

(Faith Community Chapel) Remain Steadfast

by Terrill Yoder

Terrill Yoder emphasizes the importance of remaining steadfast and unmovable in faith amidst societal changes and influences.

Duration: 37:05

Scripture: Matthew 21:38, Colossians 2:4-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:1, Hebrews 3:14, 2 Peter 1:8

Topics: "Faith Foundations", "Steadfast Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of building our lives on the teachings of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that it is not enough to simply hear the words of Jesus, but we must also put them into practice. The preacher warns that if we build our lives on anything other than Jesus Christ, our foundation will not stand when faced with trials and challenges. He encourages believers to be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, reminding them that their labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Transcript

As we are in our society, influenced by many things, I think we are in the church as well today in America. And we tend to perhaps not be as stable or as unchanging in a lot of areas as we used to be. Let me give you some examples.

And I'm not saying that these are wrong in and of themselves, but it does tend to affect how we view life in general. For instance, if you would go back, say, 50 years ago, and you would find some man, and you would find out what his occupation was, generally it didn't change much in life. Whatever he started out as, that's what he was.

And even many times if he worked for someone, he may put in 40, 50 years working at one place, especially 25 and 30 was not uncommon. I'm not saying you can't change jobs or occupations. I'm just stating how we tend to do things today.

Years ago, if someone bought a property, once they actually owned a house of their own, generally lived in that place for years. They didn't buy and sell their house as much like we do today. We tend to move more.

Another example, and sometimes you know you have to get on things like sports before some people put it all together, so we'll give one there. If you go back 50 years ago and find a baseball player, generally they would stick with a team much longer than they do now. Now, if you come to me after the service and you've got a whole list of baseball players that have been on one team since they started, I'm going to start asking you some questions about the Scripture, see if you know as much about that.

But it doesn't happen much anymore. They get traded all around. It's just we're more mobile, so things change more.

I'm afraid we tend to take our faith a little too much the same way. We tend to change. Not that there isn't a time to change and grow, or if there are things wrong, we need to change it.

I'd like if you would turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15 and want to look at the very last verse of that chapter, verse 58 of 1 Corinthians 15. Paul talks in this chapter. It's the great resurrection chapter, as you probably well know, and he goes on and he talks about the resurrection.

And he's excited about the resurrection, as I think we all should be and probably are, and he's focused on the resurrection. And after getting done with this whole proclamation of the resurrection, at the end of verse 54, he begins like this, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ. He talks about there, he says, Death is swallowed up, there's victory, and he gives you victory, only one way, through Jesus Christ. And then he says, because of all of that, and that's why that word therefore is in the first verse, or the first word of verse 54, Therefore, my beloved brethren, brethren, they were saved people.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Why? For as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. That's a wonderful blessing.

We have victory through Christ, and our labor isn't in vain, but he says three things in there I'd like to look at this morning. Steadfast, unmovable, and abounding. Are you steadfast this morning? Are you steadfast? Well, let's take a look at another verse over, and we're going to look at a lot of scriptures this morning.

Let's turn over a few pages in your Bible to Colossians chapter 1. And the same Greek word is used in Colossians chapter 1 to help us understand maybe the idea of steadfastness. I believe one of the things that is a hindrance to us today, and one reason we tend to see people swaying back and forth, and I don't know if we'll look at it, if we'll look it up and take a closer look at the reference this morning we made, depends on the time, but in James chapter 1 it talks about a man who is unstable in all his ways. He asks for faith, but he really doesn't have faith that he's going to get, or he asks for wisdom.

He really doesn't have the faith to know for sure if he's going to get it or not, and he's unstable and he's wavering, and it talks about he's kind of two-faced and so forth, and he's unstable in all his ways. He is blowing about like a wave of the sea, and we see a lot of that today. And I think part of it has to do with the fact that we don't really know for sure what we believe, and I'm talking now about core doctrines of the Bible.

And so we hear, and we are so influenced today, just because of the nature of our society, we hear so many things from so many people with regard to Christianity, and so one week we're kind of over here and

we believe this, and the next week we're kind of over here because we heard somebody else in the meantime, and then we're kind of over there because someone else comes along, and we're not stable. This verse says in Colossians 1, we'll look actually at verses 21, 22, and 23. It says, And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight.

