

# Position to Stand

by Jim Cymbala

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*The proper stance in spiritual life is a stance of joyful praise, where we acknowledge God's love and faithfulness, and respond with praise and worship.*

**Duration:** 30:18

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 36:5, Psalm 89:1, Psalm 100:1-2, Psalm 136:26, Philippians 4:4, Jude 1:21

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of maintaining a stance of joyful praise in our lives. He encourages listeners to have a fixed heart and to sing and praise God, regardless of the distractions and challenges they may face. The key to maintaining this joyful heart is to be conscious of and live in the atmosphere of God's love, knowing that His love is great and His faithfulness reaches to the skies. The speaker also highlights the danger of allowing worry and distractions to rob us of our song of praise and reminds listeners that God's love and faithfulness are two things that can never be taken away from us.

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## Transcript

For the men who follow basketball, I played point guard in high school and college, and sometimes when the guy's coming down who you're gonna guard, just to psych yourself up, and you'll see them do it today, even in the pro game. So whoever's coming up, dribbling the ball, the guy guarding him will get down real low in his defensive position, and sometimes even hit the ground with his hands, as if to just, I'm in the proper defensive position, I'm not standing here trying to guard him, I'm not like this, I'm in the defensive position that they teach you in high school and college, and you stay low, and you have your balance so that you can move, and that's the way it is. I hurt myself this morning doing that, by the way.

Now, in baseball, the batter goes into the batter's box, and he just doesn't, you know, stand like that. He's in a stance, and he gets ready, and he's waiting for the pitcher, and that's his stance. Why? Because to do what you have to do, you have to have a proper stance.

That's in spiritual life. Did you know that without a proper, everyday, spiritual stance and position, you get in trouble? And this is why so many Christians love the Lord, but don't live in victory, and they're tripped up by the enemy, because their stance is wrong, and they're waiting for someone to pray for them, they're waiting to read another book, but what they haven't learned is one of the basics, and that's why when you learn to play basketball, the coach at the Naval Academy, I remember the first couple of days of practice,

he didn't even let the basketball come out on the floor for two hours, and we were like, how are you gonna play basketball without a basketball? He said, no, you're gonna get foundation, you're gonna get in shape, come on, everybody down, and we'd be going back and forth in that position and forward and back until you're just, your muscles in your leg and your stomach and everything was just barking at you. Here's what the psalmist says was his position.

He says, my position is steadfast about this. I know what I have to go through in life, so my position now is fixed. I'm steadfast, I'm not wishy-washy about this.

Let me see if this applies to you, and if you and I are doing this on a daily basis. Psalm 108, my heart is steadfast. See, it's about the heart, not your body.

My heart is steadfast, oh God, and now, out of nowhere, he says something that doesn't make any sense. My heart is steadfast, I will sing and make music with all my soul. That's your position? Awake, harp and lyre.

I will awaken the dawn, in other words, I'll start early. I will praise you, oh Lord, among the nations. I will sing of you among the people.

So he's talking about my heart is fixed. Hey, listen, I'm not going back and forth. I'm gonna sing and praise and be joyful.

And use instruments and start early and let other people know how great God is. Why? Verse four, for great is your love, higher than the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the sky.

Read verse four out loud with me. For great is your love, higher than the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the sky.

Say it again, for great is your love, higher than the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. So now we learn here the proper stance that the psalmist is talking about is a stance of what I would call joyful praise.

The only way to be victorious with God, see great answers to prayer, see yourself grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord, see the Bible come alive, the only way to see that happen is to be in the right position, not to go to the Brooklyn Tabernacle on Sunday, not this, not that, it's on a daily basis, have a proper stance, a proper position, and that's of joyful praise. We know a couple things about that joyful praise. We know that the Bible says the joy of the Lord is our what? What is it? You mean joy equals strength? Doesn't make any sense, but spiritually it's very true.

When you and I are not experiencing a life of rejoicing in God, we automatically become weak. This is a secret that's hidden from most people. They don't even think about whether they're rejoicing or they're experiencing joy.

They're just like, well, I'm gonna stand on God's word and all of that, but the state of your heart has to be a rejoicing heart. The New Testament verifies that. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say to you, rejoice.

Why so important? Because to be strong in Jesus is to be rejoicing in Jesus. But to live victoriously until Christ comes so that we're not found in a bad place is very important. That's why we come to church and

hear the word, one of the reasons.

