



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
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## 2 CORINTHIANS 1:21-22

### 2 Corinthians Series

[PRAYER] Lord, we humbly come before you recognizing our inadequacy and our needs, recognizing that we run out of strength and energy and we just need to rely on your power that you offer to us. Lord, this study of 2 Corinthians, the study of your power is so amazing. There's so many ways that we can connect to you and your power. I pray that you'd use it strategically in our lives so that we can grasp it, understand it, and apply it in our hearts. We want to take Jesus home in our lives and so I pray that this morning you would give some practical applications that are relevant and meaningful to each person here, young persons, older persons, single, married, male, female. Just that you would give us insights that we can take home today and apply in our situations in our lives. Lord, I ask your blessing on this period of time now as we view it as a sacred time as we look at your word. We ask you to use the Holy Spirit in our lives to teach us and grow us today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Each week we come to God's word and we look at the scriptures, which represent theology. Theology is really a word that describes putting a lot of scriptures together to develop a theme. So we can have a theology of money or a theology of prayer or a theology of God. Because we take all the verses related to that and put them together. Sometimes we can look at theology and imagine it to be rather academic. It's something we do in a classroom where we're studying some theology that is somehow unrelated to our personal lives.

It's our desire on Sunday mornings and certainly (I hope) in your own Bible study to ask a question every time we come to God's word, and the question is this: So what? How does this apply to me? Or how can I take this home into my life? Or what is the relevance of this truth for my personal life? We will do that again today. But I was just impressed by the message from 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. You can turn here with me. It's just a powerful story and a message about God and what He wants to do and has done for us in our lives, and it's very practical.

So I want to ask you to stand with me and read these two verses. I'm going to read them out loud and I want you to participate in that. I ask you to exercise your body by standing just out of respect for God's word.

In 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 it says this: *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

You may be seated.

We're going to talk today about standing. In a world today when there's so much indecision, there's so many challenges, there's so many things that are up in the air, we never know what's going on with a lot of things, we are looking for ways to have some concrete rock on which we can base our lives. Even if it's our own small little world. We want some order, we want some construct in which we can bring order into our lives. God has done that for us and we're going to look at this idea of standing to understand more about what He's done for us.

You can see the verse starts and uses that word – *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.* We live in a world that there are so many opportunities that are great, but also a lot of challenges. I would suggest that there are a lot of challenges around us and having a firm stand is very important.

In order to understand this word 'standing' I want to compare it to the word 'walking'. Those are two different theological terms in God's word, standing and walking. I want you to understand what those two are so you can know how to implement this piece of theology in your life.

Standing has the idea of position, your position before God. Jesus Christ died on the cross so that you can have a position that is righteous before God. It's not something you did to earn your righteousness. It's something that God did on your behalf so that you have standing. You stand in right relationship with God. You have a position. That position is God's child. God has picked you as one who has been adopted into His family. That's standing. I don't want to go on past standing unless you get it. Make sure you got your understanding of standing. Standing is this idea that we have a position in Christ. We didn't earn it. God gave it to us. We stand as His children, righteous and redeemed, holy people before God because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. That's standing.

The other word is walking. The word 'walking' has to do with how we live it out. The things that we do and how we implement those things in life. So the walking has to do with our daily interactions with people, with our own temptations as we're struggling with our emotions or other things in our lives. That's our walk. There's our stand and our walk, and both are significant truths.

Now if we look at God's word and start dividing up scripture and putting them on a bulletin board, we can have the standing bulletin board and the walking bulletin board that would help us understand these ideas.

For example if I were to take some verses and put them on the standing bulletin board, one of them would be – *I am convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of God.* Another one would be – *Let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence.* Why? Because we have this standing before God. In other words, *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* It's God who does the work. There's a standing that we have. Then there's this verse – *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.* There's something firm, there's something deep, there's something relevant about the standing that we have before God. A lot of verses could go on the standing bulletin board.

We also could create a walking bulletin board and on that bulletin board we might use verses that talk about how we live. For example, in 1 Corinthians 10:31 it says – *So whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.* Emphasizing the works or the emphasis that we have on our actions. *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says* – says James 1:22. *You shall walk in all the way in which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land in which you will possess* (Deuteronomy 5:33). You've got the Ten Commandments. All of these ideas are contributing to the way we live and how we do it. Romans 12 says – *Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.*

Do you see the difference between your standing that provides this confident assurance because God has done something and the walk that has to do with how we're implementing that in our lives. Both of those words are important.