If you continue in the faith grounded and settled. That word settled there is the same Greek word as it is back here when it talks about being steadfast. Settled.

Settled. Not all stirred up, but settled in what we believe, and what we are doing, and what our faith. Settled in it.

It's interesting again that he talks here about the fact you were alienated, you were reconciled, and then he says, if you continue in the faith settled. Not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I have called and made a minister. So he's saying here to be settled and continue in the faith.

Don't be moved away from it. Don't take on some other thing that comes along and get off on some other doctrine and some other tangent and end up losing your faith. It reminds me of the Hebrew writer when he says there, take heed brethren.

Again he's talking to brethren. He says, take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God. Take heed brethren.

Don't depart from the living God. While we're in Colossians, turn over to chapter 2. We'll take a look at verses 4 through 10 there. He said, And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

Let someone be a good speaker and enticing words, and watch the people follow. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Paul was concerned about the steadfastness of the believers.

And then he says, As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him. You're talking about being in Christ. Walk in Him.

If you're steadfast, you're going to be walking in Christ. And that's going to be your daily life, your daily walk with Him. Then he says in verse 7, And this is what I like, Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein.

And there's that word abounding, and we may reference this verse again later. Abounding therein with thanksgiving. Then he says, Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power. And I would like to take a look at this verse again where it talks here about traditions and philosophy when we get down to the idea of being unmovable. So the idea of standing fast.

Now, I know, I've met some people, and you probably have too, that are standing fast on things they ought not to. How does it say that, I forget now, I hadn't thought about this until I was standing here, about the idea of some Christians that are like concrete, all mixed up and unchangeable, or all mixed up and

solidified or fixed or something. In other words, you can't do anything with them.

Let's go back to our text and move on here to the idea of being unmovable. As a matter of fact, I'm going to have you go right on back to Matthew, chapter 7, a very familiar passage. And the children here could probably tell us this story as well.

But I would like to turn and read it for just a couple of pieces out of it that we can take a look at it. It's the story of the two foundations. Little children sing that song about building on the rock and so forth.

In Matthew, chapter 7, verse 24, he says, Therefore, whosoever heareth these things of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And I want to stop right there for a second. As I think about being unmovable, something that is unmovable has to have a sure foundation and footer.

And if you forget everything else this morning, remember the fact that if you're going to build on something, make sure it is on Jesus Christ, the rock. If you begin to build on anything else, your structure will not stand. It will not stand.

And so he says here, in verse 25, And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, and it fell not. For it was founded upon a rock. And whosoever heareth these things of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand.

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. A couple things I would like to think about here with regard to this passage, and that is when he says, For whosoever heareth these things of mine, and then he says something else, and doeth them, don't tell me that you are on the rock of Jesus Christ if you are not doing the things he has said to do. He said, if you have heareth these things of mine, and you do them, you are building your house on a rock.

We can go out in the yard and scrape a little dirt back and build a house, or build a garage or something. And there was someone in our area that did that. They built their garage that way.

I'm not sure how it's doing now, but I'm assuming I can tell you, at least in the long run, what's going to happen. But you can do that and make it appear that you're building on the rock. But you're not.

And you're not building on the rock if you are not doing the things. Now, I would also like to caution us that we don't say, well, this was stated in the end of the Sermon on the Mount, so the only things that I really have to do are the things preceding in these chapters 5, 6, and 7. Anytime we begin to separate the living word, Jesus Christ, from the spoken word, and the written word, the Bible, we're walking in mire, and we won't get very far. The written word and the living word are, in a sense, one and the same.

Now, yes, you can separate it out to a certain extent, but this book is inspired by the Holy Ghost, written by the Holy Ghost, and you better not try to start splitting up Christ and the Holy Spirit. You understand where I'm coming from? Yes, in the Trinity there is some separation, as we understand it, but don't try to start separating it up and dividing it and saying, well, I don't have to obey this part of the word because it wasn't something that Jesus spoke. That will get you in trouble every time.

I know people do that. People within the Mennonite circles do that. That's how I know that, and so be careful about that.

