect me to be faithful. But he expects me to be faithful in the maturity that I have, and if I'm a baby in Christ, that is how he expects me to be.

He does not expect me to be as the mature Christian. The tragedy is that many of us have been Christians for many years, and we have still been babes. That's the tragedy.

And we demand a babe, that they be mature. It doesn't happen that way. And I have learned, as I've seen young people come to the Lord, it is far, far, far more important to teach them their privilege of being in Christ than it is to demand of them that they stand in the battle.

Are you hearing me? They need to be fed, they need to be built up, they need to be made strong. And as I read Watchman Me, I began to see the correct order that Paul teaches in this word, and it is my outline of this word. It goes with simple three words, and if you know the book I'm talking about, you know the three words.

They sit, walk, stand. That's God's order. Whereas with Brian Teague, we made him stand, run, and he'd never learn to sit in Christ.

It took him 20 years to come back to the place where he could climb once again in his Savior's lap and learn what it is to sit there. So look with me please at the outline in Ephesians of sit, walk, stand. Let me

paraphrase chapter 1 for you.

Paul speaks about the

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