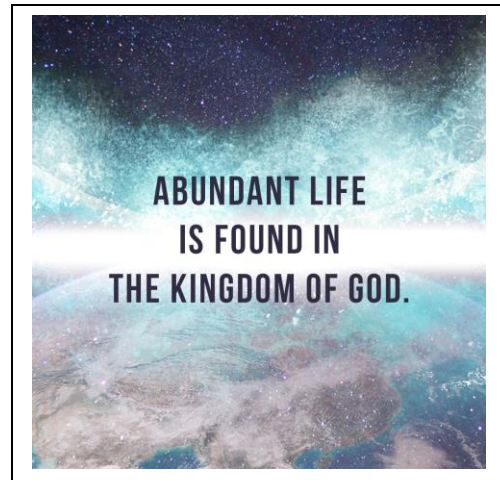


**Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Collide Series: Stand Firm**

**Scripture:** Colossians 2:8–23

**Illustration:** Have you ever been out on a hike or a walk and gone through a “rough patch.” It could be soft sand that you seem to sink into with each step; or mud and slush and your feet keep sliding around or maybe a path that has loose rocks and you must test each step to ensure you don’t twist your ankle – you are constantly seeking solid ground.



These types of adventures are like walking through life trying to depend on worldly wisdom. You’re never quite sure you’re going to land on solid ground as principles and values are constantly shifting. However, what we learn from Jesus is to trust in the eternally consistent teachings of scripture.

True wisdom is not a man-made philosophy, but the revealed secret of God in Christ, who indwells those who receive Him. This week, we are beginning a new sermon series called “Collide.” Since the beginning, the Christian faith has been on a collision course with the culture around us. The values, priorities and kingdom of the world are not seeking the same things as the kingdom of God.

Paul was arguing against all the ideologies of the culture in which Colosse was placed. They were being swayed to believe that Christ was not enough. Paul didn't come with "clever words." We don't win people to Christ by our rhetoric or lofty arguments or public speaking skills. Paul says, the actual message of the gospel seems foolish. The only way to heaven is through a man who lived in Palestine 2,000 years ago and died by Roman execution? Are you kidding me?

Paul says all the philosophies and "expert" thinkers got it wrong. In the battle between every other religious or philosophical construct they lose and Jesus wins. Human thought will never lead to the gospel, so we need godly thought to get us there.

These false teachers were claiming that God was far away and could only be approached through various levels of angels. They taught that people had to worship angels to reach God, but the Bible teaches that angels are God's servants, and He forbids worshipping them.

**How do you see God – as a distant being, almost beyond reach?**

If so, you are allowing a gap in between and trying to fill it with worldly beliefs and pagan practices – seeking some sort of intermediary, failing to realize Jesus' position as Lord of creation and head of the Church.

**How do we know when something we hear is worldly?**

**How do we know when something we hear is Godly?**

**How do we know when we are being led astray, or worse, being held captive by worldly principles and teachings?**

**This morning, I will focus on 3 points.**

**Point 1: The values of the world.**

You would have heard some of the following cliches from the kingdom of man. Money buys happiness: You only go around once in life so you must grab for all you can; If it feels good, do it; Man is basically good; All roads lead to God; The one who dies with the most toys wins.

Believe it or not, you probably subscribe to one or more of those values. They basically come down to: Being admired by others, avoiding pain, and pursuing pleasure. God is in the process of re-programming our minds into a different value system. But convincing us can be difficult.

Some people have the "show me" mentality. They want absolute proof that they can see, hear, taste, and touch or they want to be convinced by philosophical arguments and have every question answered to the satisfaction of their own logic.

God provided the one sign He's going to give: the cross. And God provided the one message to satisfy us: the invitation of the gospel attested to by the entirety of the Bible.

## **Point 2: The enticing nature of worldly values.**

The truth is many things and words the world tries to give us and tell us can look and sound very attractive when we see and hear them. Believe it or not, the Bible even talks about this. In 2 Timothy we read – the time will come when we will not endure sound doctrine but surround ourselves with false teachers and turn our ears from the truth. We cannot allow ourselves to be people who reject the truth in scripture just because it contradicts our lifestyle.

We humans are prideful to the core. That pride, and our efforts, have no part in what God is doing. We must be people who continuously fill our ears and minds with the only truth we can find in this world, and it is in the pages of scripture.

The Bible is full of practical life principles that enable us to live the abundant life Jesus came to bring us. And as you learn how to point out the worldly values that don't align with the kingdom of God you need to also spend energy pursuing the values that do align with the kingdom of God.

We should be different. We need to be different. Yes, it makes us stand out. It makes our former friends uncomfortable, even if we never utter a word. The simple fact that we refuse to talk and act like we used to become our very witness. The pressure is on to conform back into the world's values. We need to decide whether we want to continue to trust that what Jesus said and did was right, and if so, let Him make us appear foolish to the world so that His power

might flow through us to bring others from darkness into His marvelous light! It's not about money, power, intellect, or human accomplishment, it's about Jesus.

**Point 3: The Spirit is our guide.**

It's not enough to simply say “no” to the things and values of this world. We must take it a step further and say “yes” to the things of God. Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to be a guide and a strength in this endeavor.

Jesus invites us to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us “into all truth.” Once we begin to follow God’s lead, we will be able to experience the best life possible. We will be constantly coming back to the only truth worth standing on at all, one that will never lead us astray.

It takes devotion and effort to learn to walk in step with the Spirit as you follow the teachings of scripture. There will always be temptations to veer off the path and go adventuring through the “rough patches.” But again, those temptations are only temporary, much like the rewards they promise. Abundant life is found in the kingdom of God. And the Holy Spirit was given as a gift to help lead and guide the way.

**Conclusion:**

The world is trying to draw you into values that are inconsistent, seductive, and at worst...*destructive*. But today, as we begin this new series, we all can invite the Spirit of God to guide us into scriptural truth...the one thing we can stand on, knowing it will remain firm.

The first step is to call out and recognize any false truths or principles you may believe in.

The next step is admitting how enticing and attractive some of these principles are. It does you no good to pretend like they aren't, but it also does no good to think we can simply avoid the pervasive false teaching that is rampant in the world simply because we don't like it. And finally, we must trust in the Spirit to lead and guide us into and through the truth.

Will you choose to take a stand today, and every day, going forward?

Will you choose to trust the leading of the Spirit?

Will you make a daily commitment to scripture?