For one thing, this is just totally related to this, maybe, not the message so much, but if we're going to say, well, we're only going to follow the things that Jesus Himself spoke, well, you're going to have problems, maybe, figuring out what that was because, as far as I know, Jesus never took a pen and paper and wrote down the things that He spoke, and that was before they invented tape recorders, and so you don't know outside of what the Spirit inspired these writers to write as to what He actually spoke verbally. I think most of us know, and if we don't, we can get in the Word and find out what His commandments are and what He expects of us. The other thing on this portion I would like to look at, and the last verse, I'm sure you've studied this yourself, but it says, those that didn't do this, when the winds came, when the floods came, the house fell, and great was the fall of it.

It didn't just crumble a little bit, and that tells me that many people build quite a structure on sand, but it will crumble eventually. It is not unmovable. You build on Christ, and you can be unmovable as long as you continue to build on that.

I like how the psalmist says that the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God and my strength in whom I will trust, and that pretty well sums it up from that standpoint. Turn back with me to Ephesians. Like I said, we're going to look at a number of verses this morning.

Ephesians 2, verse 20. As we think about this foundation and focusing on the fact that it is Christ, He also used men to help Him build a structure for us to build upon as the church. He says here, in verse 20, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, and He allowed the prophets and the apostles to write His word, and then we build upon that as a church. We build upon that word. Now, I mentioned the fact that in Colossians 2, verse 8, let's turn back to that again.

He says here, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men and after the rudiments or the principles of the world, and not after Christ. If you begin to build your theology, or your life, or your doctrine, or your teaching, or whatever, on any of these things, you will not be unmovable. For instance, He says here, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy.

We can have a lot of good philosophy. There are a lot of philosophers that have shaped the world, the entire world. Many of the Greek philosophers have done that.

We can bring philosophy and psychology and all of that kind of thing into the church, but it's not the sure foundation. Then He says, vain deceit. The kind of things that people are out to deceive others with.

There's a lot of vain deceit within Christendom today. I'm here to tell you, there's a lot there. What about after the tradition of men? Now, maybe that's one that affects us as Anabaptist believers a little more.

Do we build our foundation upon tradition? Well, here's an interesting verse. Turn on a few pages. Keep your thumb here in this one and turn on a few pages to 2 Thessalonians.

Chapter 2, verse 15, I believe it is. It would help if I'd be in 2 Thessalonians myself. There it is.

He says here, and he uses some of the same words we used in the other verse. He says, Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle, or our letters. We discern between the traditions that we need to stand fast and accept and those that we

don't.

And that can become quite an issue. As a matter of fact, I have found that those, and I'm talking out of experience with a young couple just recently, that left a church over in our area that had a lot of rules and regulations that maybe they didn't have the Scripture to back it up. It had been built upon attitude for many years.

And when we sat down and visited with them, because it looked there for a while like maybe they would come to a good, clear understanding, we talked about some things like the headship veiling and divorce and remarriage and some other things like that. And he was struggling with, and he called them more than once, traditions. Now perhaps the application and the way it is applied may sometimes be somewhat traditional.

But the fact that God commands it is not a tradition. It's in the word of God. And you can't just throw it out and say it's a tradition.

And so it's important that we begin to understand that we cannot build a foundation upon maybe sometimes the way we apply the Scripture. And then sometimes through application we begin to build traditions that then become doctrines of men. And we say, well, if you don't do it exactly like this, then you're lost.

And that's not right. And so Paul was concerned about that. And basically the word tradition does get translated different ways in the New Testament.

It can also be sometimes teaching in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 where he talks about then and goes on with some of the doctrines we hold close. He says ordinances that I delivered. It's the same Greek word for traditions.

We sometimes run so fast from the word traditions that if we do that we might run right on past 1 Corinthians 11 too. And some people do that. We shouldn't.

So there is a balance there to understand is this something, is this a teaching and a tradition that is indeed based upon God's word or is it something that has been invented by man and does not dare be, shall we say, demanded of others when it comes to our faith. And there's a lot of things that go into that. And we don't have time this morning to deal with all of that.

And then we go on and he says that after the principles of this world or the rudiments of this world we cannot base a foundation upon that. A lot of people build their house upon themselves and their own desires upon self. Everything they build is upon what makes me feel good, my own flesh and upon self.

And that will crumble as well. 2 Timothy 2 verse 19 says Nevertheless the foundation of God stand assure having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are his and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Depart from iniquity.

