

## **THE STRENGTH TO KEEP STANDING**

26 October 2025

### **Summary:**

This message explores the often-overlooked reality that miracles and spiritual breakthroughs are frequently followed by opposition and testing. Using the account of Jesus healing the man with the withered hand in Mark 3:1-6, Bruce emphasizes that while faith initiates miracles, endurance sustains them. The message challenges believers to understand that stepping forward in obedience is only the beginning and maturity comes from standing firm when circumstances, internal voices, and external opposition push back. The message addresses how both religious (Pharisees) and political (Herodians) powers opposed Jesus, illustrating that spiritual progress always attracts resistance. The core theological insight is that God doesn't just heal us; He equips us to stand in that healing through perseverance, community, and the fire of the Holy Spirit within us.

### **Key Points:**

- Every act of faith is always followed by a test of faith; miracles reveal opposition rather than remove it
- The Pharisees focused on external religious obedience while Jesus emphasized internal heart transformation
- The Herodians represented political compromise and worldly power, opposing Jesus for threatening their control
- Faith starts the miracle, but endurance sustains it. Many have enough faith to begin but not enough to continue
- Maturity means standing in the place of healing even when circumstances, memories, or others try to push us back
- The miracle begins when we stretch (obey), but it matures when we stand (persevere)
- Standing is an active posture, not passive. It means refusing to retreat to old patterns of paralysis
- We lose miracles when we focus on circumstances rather than on Christ (like Peter walking on water)
- Quiet faithfulness in small things like continuing to pray, show up, give, and hope, builds spiritual resilience
- The community of believers (IMPACTERS ministry) exists as people who stand on the other side of healing, supporting each other in perseverance
- We are all poor, weak, hidden, and hurting in some way, which is why we need each other to stand

- The goal is not just experiencing miracles but developing the maturity of perseverance to win the prize

**Scripture Reference:**

- Mark 3:1-6 (Primary passage: Jesus healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, followed by Pharisees and Herodians plotting against Him)
- Matthew 23 (Jesus' rebuke of Pharisees as hypocrites who clean the outside but are full of greed inside)
- John 16:33 ("In the world you'll have persecution, but take courage, I've conquered the world")
- Ephesians 6:13 (Taking up the whole armor of God to stand firm)
- Galatians 6:9 ("Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time if we do not give up")
- Matthew 14:22-33 (Peter walking on water, seeing the wind, and beginning to sink)
- Habakkuk (referenced regarding writing down what God has done so others can continue)

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### **SMALL GROUP GUIDE**

#### **Opening Prayer:**

Pray the IMPACTERS prayer together as a group. Begin by asking God to help each person be open to His voice and to give wisdom for the discussion ahead.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

1. Miracles are followed by opposition - When we step forward in faith, life often pushes back
2. The miracle begins when we stretch, but it matures when we stand - Healing is just the beginning; endurance sustains it
3. Every act of faith is always followed by a test of faith - Opposition after obedience doesn't mean you're doing something wrong
4. Standing is an active posture - It means refusing to retreat when life wants to push us back
5. Many people have enough faith to begin, but not enough endurance to continue - Perseverance is what builds maturity.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Have you ever experienced opposition after a breakthrough or healing in your life?
2. The message states: "The miracle begins when we stretch, but it matures when we stand." What does this mean to you?
3. Peter walked on water but began to sink when he noticed his circumstances. How do we "lose the miracle" by looking at our circumstances?
4. The message mentions voices that tell us to "sit down" - from our past, from others, from our own self-doubt. Which of these voices is loudest in your life right now?
5. "Standing means I will not go back to the old paralysis. I will not let fear rise up again." Is there an area where you've been tempted to go back to "old paralysis"? What would it look like for you to actively stand in that area?
6. The message emphasized that we remember our failures more than our successes. Why do you think this is? How can we shift our focus to see ourselves as God sees us?
7. The message says: "There are times when the only victory God asks of you is to remain standing." When have you experienced a season like this? How did you find strength to keep standing?

**Practical Applications:**

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. Identify Your Opposition

- Write down the areas where you've experienced healing or breakthrough
- List the opposition (internal or external) you're facing in maintaining that freedom
- Pray specifically about standing firm in those areas

2. Practice "Standing" Language

- When negative thoughts about your past come up, speak out loud: "I am healed. I am restored. I am made new."
- Journal about who God says you are versus who you used to be

3. Find Your Fire Community

- Reach out to 2-3 people who can help you stand when you feel weak
- Share your struggle and ask them to check in with you regularly
- Commit to being that person for someone else

4. Daily Perseverance Practice

- Each morning this week, declare one area where you will "keep standing"
- Each evening, thank God for His grace that helped you stand that day
- Notice the small victories of faithfulness

5. Study Endurance

- Read one of these passages each day and journal about what it teaches about standing firm:
  - Monday: Ephesians 6:10-18
  - Tuesday: James 1:2-4
  - Wednesday: Romans 5:3-5
  - Thursday: 2 Corinthians 4:7-10
  - Friday: Hebrews 10:35-39
  - Saturday: 1 Corinthians 15:58
  - Sunday: Philippians 4:13

**Closing Prayer:**

Father, thank you for calling us to step forward in faith. Give us the courage to stretch beyond our comfort zones, trusting in Your healing power. Help us to be a testimony of Your grace in action. In Jesus' name, Amen.