

THEME – STAND STRONG

Subject: Light in the Darkness John 12:46 (NIV)

Scripture Passage:

“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”

Introduction:

One of the strongest images of standing strong in a storm is the lighthouse. In the era before radar, satellite navigation and GPS systems, lighthouses were vital to protect ships from crashing onto rocks, shoals and shores. Building lighthouses can be considered one of man’s most noble endeavors. Since the beginning of seafaring, families and friends have lit bonfires at night to guide sailors home.

- **George Bernard Shaw** said, “I can think of no other edifice constructed by man as altruistic as a lighthouse. They were built only to serve.”
- **Evangelist D.L. Moody** commented, “Lighthouses don’t fire cannons to call attention to their shining—they just shine.”
- **Bishop J.B. Thomas**, late pastor of one of the House of God churches in Lexington, Kentucky used to say, “There’s a lighthouse on the hillside and bidden people to come on over to the lighthouse.” He called his church the **lighthouse** and it really was on a hill and on **Broadway!!** You couldn’t miss it. His former church was called the church over in the valley. I didn’t understand the meaning as a child but during my research for this lesson, it changed my perspective of what he was really saying.

Jesus used this imagery of light to describe our role in His kingdom. We are the light of the world, He said, after claiming Himself to be the true light. Therefore we function much like a lighthouse, both internally and externally.

Scripture References:

Genesis 1:1-3; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 119:105, 130; Isaiah 60:1; Matthew 5:14; 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; John 1:4, 8:12; Acts 13:47;

Biblical Applications:

1. What are the symbolic meanings of the lighthouse?

2. What feelings does a lighthouse invoke in you? (Look at a piece of art or picture of a lighthouse.)

3. Explain how you feel after reciting the following prayer?

Dear God,

I call on you to illuminate my path and guide me on my journey. As I sail the stormy seas and navigate through these challenging times I trust that all is in Divine alignment.

I trust that although I have a vision of where I want to go I cannot see clearly through my current situations on how I will get there. I have faith that all is as it should be and that I am being guided toward my destination, understanding that “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

At this moment I can see what needs to be done. I know that as long as I stay on the path, I will see clearly and find my way. I appreciate the lighthouse shining brightly.

Although things seem uncertain, I believe that hope will be revealed when the moment is right.

And so it is.

Amen

4. What words would you write for your personal prayer?

Closing:

The first design for a lighthouse is the internal function of generating light. Early lighthouses used a literal fire that had to be constantly fed and watched. Later electric lights were utilized and ultimately laser lights. But this light still has to be internally projected.

So we too as followers of Jesus project internal light, the outer expression of the inner life under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The other aspect of a modern lighthouse is that it also is an external reflector. Over the years of improvements, revolving lenses have been developed to reflect that internally generated light further into the darkness.

As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so we reflect the light of the Son in a world of darkness.

And finally, lighthouses remind us of God's love. Like the bright shining beam of a lighthouse, His love reaches out...piercing through the darkness of any storm.

References:

Blog, "*When Jesus Sends You Into the Storm*", Shannon Popkin

The Matthew Henry Commentary, Zondervan (1961)

Article, "*The Lighthouse*" by Stefanie Miller, trans4mind.com

Soul Care Bible, American Association of Christian Counselors, Thomas Nelson Corporation (1982)

Songs for Encouragement:

JESUS IS THE LIGHTHOUSE by the Heritage Singers

There's a lighthouse on the hillside
That overlooks life's sea
When I'm tossed it sends out a light
That I might see

And the light that shines in darkness now
Will safely lead us o'er
If it wasn't for the lighthouse
My ship would be no more.