We think about being unmovable. You know, we talked a little bit here about Bill Miller this morning. And Bill Miller was an inspiration to me.

And he gave me a title one time soon after I was ordained out in Illinois at a place where I had a message. I didn't think anybody would be here that would remember because I wasn't going to say what it was. And

I'm still not going to.

So if I get that, I know who said it. He's talked to me about that a couple times since and has encouraged me to hold on and keep on. We had the privilege the last couple of years since he's been at Greencroft to have him there at Salem a number of times on a Sunday morning because we have a bus that goes to Greencroft and picks up some of our members and some others that have moved in there or whatever that want to come to church.

And so we go and pick him up. And his family was discouraging him from driving of which he didn't quite obey or he wouldn't have had his accident. So he would come to church.

And it was a privilege to have him there not only because of the fact that he helped keep us a little more alive and on our toes praising the Lord as he would but just as an encourager and so forth. I might say this totally aside from the message with regard to his accident. He told Cindy and I here recently he said my family doesn't want me to drive.

They told me I'm not supposed to drive anymore. He said they don't want me to drive until I have a bad accident. He said well I told them I don't want to have a good one either.

But he did have one. Well, one thing about it he didn't have to get I don't know how old he would have had to get to lose his mind or get feeble but he didn't have to go through that. I think many of us would have loved to have seen just how long Bill would live and preach the gospel at the same time.

He was able to go reasonably quickly. So we don't want to question God's wisdom and all of that and his either for driving. It's hard for any of us to give up driving I guess even if we are 96.

But in saying all of that about him it's good to see men that remain steadfast and unmovable for years. His family yesterday at the funeral and I don't know his family that well but it was somewhat disappointing to see where the family has gone. There was some comment made about the fact that the family obviously loved him very much and they had a lot of good to say about him but there was some mention made about sometimes we have to recognize that grandpa was still a sinner saved like the rest of them which he was but it had reference to the idea of sometimes he could be kind of critical of the family when they weren't following the scripture like he was or like he believed it should be.

When I looked at some of the family I thought I think I would have been a little critical myself. I was encouraged in a sense to hear that to know that Bill Miller wasn't afraid to even tell his family sometimes it's not according to the word you're not doing it according to the word. I don't know how he said it maybe he did come across in a critical way.

I don't know. I kind of doubt it. I think he was just saying it like it was.

And so he was steadfast is what I'm trying to say. Steadfast. He didn't get moved.

So many times I see people who are moved off of their footing and foundation because someone in the family is over here or over there. So then they become moved off. And that's never good.

Turn with me to Hebrews. I'd like to look at the fact that sometimes if you've got a concordance or a computer or something that you could do this look up all the verses where it says to hold fast. As we're thinking about this idea of being unmovable.

To hold fast. You'll find a number of verses. I'd like to look at a few this morning just in Hebrews.

So turn to Hebrews chapter 3 to begin with. As we think about the idea of holding fast and there is one verse and I don't think we dare translate the others all according to this verse. That gets dangerous.

I would caution you on that. Never take one verse out of the Bible that maybe you don't understand and maybe no one else seems to either and build a whole theology on it and throw out other scriptures with it. That's dangerous.

But I think this will help us a little bit. Understanding this idea of holding fast. The Greek word that is translated there to hold fast if you go back and we won't turn to it right now but to Matthew 21-38 the same word is translated seize.

To seize something. And I like that. I think it helps us understand the idea of what holding fast is.

To get a hold of something. To grip it. Tenaciously you see.

That we hold fast. And the writer of Hebrews uses this a number of times in his gospel. We are going to look at several here.

He says in Hebrews 3-6 But Christ as a son over his house whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the whole firm unto the end. You see that? He says we are part of Christ's house. We are part of the church.

We are part of this group. But then he says if we hold fast the confidence and that word confidence there can mean our conversion and our profession. We hold fast to that.

But he says we are part of that if we hold fast firm unto the end. Paul talks about the fact that lest I preach the gospel and in a sense I get I help the Lord to save many other people and I help you to get on the right footing. But I myself be a castaway.

Because I don't hold firm unto the end. Like he says here. So the encouragement is to hold fast.

To hold firm. Don't throw out the things that you know are scriptural and that you should be believing and standing firm on. But hold fast unto the end.