So we find out that the joy of the Lord is our strength. George Mueller, the great spiritual giant whose books are worth reading, they're reprinting his secret of faith, George Mueller on prayer, his two-volume autobiography, which is his letters and his teachings, he said this, this man who had such faith and such favor with God, he said, I can't start the morning without a happy heart in Jesus. I can't face the world unless I'm rejoicing in Jesus, unless I'm happy.

If pressures are on me, if something's distracted me, I heard a minister say in a conference I spoke in in Florida last week, he said an interesting thing. He says, Satan uses weapons of mass distraction. Isn't that good? Just to distract us off of who we are in Jesus and what we have in Jesus.

So we got the position, the proper position is, he says, I'm gonna sing. No, I'm gonna be strong, my heart is fixed. You know, I could say it this way.

You know what the devil's trying to rob or has already robbed in some of our lives? Our song. Our song of praise. We can't walk down and be rejoicing.

We can't drive in a car, you know? Satan wants to work so that when Jackie's going to work, she works for the city. When she's going to work, she'll be distracted. Instead of being praising God, instead of being happy in the Lord, she'll be like, what are they doing that for? What did she say that to me for? And man, reading the newspaper, this thing is going crazy.

And the next thing you know, you're so distracted, you're not happy anymore in Jesus. You lost Jesus on the three train, right? You can't get to work, you can't find him. All right, the position is joyful praise.

My heart is fixed, I will sing. And I'm gonna be rejoicing. And in everything, give thanks.

That's the will of God for you, the Bible says. But how do you have that kind of heart? How do you keep a joyful, singing, worshipful, thankful heart all day long, with all the junk that's going on around us? How do you do that? The psalmist gives us the key. Notice what he says.

My heart is fixed, I'm gonna do this. I'm gonna sing, gonna praise God. Early in the morning, get the instruments out.

I'm gonna be singing, and I'm gonna tell other people how great he is. How do you keep that heart? And then he gives the key, and that's all I wanna say. Here's the reason.

For your love is great, higher than the heavens. And your faithfulness reaches to the skies. The two things that no one can rob from us, although Satan wants to rob, and he can rob it from us, but the thing that nobody can take from us if we're careful, is two things.

God loves you, and God will never let you down. God is love. Your love is great, it reaches higher than the heavens, and your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Those are the two things that Satan wants to rob from me and you every day. Why? Because if we can lose a consciousness, an assurance, and confidence that Christ loves me, despite my failings, then I'm in a bad position. I'm weak.

Look at the way I'm already going back and forth here. I'm weak-kneed. If he can then make me question whether God is faithful, now I'm ready for a knockout blow.

Satan will hold certain temptations back from us until he can get us distracted away from a consciousness of God's love for me and God's faithfulness to his promises, and then I'm adrift. I can be bitter, I'm upset, I'm angry. I'm up in somebody's grill about something they said to me or let me down.

I'm anxious, I'm worried, I'm not sleeping at night because I don't know if God will come through as if God doesn't exist. I know people that I counsel that have 40-minute thought patterns of worry and God never comes into their consciousness once, and they're Christians, because that's how worry can get. So the psalmist is teaching us the proper stance is joyful praise, but the only way you can maintain that is to be conscious, listen, to be conscious and live in the atmosphere of the sunshine of God's love in your soul.

He loves me, he loves me. That's what I try to provide for my grandson. He can't talk yet, he's saying a few words, but I just hold him and I want him to know and so do his parents, Levi, you're loved because that builds security and confidence.

Why do people get messed up when they get older many times, because they grew up in a house they weren't sure anyone loved them? I talked to someone a few months ago, their mother never once told them that she loved them. Not once, maybe you're like that. Maybe you grew up where, and a lot of parents do that because that's the way they were raised.

No expressions of emotion and affection. And they say now that that hinders children. In fact, when they got Levi, Levi was three months old, but because he had never been held and cuddled and was in an orphanage in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, there were signs.

He wasn't developing and all the rest because we all need to know that we're loved. And God says for you to be strong, you gotta know that I love you. But past simple, you don't know me.

Do you know how I've failed God? Do you know the ugly things I've done and said that no one knows about? No, I don't know that, I'm not interested in it, that's your business. But I know one thing, despite that, God loves you. No, no, but since I had the light, since I've been a Christian, you don't know.

No, God loves you. God is love. God loves you.

God loves you. And if the enemy can rob you of that fact, you're already in a weaker position. God loves you.