Now if you take those two bulletin boards or represent those two ideas, standing and walking, I want to ask you two questions. I want you to think about these questions and see what you think. Now our first question is this: Does the way you walk affect your standing? The answer is no. Your standing is set by Jesus Christ because He established it for you. God is the one who does that work for us and nothing we can do can separate us from the love of God. So the walk that we have does not affect your standing. Let's ask this in reverse and ask this question: Does your standing affect the way you walk? It should. Yes. The answer is yes. The way you are in your position in Christ then affects how you implement your life. Very important.

These are two theological concepts that we have in the Bible, the standing and the walking, and we're going to emphasize the standing today. I just want you to put it in context as you try to apply this to your own personal life.

Now let's go back to our verse and see what it says. Because in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 it talks about where our standing comes from. It says – *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.* Notice whose responsibility it is to establish this standing for us. It is God's responsibility. He sets that up. It's His firmness that establishes this rock that we have in our lives. Very important because it produces something important inside of us that we can enjoy because it doesn't change. It's solid. In a world where there's a lot of uncertainty, we need something solid on which to place our feet.

This does something for us in our lives. It gives us a great ability to deal with temptations because we're solidly standing on something, not easily persuaded by the world or others or even our own wicked hearts to go in the wrong direction. We have a solid standing and we understand this standing, we stand firm on it, then we're able to deal with our emotions that tend to get us off track something. We're able to deal with our negative thinking that causes us some problems in our lives. The standing that we have is important. And notice that it comes from God. Notice that it says here – *it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.*

Now he's going to illustrate it in three ways and that's what's represented in the rest of the verse. So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to take those exact words. I'm not going to change the words. I'm just going to put them in an outline that will show you the three things we're going to

look at today. I didn't change the words. I just put the numbers 1, 2, and 3 before them. It says He does this in three ways or He communicates it to us in three ways.

- 1) He anoints us.
- 2) He sets His seal of ownership on us.
- 3) He puts His Spirit in our hearts.

Those are the three things. Those things are very important and I want now to take it down to where the rubber meets the road so you see where the practical piece comes in.

Before I go and take each one of these apart, I want you to see what it does for you. Because when you are anointed you feel empowered. When we look at the seal we're going to say you feel secure. And when we look at the Spirit that we're going to see today, you're going to see that we feel cared for. What I'm doing now is I'm showing you the application of this standing. That when you take the idea of standing and apply it specifically to your life then you have this idea of being anointed, seal, Spirit, and they help you to feel differently, live your life differently. This is the outline of where we're going today and I want to cover these three different ideas.

Let's start with the word *anointed*. We are introduced to that word *anoint* in the Old Testament. It has this idea of working with animals at first. Particularly a sheep who has this thick wool, but not as much on his head, so the little insects can get on the hair and get down into the skin and burrow down and create a problem. So sometimes when that's the case or when the animal is injured, the shepherd will come along and massage oil into the head of the sheep or into his wool. Or if there's injury you put oil on it for healing. We even use essential oils. Many of you use those today in order to contribute to healing in a person's life. That's how it was originally used.

That's how we see it in Psalm 23. You know Psalm 23. That's the Good Shepherd Psalm that David wrote. In verse 5 it says – *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.* There's this personal relationship that exists between this shepherd and the sheep. God cares for us in that very particular way.

But the word *anointing* became much more than that. It turned into much more than this idea of just caring for sheep. It starts to be used for empowerment and receiving the blessing of God to do a particular task.

One of my favorite Bible stories is the one of Elisha. It so happens that on this particular day of the story that Elijah and Elisha are walking along it comes known to everyone that this is the day that Elijah is going to be done on earth. He's going to leave. Maybe not everybody knows how he's going to leave. He's going to leave on this chariot of fire and go up in the air. People don't know all that yet, but they know this is the end of his life today.

So as they're walking along, Elijah says to the fifty prophets, "You guys wait here. In fact, Elisha, you wait here too."

And Elisha says, "No way. I'm not waiting here. I'm going with you."

Elijah says, "Okay, come on."

So they go a little bit further and Elijah says, “Why don’t you stay here. I’m going to go across the Jordan River.”

“No way. I’m staying with you,” he says.

Elijah takes off his cloak (I would imagine like a big robe) and the Bible says that he rolled it up. He took it and he hit the Jordan River, and the Jordan opened up. This is another one of those crossings of the Jordan River that we don’t hear about too much, but it opens up and he and Elisha walked across.

Elijah says, “You are following me around. What is it that you want? What can I do for you?”

And Elisha says, “I want a double portion of your spirit, a double portion of your power.”

Elijah says, “Whoa. That’s really big. I don’t know if I can do that. That’s not really up to me. That’s a real challenging request. But I’ll tell you what. If you’re with me and you see me go up to heaven then you will have what you want.”