Over here in the same chapter we go down to verse 14. And this follows right after that verse I mentioned earlier about take heed brethren. Maybe we will just read that starting at verse 12.

Take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. And I would stop right now and say there is a difference. The way it certainly appears in Scripture a difference between unbelief and disbelief.

Unbelief is that lack of faith and that just kind of wavering and questioning God and so forth and takes you into an area. Disbelief is when you say I don't believe there is a God. I have heard some people say it like this.

Disbelief is saying no with your head and your heart. And unbelief is saying yes with your head and not with your heart. And belief is saying yes with both.

And so that might help us here a little bit. Verse 13 says but exhort one another daily while it is called to day lest any of you be heartened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

Paul has said today if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation. We will stop reading there. So again he is talking about holding on unto the end.

Turn over in Hebrews 10 verse 23. He says let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. And one reason is because it says for he is faithful that promised.

We have been talking about these promises and we go clear back to our text that we started with in 1 Corinthians 15 there. He gives all this promise of the resurrection and builds upon that and then he gives this holding fast and holding firm because of those promises. Well I would ask you this morning and I ask myself what are we holding on to? What are you holding on to? What are you holding on to in life? Are you holding on to self? Are you holding on to your own desires? Are you holding on to sin? Or are you holding on to that rock that will make you unmovable? Always abounding.

I would like to look this morning at the idea now of abounding as we go back and I said we were going to look at the idea of being unmovable and steadfast and abounding. Now Ruth threw a number of verses here and you don't have to turn to these because I took the time to get them on paper here. True faith brings works.

Did you know that? True faith brings works. He says there in our text always abounding in the work. Always abounding.

Abounding. And so as we think about that let's look at some of these things that we can abound in. Romans 5.20 says Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound but where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

That's not the only place that talks about grace abounding. In 2 Corinthians 8.7 it says Therefore as ye abound in everything in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all diligence and in your love to us see that you abound in this grace also. If we are not abounding in the grace that did much more abound we will not stand steadfast.

We will not be unmovable. It is only through the grace of God. 2 Corinthians 9.8 says And God is able to make all grace abound toward you not toward someone else but toward you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work.

It goes right along with our verse this morning. Grace abounding toward you that you can abound to every good work. If you have no good work in your life I would question whether or not you have God's grace abounding in your life.

And so the grace and that go together. So many times we see people wanting to somehow put grace and faith and good works in separate piles and somehow make them opposed to each other. But they all flow together in God's plan.

Colossians 2.7 says Rooted and built up in him and we looked at this earlier and established in the faith as ye have been taught abounding therein with thanksgiving. We abound with thanksgiving. Romans 5.13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope through the

power of the Holy Ghost.

Philippians 1.9-10 And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and in all judgment that ye may approve things that are excellent that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 3.12-13 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men even as we do toward you. To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God.

Even our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints there is a correlation between abounding in grace good works and holiness before God. And it states it there. 1 Thessalonians 4.1 says Furthermore then we beseech you brethren and exhort you by the Lord Jesus that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God so ye would abound more and more for ye know that the commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus Christ and 2 Peter 1.8 says for if these things be in you and abound they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't know exactly where each of you are at in your Christian walk. It's good to come here and see people here that I've not met before. That's encouraging.

So I don't know where all of you are at but I would tell you this. If we go back to this verse if you expect to be part of the resurrection that is going to be with Christ we believe in the resurrection of the ungodly as well for damnation. I believe you need to be steadfast unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord because we know that our labor in him is not in vain.

Let's pray. Our great God and Heavenly Father this morning I just want to thank you for the firm foundation you have given us. Lord help us to be steadfast and to be planted upon Jesus Christ.

Lord I just pray that you would be now with each one that is here this morning with this congregation. Lord I just pray that you would continue to bless them and strengthen them and encourage them. Lord that your grace would abound toward them and Lord that they would abound in love toward one another.

Lord we just pray that you would help us to be witnesses of you wherever we go as we go from here. Help us Lord to challenge others to serve you. Lord I pray too that you would grant your safety to each one as we travel home today.

Lord that you would just be in us and us in you. Help us Lord show us where we need to grow in you or we need to grow in grace. Lord where we need to abound more in you.

Help us Lord to see it and see it clearly. In Jesus name I pray.

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