

Worth Standing For?

In light of last week's lesson on whom and what we engage, I want to begin tonight by asking you two questions. The first question is this, what and who do you defend. If someone were to talk bad about your mom, do you defend her? If someone is picking on your little brother or sister, do you defend them or go along with it? What about stuff, some of you guys love your cars. Someone keys your car, says something dumb about your car. You man up, "Ain't no one gonna mess with my car". When I was in H.S. I really didn't have a decent car (Show Picture). But it was mine, really mine. I had saved my money and bought it myself. I paid my own insurance policy, I paid my own gas. So even though it wasn't great, I took pride in it. Washed it, waxed it, even did some of the minor repairs on my own. One day I found myself in this situation at the school where I had this girlfriend (imagine that) and she had failed to mention to me that she had another boyfriend. Now this boyfriend wasn't that tough, he wasn't that big or anything. He was the kind of guy that was a punk, he'd do something to you and then run away. Some of you know people like this, in fact some of you guys are people like this. You know you are not very big, so you don't start a lot of fights. Instead you just irritate the mess out of people. We all know people like this. This guy was like that, so he's walking down the hall and he's giving me the look like he wants to fight, but he had already flicked me off that day, but did it during class so I couldn't do anything about it, so I knew he didn't want to fight. Just irritate the mess out of me. So he gives me the look and keeps going, whatever right? School ends, I go out to my car and he's standing next to it. He looks at me and proceeds to dump out a can of soda all over it. Then of course he books it. Now no lie, I was young and I was ticked. Lets put it this way, if you saw me that day you wouldn't have seen Jesus. I didn't fight the guy, never got the chance too. But to me my car was worth defending. My 87 Dodge Charger 4 cylinder hatch back with 180000 miles and a tape deck was worth defending. Some of you guys have nicer cars and your car is so worth defending to you, you'd do whatever it takes to make that kid pay. Why, because it's worth it to you, you're willing to take a stand for your car.

Some of you girls your hair is worth defending, you don't want to play any games because you might mess it up. In fact if a guy sitting behind you really wants to get on your nerves, what will he do? He'll mess with your hair. When I was in M.S. and early H.S. the girls always had their hair pulled back, like in a pony tail, but in the front they had bangs that stood up like 4-6 inches (show picture). We used to sit in class and see how many wads of paper we could stuck in their hair. Sometimes those wads of paper would stay in their hair for hours. They would never know. There was so much hair spray that they couldn't feel anything in their hair. Whenever the girls fight, what's the first thing they go for, hair and face. Why because those things are worth value to you, they know that those things are worth defending. Some of you spend hours, getting your hair and makeup ready, someone comes up to you and tells you they don't like your hair and your response is "oh, ok, thanks for opinion". NOT. It's either (dramatically) "oh why not" or it's "well your ugly too". You see your hair in how you look is worth defending to you. It's worth fighting for. What in your life is worth defending, worth taking a stand for?

The second question is this, those things and people that you would defend, that you would take a stand for, would they defend you? If someone stabbed you would your car fight for you? If someone said you were ugly, would your hair or makeup take a stand for you? What about your parents, if I were to go to your parents and tell them you were dumb. Seriously, truly how many of you think your parents would be like, "yea your right Rick, my kids dumb". Not happening. Some of them would explode, why do parents get in arguments with teachers? Nine out of ten times it's because you're worth defending to them. You are theirs, their love, sometimes you hold their hopes and dreams (even if that's not the way it should be). In a very real way you are a part of them.

You know what's insightful about that? That's how God see's us. God see's us as a part of him. We are created in His image, so he defends us, he stands up for us. When we get beat up,

(physically, emotionally, spiritually, maybe even physically) he defends us. He stands up next to us, we are worth defending to him. Listen to the words of scripture...

Isa 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. Isa 40:29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Isa 40:30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; Isa 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

You see, we all get tired and weary sometimes. In fact, I ask a lot of you how's it going and most of the time the answer is something to affect that "Man, I'm tired" or "I'm just so tired". You know what happens when we get tired. We don't act like ourselves. Some of us get jumpy, we sort of bounce from one conversation to another and can't sit still. This happens a lot at Winter Blast, it's go, go, go. So on the way home everyone crashes. Others of us, we get irritable, we don't want no one messing with us. Just give us some space. Most of us though we just chill in some sense, most of us are ok with that, but when we get so tired that we just sort of chill we really don't take seriously the things we need to. A friend comes to us when we're tired and we don't really listen, our parents tell us something and it sorts of goes through one ear and out the other. We're not ourselves. Another thing we do when we're tired is mess up more. You ever do homework at like two in the morning and get up for school the next day, look at your work and either not be able to read it or it doesn't make sense. We stumbled. When you're tired you more susceptible to temptation and sin because you're mind isn't as sharp and you don't think as straight.

As we go through tough times, as we wrestle with everyday life God can be our strength when we hope in him and not our ability to pull test answers out of mid air after two hours of sleep. The reality too, is that when we place our hope in the Lord and not our ability than we're going to go to bed earlier. If my hope is in God than I want to make sure he has my best. In fact Jesus gave his best for us, when Christ died on the cross it was his all. And when he rose again and stood in our place, my place he gave his all to defended us and stand for us. All that abuse, all the weight of all the sin was placed on Him. He stood up for us to the enemy and scripture says that "...the LORD has laid on him the iniquity (sin) of us all".