I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW by [Johnny Nash](#)

I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunny day
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunny day
I think I can make it now the pain is gone
All of the bad feelings have disappeared
Here is that rainbow I've been praying for
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunny day

STAND by [Donnie McClurkin](#)

What do you do
When you've done all you can and it seems like it's never enough
And what do you say when your friends turn away and you're all alone
Tell me what do you give
When you've given your all and it seems like you can't make it through
Well you just stand when there's nothing left to do
You just stand watch the LORD see you through
Yes after you've done all you can, you just stand
Tell me how do you handle the guilt of your past
Tell me how do you deal with the strain
And how can you smile when your heart has been broken and filled with pain
Tell me what do you give
When you've given your all and it seems like you can't make it through
Child, you just stand, when there's nothing left to do
You just stand watch the Lord see you through
Yes after you've done all you can, you just stand, stand and be sure
Be not entangled in that bondage, oh you just stand and endure
God has a purpose, yes God has a plan
Tell me what do you do

When you've done all you can and seems like you can't make it through
Child, you just stand, stand, you just stand, stand, stand, stand
Through the storm, stand, stand through the rain
Stand, through the hurt, stand, yeah through the pain, you just
Don't you stop, stand, and don't you bend, stand, don't give up
Stand, no don't give in, you just
Hold on, stand, just be strong, stand
God will step in, stand, and it won't be long, you just
After you've done all you can, You just stand!

NOTES

Leading Today: Be a Faithful Lighthouse Keeper

Ron Walters

High above the familiar skyline of Alexandria stood Pharos Lighthouse, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The lighthouse was designed as a safety mechanism for sea-going traffic. At the same time, it had become an incomparable landmark for the city. In the ancient world, only Egypt would multitask on such a grand scale

Located on prime beachfront property on Alexandria's harbor, the 45-story, multi-shaped lighthouse was an engineering marvel. Its silhouette was the dominant feature on the local cosmopolitan skyline. The observation deck, complete with a chic café, was a must-see tourist attraction.

Because it was the world's tallest building, the lighthouse served as the crown jewel for the city's marketing plan. In fact, its famous likeness was engraved on coins in faraway Rome. The Pharos Lighthouse was the world's crème de la crème of lighthouses.

However, the lighthouse was more than just show. It was also practical. It housed a large curved mirror in its beacon chamber and could project a 100-mile beam of light into the dark Mediterranean night to aid distressed, searching sailors. The famed lighthouse was built two centuries before Christ and lasted for more than a thousand years beyond His lifetime on earth

Yet, with all its notoriety, the lighthouse's builder might have been forever forgotten had it not been for some quick-thinking and gutsy maneuvering.

Sostrates was the tower's architect and chief builder. He gave 20 years of his life to complete the project. As is true with most builders, Sostrates wished to leave his mark on his life's work. He petitioned Ptolemy II King of Egypt for the right to inscribe his name in the marble base of the lighthouse.

Ptolemy was no dummy and would have nothing to do with Sostrates' request. In fact, Ptolemy wanted the lighthouse to bear his own name so history might remember him, instead of the builder. Ptolemy demanded that Sostrates chisel the inscription to honor Egypt's king and no one else. The order was final. The words were scripted and approved. Ptolemy was to be remembered forever on the walls of Pharos Lighthouse, while Sostrates was relegated to be the inscriber of Ptolemy's self-proclaimed tribute.

Sostrates was ticked. He had done all the work, yet the king wanted all the credit.

He returned to the jobsite and devised a plan. Hanging a large curtain to hide his work, he chiseled into the marble these words: BUILT BY SOSTRATES SON OF DEXIPHANES OF KNIDOS ON BEHALF OF ALL MARINERS AND TO THEIR SAVIOR GODS.

Then Sostrates covered the inscription with a thin layer of cheap plaster. In the plaster he wrote the entire text of Ptolemy's self-serving announcement.

As years passed, wind, rain and pounding surf chipped away the cheap plaster, revealing the name of its true

builder.

In a wonderful way, Sostrates' lighthouse is a parable of the church, which belongs to Christ and always will. It has His name written all over it. After all, He built it, He bought it, He is the head of it, and He serves as its chief cornerstone. In fact, He has constructed His church to be so efficient and strong that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

Today, in the 21st century, we are the lighthouse keepers of His beloved church. We are commissioned to keep the warning light lit and to build upon His foundation faithfully.

How are we to do that? What are the duties of lighthouse keepers? What activities has He required for His church?

Actually, there are only three:

- Be committed to God through worship—exist "for the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:12).
- Be committed to fellow believers through nurturing—aid "the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).
- Be committed to the world through evangelizing and caring—strive "to make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

Take ownership of your church, your local lighthouse. Claim it as your own. Carve your name just below His name. Leave your indelible mark for future generations to see. Let it be known that you were there. Be a steward who is worthy of being remembered.