



Bible Study

Standing Firm in Challenging Times

READ LUKE 21:5-32

This study follows the same Bible passage as the sermon outline (pages 16-17). It can be used before or after hearing the sermon. If it is used without the sermon, it may be useful for the group leader to read through the sermon outline beforehand. You may also like to read the SCAAW 2022 eight-day devotional booklet, which is enclosed with the magazine and can be ordered from barnabasaid.org/scaaw

The section headed “Digging Deeper” is for those who would like to explore the theme in more depth.

1. What “signs of the times” mentioned in the passage do you notice in the world today?
2. Consider the opposite tendencies of faithless despair and mindless determination not to believe anything bad could happen to us. When have you leant too far in either direction? How have you sought to counter this tendency?
3. We are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). What does that mean to you? As someone whose real home is in heaven, while nation rises up against nation (v.10), what should be our response?
4. Have there been times when trying to be a good citizen of your own nation has brought you into conflict with your primary citizenship, belonging to God’s kingdom? How have you resolved/can we resolve such dilemmas?
5. What counter-cultural actions have you or other Christians taken to be salt and light in a crooked generation (Philippians 2:14)?
6. The British politician Sir Stafford Cripps (1889-1952) said that the Church should not be in politics, but urged that there should be more Christians in politics and more Christianity in politicians. What do you understand by this view? How far should Christians be engaged in politics?
7. Are there times when Christians have to disobey the law, obeying God rather than human laws? Share occasions when you have done so, or felt challenged to do so.
8. How do you imagine the disciples felt being told that some of them would be put to death (verse 16)?
9. “Everyone will hate you because of me” (verse 17). How can we ensure that any opposition or persecution we encounter is because of our faith in Jesus and not the result of any fault in us?
10. “Not a hair of your head will perish” (verse 18). How do you think the disciples felt on hearing this? How does realizing that your soul is secure change your perspective of life?
11. What important issues or causes must nevertheless be secondary to our focus on eternity? At what point should we accept injustice for ourselves for the sake of God’s Kingdom? At what point should we accept injustice for others for the sake of God’s Kingdom?
12. How can we learn to endure and stand firm (hupomone) (v.19) in all of life’s trials and not to give up?
13. How can we show steadfastness by striving to live a godly life in a corrupt and immoral world (2 Peter 1:6)?

Digging deeper

1. What other verses or passages from Scripture have helped you to a more balanced and accurate picture of suffering, where the opposite extremes of despair and overconfidence are confronted and defused?
2. What are the characteristics of false teachers? What do we need to guard against most? (Matthew 7:15-16; Ephesians 4:14; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 6:3-5; 2 Peter 2:1-3; Jude v.4)
3. “But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves” (verse 14). What causes us anxiety and worry about what will happen if or when we are persecuted, and how can we learn to trust God in these difficult situations, so that we do not worry?
4. “At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (verse 27). What images of God’s glory from Scripture do you find the most inspiring? What do we learn from each instance of His glory being manifest? (For example, Exodus 24:15-16; Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 1:26-28; Matthew 17:5; John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Revelation 21:11)