This is what Jesus tried to teach the disciples at the Last Supper. He said to them in John 15, nine, as the Father has loved me, so I have loved. Whoa, think of that, wait a minute, just hit me.

As the Father loved Jesus, so have I loved you. I would say Jesus loves us. What do you think about that? What's the measuring rod? As the Father has loved me, the Son, so I have loved you.

Now what does he say? Remain in my love. What does that mean, remain in my love? It's not make sure I keep loving you. He does love us.

What remain in his love means live in the sunshine and enjoy the comfort of the consciousness that I love you, I love you, I love you. Walk down the street just knowing he loves me today. He loves me today.

You say, Pastor Simple, I know you, I don't see that much lovable. I know, but he loves me. How many are so happy he loves us? Lift, lift your hands.

He loves us. He loves me. He loves me.

Now, he says, now remain in my love. What good is it if Jesus loves me if I'm not rejoicing in it and I'm not conscious and the devil fools me and says he hates you and he's gonna whack you over the head for all the failings in your life? What kind of life is that? Here he loves me and I've been twisted into a position, I believe the lie that he's against me. He's not against me.

He's for me. The Bible says to us in Romans 5a, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God commended his love toward us that while we were yet sinners, that means before you ever lifted your hands to worship him when you were using his name in vain and saying, for Christ's sake, get out of my face, he was loving you though you were cursing and violating all his commands and me too.

Now that we're his children, do you think he loves us less? No, but Satan wants to take that from us. I've lived many days not loved, feeling loved by God. I had one of the best speakers in America at one time, evangelist, a great preacher in my office in the other building years ago and he just turned to me and he said, I'll be honest with you, I don't wanna go out, I don't want you to introduce me.

I'm right now in just such condemnation, I don't feel God loves me. And my heart almost dropped. But see, these are battles we all fight.

Anybody ever fight that battle? Anyone ever have the devil tell you that God doesn't love you? Come on, come on, all right? Now, Jude in the book, this is a half-brother of our Lord, like James who wrote the book of James. Jude said in verse 21, he says, keep yourself in what? As you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Keep yourself in God's love.

What does that mean, keep myself in God's love? God always loves me, God is love, but keeping yourself in it means maintain the consciousness and assurance, remember it so that it'll keep you singing and it'll keep you in proper position. He loves me. Now, here's what will rob us of that.

Let me give you three things. First of all, the one that's the most important. If we're living with known sin, if we're practicing a sin, the clouds will block the fact that he loves us.

Many Christians are living with very little consciousness of God's love, although God loves them, and he might have to chasten them to get their attention, but why they're not enjoying the sense of his love is there's unconfessed sin in their life. In other words, they have some attitude or they're practicing something or they're going back and again and planning and embracing the pornography or the hate or the prejudice against minorities or minority prejudice against whites or lying on the job or robbing the government with the income tax. They're practicing something that is against God.

Now, a cloud forms over you and you can't see the sun and enjoy it. If God shined his love down on you and you felt his love while you were in sin, he would actually be encouraging you to sin more. Like, you're in sin, now let me help you get stronger in it by just showering you with a consciousness of my love.

So what God does, have we not all experienced it? I never got any big amens this morning at nine. I probably won't get any now, but it is what it is. How many of us have experienced a withdrawal of a sense of God's love and presence in our life? And you go, ooh.

Have you ever been warned by the Holy Spirit not to say something in a conversation? And you say it anyway? And you look at your mouth like, what do you have a mind of your own? What are you doing? And the moment you say it, there's an adjustment that you feel inside. How many know what I'm talking about? Just lift your hand. Does God stop loving us? No, he's love.

Do we miss the blessing of his consciousness of his love? Yeah. So if you're here today and you got something going on that's, quote, in secret, there's no secrets to God. There's no secret word, no secret phone call, no secret Facebook, there's no secret, there's nothing secret to God.

So what we have to do is confess that sin and say, Lord, I am not gonna miss out on the sunshine of your love for me. And to show his love, many times, God will get right up close with us with a knife. Oh no, pastors, come on, God is love, he doesn't use a knife.

Doctors are good to us, too, and they cut out cancers. I mean, what if a person went in for surgery for cancer and they were wheeled in and before they put him to sleep, doctors got the knives and they go, whoa, whoa, whoa, I signed up for operation, I didn't know you were gonna use a knife on me. I thought you cared for me, why would you cut into my skin? You had to get out something that could kill you.