You see we spend so much time defending things, standing up for things that are secondary. If you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, Jesus defends you; he takes a stand for you. Why wouldn't you do the same for him? I mean, it's not like he needs you to defend him. It's not like if you don't take a stand, than He can't do His job. But if you care for somebody, if you care for something you're willing, ready, and able. You even over react sometimes because you're so excited or passionate about the person or thing. Like your car or your hair, you value it so you talk about it. For some of you it's a sport, for some it's a person. Your parents, your friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, some of you it's even your brother(s) or sister(s), but what about Jesus? Is he worth talking about, are you talking about Him. What he's done, who he is. Is he worth defending, when others are talking about him, bashing him. We don't think too often about people bashing on God, but you know that whenever a person claims to be a Christian and acts totally opposite, their tearing up Jesus' reputation, their bashing him. What about when someone takes God's name in vain, we don't think too often about that. But a reality there is when someone does that, they are using their creators name as a cuss word. None of us would appreciate our names being used as a cuss word. When someone uses Jesus or God's name as a cuss word, is he worth saying something for. I'm not saying you start judging people, like "you shouldn't do that, the bible says so!" or "that's offensive to me, don't do that!" It's not really about you anyways. It's about God. Maybe it should just bother you. I mean if I walked into a room and someone is talking bad about my kids or my wife, I'm going to go through a series of emotions. Maybe I over react and I say or do something (we do that about our cars, hair, and friends) or on the other hand maybe I'm just hurt that someone would say something that mean about my

family, their mine. They are a gift to me from God, how dare anyone say anything in a mean or hurtful way concerning them. If you got a problem that's one thing, but to go tear them up that's another.

Listen to what Jesus says about those who don't have a relationship with him. I mean thing for a second. If I care about someone or something I'll either feel or say something when they are bashed or insulted, especially someone who's already stood up for me. If I don't though, I don't care, if I don't do anything than it's pretty obvious that I don't have any relationship with the person, with the thing, or with God. Jesus says this...

Mt 10:32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. Mt 10:33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

I want you to understand here, those who Jesus says disown him are not necessarily those who have a relationship with God, but rather people who are created in His image (so they are a part of Him). Jesus says that all people are worth defending; he took a stand for everyone on the cross. However not everyone chooses to believe that. I want you to picture this for a second. Jesus is dying on the cross and you're there. Jesus looks down at you and says, "I'm doing this for you, everything you've ever said, thought, and done wrong, it's all on me right now, I love you" So you are there. You are hearing this, you're watching this and you look at Jesus and say, "Um, wow, uh, you didn't have to do that, I appreciate it and all, but um, I think I'll take my chances on my own". Jesus would probably say something like, "you don't get it, you don't have a chance on your own" and then after a moment he says, "you don't really want one". You may try to go back and forth with him for a while, "I do, but not right now, I'm doing my own thing" or you may have enough guts to be honest and say "you're right, I don't, I'm going to go my way". You see it's people like that, like some of you in here who will never acknowledge God before men, he's not worth acknowledging to you. So even though he's already bought and paid for you, your life. He'll let you go and walk away from you. Disown you. Scripture tells us that even though he walks away, he continues to be faithful...

2Ti 2:11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him;
2Ti 2:12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;
2Ti 2:13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

It's tough to wrap our minds and hearts around this, but think of it this way. Have you ever let someone "borrow" something that you knew you weren't going to get back? When Becky and I were dating, we went out one night for a walk or something. She was cold, so I gave her my flannel. Now little did I know at that point that was the last night I would wear that flannel. She had it for years, but it was still mine. I had bought for it, paid for it, it was mine. But she possessed it. It's a little bit of a stretch, but because we are created in God's image, we have his flannel. We have his stamp. It's his, but it's in our possession. It's always going to be his, even if we walk away we're still going to have his image, we're still going have his flannel.

You have the image of God stamped into every aspect of your life, Christ defends you and continues to defend you. He continues to stand up for you. What and who do you stand up for, what's worth defending for you? Why are we so consumed with defending stuff that gives us so little? What are you doing with the image of God imprinted on your life, are you acknowledging it, talking about it, living it or disowning it. These are serious questions that you have to answer for yourself between you and your God or god.

Suggested Questions for Discussion

1. What and/or who do you stand for, stand up for, willing to defend?
 - a. Have they ever done any of that for you?
2. When we look at the passage in Isaiah and see those that God defends, who is it?
 - a. What does that make us?
 - b. Are you ok with that?
 - i. We have to be weak in order for God to make us strong, have you surrendered your weakness to Him?
3. What do you think it means to be created in the image of God?
 - a. What are you doing with that image?
 - b. What could you do with that image?
4. Have you ever bashed God, took his name in vain?
 - a. Have you ever watched or listened to others bash God?
 - i. What did you do about it
 - ii. What could you have done about it?
5. Personally, are you acknowledging God or Disowning Him?