Well it so happens that this fiery chariot comes down with fiery horses and somehow Elijah gets into the fiery chariot and takes off and goes up to heaven, and he leaves his cloak behind. Elisha picks up this cloak and walks back to the Jordan River and he’s wondering, “Do I have the power? Do I have the power that God has promised me in this story?” He takes it and he rolls up the cloak again and the Jordan River opens up, which is the beginning of a huge ministry for Elisha as he goes on because he has the anointing and the power of God.

This is one of those things I personally pray for in my life that God would allow me to experience the anointing of His blessing. Because with the anointing comes power. Certainly I would ask that the Lord would give it to me when I share with you on Sunday morning, that the word that comes forth would be much more than I prepared because the Holy Spirit is bringing it into your lives in some way that makes it so powerful, that it’s so energized that it goes far beyond anything that I would’ve thought of. That’s the anointing. But it’s not just in my preaching. I would pray that God would anoint me in my work as a father or a grandfather or a husband. I think we can all come before God and say, “Lord, would you please anoint me and give me the power to be the person that you’ve called me to be.”

There’s this story of Samuel that we studied recently when Samuel was told, “I want you to go and anoint the new king.” If you look at the story carefully, you’ll see the power that’s residing right in the story. Because Samuel goes and, of course it wasn’t any of the other brothers, he had to go and find David and bring him in. The Bible says these words about him when Samuel anointed him – *So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David.* Wow.

You want the anointing. I’m telling you. You want it in your life to do what God has called you to do in any sphere of your life. You want the anointing in every area of your life.

This is why it was so hard for David when his sin was revealed with Bathsheba. It all became public and then he realized how bad this was, this terrible thing he had done. He comes and he writes Psalm 51 and he prays this prayer that has so much meaning at this point. He says as part of his prayer in Psalm 51 – *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within*

*me. Do not cast from me your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

There's power in the anointing. When you understand that God has given us a standing in Christ, that He died on the cross for us so that we can enjoy His presence and He's given us something that we can take with us every day in our lives called the anointing (that's what's promised in 2 Corinthians 1), we can feel empowered in whatever we do. So the first thing we're seeing that God does in this standing is that he anoints us. Feel the power.

The second thing He does is He sets His seals of ownership on us. Now a seal was like a stamp. We see it used in the Bible in different ways. In the book of Esther we see that the king stamped with his ring a law that could not be changed. It became a permanent law because he sealed it with his ring. In the New Testament we see that Jesus' tomb when He was buried was sealed by the authorities. There was a stamp placed on that seal – "Do not open this tomb." There was nothing on the inside, so when the stone was rolled away, it wasn't a problem for Christ. But the point is there was a seal that was placed there, an authoritative seal.

But this is talking about a seal of ownership, a little bit different kind of a seal. Even in those days, both in Old and New Testament, people would stamp their stuff. So when it got mingled with others they could say, "Oh that's my stuff here. It has my stamp on it." Especially when it came to animals. We brand them today. It's a seal of ownership. God does that for us. That's what the passage is describing. In this passage it says – *God who makes both you and us stand firm in Christ, set his seal of ownership on us.* He's planted that seal on us. And it helps us to feel secure.

If we were to take this idea of a seal of protection or security today, I want to give you a technical or an illustration that uses technology. Let's talk about a firewall. Some of you don't even know what a firewall is. I'm just going to explain to you what a firewall is. This isn't a firewall in the fire department; this is a firewall in software. This firewall is a piece of software that protects valuable information as it's being passed from an insecure location to a secure location.

So in your normal email you could send your social security number or your credit card information and when you send it by email, it's insecure. It's dangerous because it can be easily discovered by others who are hunting for such things. However, if you're going to send it to a bank or you're sending it to some other company that's asking for your information, they may say to you, "I'm going to send to you a secure email." So they'll send you a secure email and then you can attach your information to that email. Usually it means going through a website of some kind in order to pass your valuable information from an insecure location to a secure location. So now you have a secure system for the valuable things that you have.

Now God does that for us. He values us. He reassures us in our lives. In our news today we have the challenges of people, especially in government (presidents and others), who use insecure email to talk about government documents and government information. When you pass insecure information around then others can get ahold of it more easily than they can through a firewall. God wants to protect us. He wants us to feel secure. There's something about the stamp of

ownership and this sense of protection that God has for us that allows us to experience this security that God wants us to have.