Maybe you're here today and God's knife is being applied right while I'm speaking, you're feeling uncomfortable because you know if everything were laid out in the open, you'd be embarrassed and run out of the building. I'm not talking about confessed sin, we all fall short of the glory of God, but once we confess it, it's not only forgiven, it's removed as far as the east from the west from us. But things we get trapped up into, an improper relationship with somebody.

Then you lose all sense of God's love. This is why when Christians backslide, they're the most miserable people. To me, a backslidden Christian I know from my own life, they're more miserable than a person who's an unbeliever, never been born again.

Because a believer, an unbeliever who's never been born again, they don't know anything and they're just rolling through life trying to fill that void inside of them. But once you know the peace of God and once the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you and then when you start to practice something against God's word, whoa, all the sirens go off. And you either get it right or you quiet the voices and then you harden your conscience and the next thing you know, the worst, you won't hear anymore.

He'll be knocking and you won't even hear. So that's number one. Keep yourselves in the love of God.

Confess everything he convicts you of. Never justify yourself. Just say, God, my bad.

The minute you blame somebody else, you're getting off the hook. You're gonna miss the blessing. Number two, even after you confess the sin, months and years later, sometimes the enemy will come and try to rob you of that consciousness of God's love.

You know how he does it? Through something the Bible calls condemnation or accusation that leads to condemnation. To feel condemned is to feel guilty and beat down by the enemy. And he impersonates the Holy Spirit so he doesn't come and say, I'm the devil, I'm trying to bring you down.

No, he comes like the Holy Spirit and he impersonates the Holy Spirit and he goes, hey, don't you know what God's word says? Remember what you did nine months ago? I know, but I confess that I knew I was wrong. I wept tears over that. Hey, you think you're a little tears and a little sentence? God is holy and

you're not what you make yourself out to be.

What if people knew about what you said or did and now you're gonna have no sense of God's love. Now, now, now condemnation comes in, accusations come in. You know, my friend David Berkowitz, the son of Sam, the serial killer, from back in the 70s, he killed at least nine people, shot them, or seven, nine, something like that.

And we got to be friends after he became a Christian. He's one of the most godly people that I know right now, which is, you talk about a trophy of God's grace. So he used to call me every Friday and we used to talk and then I went up and met him with my wife, spent a few hours with him.

My mom has met him, went up there, Sullivan Correctional Facility. And he told me one time that even after he was saved, well, when he got saved, he cried for, I think he told me, three months. Because when the light came in of Jesus and he realized what he had done, he just wept for three months.

Just almost couldn't stop. And he would tell me sometimes, pray for me, pastor. This is years now later, he's serving the Lord.

He said, because the enemy still tries to come in and say, they'll never forget what you did. You're a murderer, which he is. But by the miracle of God's grace, he is a forgiven, cleansed, born-again Christian child of the living God.

Do you believe that? Come on, if you believe that, put your hands together with me. So the enemy, the enemy will come into his mind and attack him and tell him that and he would say, pray for me, because sometimes I have battles with condemnation. The devil is called the accuser of the brothers and sisters in the Bible and you know what that means? He accuses us of stuff we did, even though God forgave us.

Why does he accuse us? Because the minute you look inward and feel condemned, you've lost all sense of God's love. Now you can't abide in that sunshine. One last thing on this.

Another way beside unconfessed sin and giving into condemnation accusations, if you've grown up in a house or you live in a house right now, and I wanna get very straight with you. If you live someplace where people hate you, if you live on a job where someone is nasty to you, if you had a mother and father who treated you like dirt, years ago I was talking to a man in our church who told me the first 15 years of his life, all his father ever said to him, all his father ever said, never once I love you, never put his arm around him, just said, you're stupid and you'll never amount to anything. Now you had that for 15 years, then you try to sense and live with the thing that God loves me when your own father has thrown you to the dogs, right? If you're here today and you live in a house where your spouse, maybe an unbeliever, uses vile language, curses you, maybe even abuses you, if you're in a place around prejudice, whatever race you are, and people give you ugly looks, you know, I'd rather get punched than get an ugly look.

Anybody here with me? I've had some looks that if looks could kill, they would've had my funeral years ago, right? How about you? How many know what an ugly look can do to you, right? Somebody, but here's the thing, you can't give into that because that's Satan trying to use that to take away, he loves me. I'm telling you, I don't care how nasty they are, God loves you. I don't care who it is in your family that's saying ugly things, God loves you.

