

# Stand Firm in Times of Opposition

*FCC Life Group Discussion Notes*

*Based on the "We Stand Firm" Series of Matthew Rogers*

*Matthew Rogers Preaching*

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## Life Group Leader:

The sermon is from **First Christian Church (FCC), Warsaw, IN**, part of the "We Stand Firm" series based on 1 Peter. The title is **Stand Firm in Times of Opposition**, drawing primarily from **1 Peter 3:8-22**. The key theme focuses on responding to opposition and suffering as exiles in the world—not with fear or retaliation—but by blessing others, being ready to share hope gently, and remaining confident in Christ's victory.

**Sermon Title:** Stand Firm in Times of Opposition

**Sermon Text:** 1 Peter 3:8-22

**Sermon Summary:** As Christians living as exiles in a world that can oppose us, we are called not to fear or repay evil but to adopt a posture of submission and blessing. Instead of fearing intimidation, we bless others, are ready to give a reason for our hope with gentleness, and stand confident because Christ's suffering and resurrection secure our future.

## Discussion Notes:

### Opening Prayer

- Pray for courage to stand firm without fear when facing opposition or unfair treatment in daily life.
- Ask God to fill the group with compassion, humility, and a readiness to bless others instead of retaliating.

### Ice Breaker

When have you experienced a situation where someone treated you unfairly or opposed you—how did you respond in the moment, and looking back, would you handle it differently now?

### Key Scripture

**1 Peter 3:14b-15 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Do not fear them or be intimidated, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

*Suggested points for prayer is given in each prayer section and are up to the discretion of the leader.*

## Sermon Summary

As exiles in a world that can be scary and oppositional, we are called to adopt a posture of submission when treated unfairly, with the goal of blessing others. Rather than fearing or repaying evil, we don't fear—instead, we bless by being ready to share our hope, doing so gently, and remaining confident in Christ's ultimate victory.

### Discussion Point 1: Be Ready

**Scripture: 1 Peter 3:15 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

...but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

**Point Summary:** Our hope is secure because Jesus has settled everything about our past and future—everything is good and secure in Him. This hope is future-oriented, rooted in the Gospel, and we should preach it to ourselves daily so we're prepared to share the reason for our hope when others notice our settled confidence.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. In one sentence, how would you describe the reason for your hope in Christ? How does knowing your future is secure free you from fear in tough situations?
2. What practical steps can you take to "preach the Gospel to yourself" every day so you're more ready to share it naturally?

### Discussion Point 2: Be Gentle

**Scripture: 1 Peter 3:16 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame.

**Point Summary:** Giving a defense (apologia) for our hope isn't about arguing or proving we're right—it's offering a well-reasoned, gentle response with respect. We share our story of hope thoughtfully, allowing the Holy Spirit to shape us inwardly so our words and actions align, even under opposition.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Think of a time when someone asked about your faith or challenged you—did you respond with gentleness and respect? What might have made the difference?
2. How can practices like BLESS (or similar everyday habits of blessing others) help us stay gentle and reverent when sharing our hope?

## Discussion Point 3: Be Confident

**Scripture: 1 Peter 3:21-22 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

**Point Summary:** Our confidence comes from Christ's suffering once for all, bringing us to God, and His resurrection and exalted position—everything is under His authority. With a settled hope, the Spirit's fruit growing in us, and trust in Jesus rather than ourselves, we can face opposition without fear and live boldly to bless others.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does reflecting on Christ's resurrection and current authority at God's right hand build your confidence when you face opposition or suffering for doing good?
2. In what areas of life do you need to trust Jesus more fully so you feel "nothing to prove and nothing to lose," freeing you to bless others?

## Wrap-Up

Peter reminds us in **1 Peter 3:14b-15** not to fear but to set Christ apart as Lord and be ready to share our hope. By being ready, gentle, and confident, we stand firm in opposition—not by fighting back, but by blessing others and trusting the One who has already secured our future.

## Challenge

This week, identify one person or situation where you might face opposition or questions about your faith. Prepare your heart by reminding yourself daily of your Gospel hope (try the GOGO acronym: God's love, Our problem, God's solution, Our response). Commit to responding with blessing, gentleness, and confidence—perhaps even share your story if the door opens. If your group is preparing for baptism or renewal, consider how publicly affirming your faith ties into this.

## Closing Prayer

- Thank God for the secure hope we have in Christ's suffering, resurrection, and authority over all things.
- Pray for opportunities this week to bless others instead of fearing or retaliating, and for gentleness and confidence in sharing the reason for our hope.

# Life Group Handout

(Separate – Print-Friendly Version for Group Members)

**Stand Firm in Times of Opposition** *First Christian Church (FCC), Warsaw, IN* (1 Peter 3:8-22 – CSB)

**Key Verse to Remember: 1 Peter 3:14b-15 (CSB)** Do not fear them or be intimidated, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

**Sermon Summary (Quick Recap):** As exiles, we don't repay evil or fear opposition—we bless instead. Be ready to share your hope, do it gently, and stay confident in Christ's victory.

## My Notes / Takeaways:

- **Be Ready:** My one-sentence reason for hope: \_\_\_\_\_  
Action step to preach the Gospel to myself daily: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- **Be Gentle:** A time I could have responded more gently: \_\_\_\_\_  
How I can use blessing practices this week: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- **Be Confident:** How Christ's resurrection builds my confidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
Area to trust Jesus more: \_\_\_\_\_

**This Week's Challenge:** Prepare for one potential opposition moment—be ready, gentle, and confident to bless. Share your story if asked!