Resist the devil, don't believe that, don't give into that, God loves you. I don't care what you've done, where you've been, you're a believer today, God loves you. If you're not a believer, God loves you, he's

trying to call you in to the ark of safety, wants you to receive Christ as your savior, but God loves you, and many times when you're around that pressure of anger, animosity, hate, gossip, just someone trying to bury you.

I talk to people, they live close to someone who's trying to actually kill them, emotionally, mentally. Just know this, God knows you better than anyone else and he's perfectly holy, and yet he loves you. So when someone tries to convince you you're good for nothing, you don't have to listen to them, God's verdict on you is this, you're not what you ought to be yet, but you're not what you used to be, and I love you.

God is saying to us, I love you. Come on, say it out loud, God loves me. Say it out loud, God loves me.

I said say it out loud while you clap, God loves me. God loves me, God loves me. I don't care who doesn't love me or doesn't love you, God loves me, that trumps everything.

God loves me. Someone will say, oh, I see through you, that's why I don't like you. Well, God sees everything and he still loves us.

Sees everything. So to be in that proper position of joyful praise, we gotta live consciously every day, we gotta maintain, keep yourself in the love of God. He loves me.

Resist the devil when he tries to tell you it's not true. Satan, what does that mean, resist the devil? It doesn't mean physically resist him, it means in your heart, in your spirit, you gotta get out of here, you're a liar. You ever tell Satan he's a liar out loud? Luther one time, Martin Luther had a battle so real, Satan, he felt his presence in where he was writing a commentary, I think, on part of the Bible or translating the Bible into German, which they didn't have in German language, the Bible, that he took his inkwell that he was using and he threw it at the door because he felt Satan over there but that's not gonna resist the devil.

Resist the devil by speaking the word of God. Satan, you're a liar. Christ died for me, my sins are gone.

Don't bring up stuff I did, I'll bring up stuff you did back in the Garden of Eden and a lot of other times. Don't talk to me about where I'm going, I'm telling you where you're going now. Come on, let's put our hands together, we can speak those words.

Last thought, not only is your love higher than the heavens but your faithfulness reaches to the skies. What does God is faithful mean? It means God will always keep his word. Every promise, God will fulfill and that's what keeps you joyfully praising God every day.

He loves me and he will never fail me. Whoa, now I can face the day. Yeah, but you got a lot of stuff you have to face.

Yeah, but he loves me and he will never fail me. And I wanna just declare here in closing, whenever you're going through today, here's what God promises. I will either bring you out, there are verses where I will deliver you out or I will bring you through.

Pastor, when will he bring me out? I don't know but he will either bring you out or he will bring you through. His ways are not our ways and he wants to teach us lessons and prepare us to minister to others. So sometimes he brings us out to give us a testimony, sometimes he lets us go through it but we come out praising God on the victory side and we've had iron put in our souls and we've learned lessons that he wanted to teach us but either he will pull me out of it or he will bring me through it but he will never fail.

God cannot fail. How blessed is the man or woman who puts their trust in God. They'll never be ashamed.

People will disappoint you, church will disappoint you, a pastor will disappoint, someone visited a few weeks ago from another church, wanted to fill my ear with, I go to this church and the people have let me down and they're all down and I said, churches will always let you down, they're not Jesus. Keeping our eyes on Jesus, the author, finisher of our faith, let's pray. God, all the agitation that the enemy wants to bring into our lives is to take away our stance of joyful praise.

We have to be happy in you, God. I have to be happy today and if I wake up tomorrow, you have to give me a joyful spirit and you have to enable me to be praising you so that through all the ups and downs of every day and all the vicissitudes of life that I can maintain the posture of he loves me, he will never fail me. He said he'll never leave me, he's gonna work this thing out for my good.

Without that God, we've all experienced terrible times of unbelief, anxiety, we get bitter, we blame people, we get crazy, we go crazy and we wanna confess that to you. Now we understand Satan's devices. He wants to take away a consciousness of your love and he wants to take away the security that you are faithful so that we can just rest.

And God, now I ask you to heal the agitation that's in people's minds here today. We're gonna just claim and receive your peace by saying in our heart, he loves me. Jesus, you love me.

You love me. Jim Cymbala, you love me. And I want my friends, Lord, to be able to say their name.

He loves me and he will never fail me as I trust him. He is faithful. Every promise he made will come to pass.

Not the way I envisioned it, not in my timing, but he has never failed one person who ever trusted him.

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