Now that's really important today, you've got to understand because there's a lot of people with a lot of fear, I would suggest. In the news today the emphasis of the news is generally bad news because that's what sells. Most of the news you hear isn't about some boy scout walking a lady across the street or something. What you hear is bad news about the boy scout who hit the lady instead. So there's a lot of good news and bad news, but you only get to hear the bad news because that's what sells in the news.

So I would suggest there's even this artificial sense of danger that exists in our world. Now our world is a dangerous place. When you sign to be a Christian, you're signing to be the greatest mission and dangerous mission that exists in the world. I just want to tell you. But I would suggest that there is a place of safety that God allows for us and it's in the standing of Jesus Christ. We understand that we are positioned right where God wants us to be and it's the safest place to be. So the safest place for you to ever be is right in the center of God's will. That doesn't mean you won't go through a storm.

When Jesus sent the disciples, He says, "Go to the other side of the lake. I'll meet you over there." They're going on the lake and there's a big storm, but they are right in the center of God's will. They are doing exactly what God had told them to do and they are experiencing a storm in the midst of that. You will experience storms, but there is a safety that exists because God has set His seal on you of ownership and there is protection there that can give you a tremendous amount of freedom, it can give you a tremendous amount of satisfaction, a tremendous amount of peace in your life to enjoy what God has done for you. When we understand this idea of seal then we understand that this seal helps us to feel secure.

We're going to look at the third one now which has to do with the Spirit. It says He *put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

The Holy Spirit is a person, not an influence. This is isn't like the force in *Star Wars*. There is a real person, the Holy Spirit, who has a real job in the Godhead. So there's the person of the Father, the person of the Son, and the person of the Holy Spirit who are represented as one God. The word Trinity isn't in the Bible. We have made up that word to describe what we see in God's word that God says there is one God. But then He describes this one God with three different personalities.

The Holy Spirit is a person who comes to live inside of us who has certain job descriptions as part of His personality. You've likely experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. Did you know he Holy Spirit even works on people who are not Christians? Because the Bible tells us that He *convicts the world of sin, in regards to sin, righteousness and judgment.* So the Holy Spirit is the one who draws even a nonbeliever toward Himself. The Holy Spirit is powerful.

If you're a Christian you've likely experienced the power of the Holy Spirit because you start to move in a direction and the Holy Spirit says, "Uh uh. Don't go that way." Or you start going in another and "Yes, you need to go in this direction." Or God gives you discernment about a

particular situation or something happens in your life and you know that God is working in the midst of this. There is something supernatural happening right now and you are trying to be in tune to God's Spirit. That is what we are talking about here when it says He has given us His Spirit.

And where does He put the Spirit? He puts it in our hearts, which is along with our emotions and our desires and other things that are inside of the heart as well. So the Holy Spirit is in there and helping us to guide and it says that He is a deposit. A deposit gives the impression that it's like a down payment. It's a piece of a greater thing that's yet to come. If you're putting a down payment on a car or a house or something that's a portion of the bigger amount that's yet to come. So He describes the Holy Spirit as this deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

I want to show you why I say in this case the emphasis of the Spirit helps us to feel cared for. I think it comes right out of the text. I want to show you a parallel passage first of all. This is not 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, but it says the same things that it does there. This is from Ephesians 1:13-14. It reads this way: *When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession.* It's a deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance.

Let me ask you a question. Let's say that today you found out that you are an heir and that you are going to inherit 10 million dollars. We're just going to use the financial example that God is using here about an inheritance. Let's just say that you found out that you were going to inherit 10 million dollars. I want to know how would that make you live life differently? How would you feel? What would it do? Remove a lot of the stress, wouldn't it? Definitely it would. You wouldn't have to be pushing and pushing and pushing. You'd say, "I've got it. I've got my 10 million. I can relax a little bit." Isn't that what you'd say? I'm cared for. I'm set up.

That's why I take the word cared for because we can recognize that the Holy Spirit is a deposit so everything you get to experience now about the spiritual gift that God is giving you from the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Holy Spirit that God gives you, the love, joy, peace, and so on that you experience. All of those powers that the Holy Spirit gives you are only a deposit. A deposit of something more to come. It's only going to grow from here.

It gets so much better as you experience more and more of the Holy Spirit, and certainly in eternity we have this huge inheritance that we're going to experience. That's powerful. We can go along now, because of the standing we have in Christ we can feel this sense of being cared for. We now have our feet planted on a rock that allows us to feel empowered, allow us to feel secure, allows us to feel cared for, and that changes the way we live. Every day it changes how you experience life and what you do.

When I just step back and look at our world I see a lot of people under a lot of pressure and stress really pushing and trying to get somewhere, and sometimes they get annoying to me, these people that are pushing. Sometimes you're trying to get in line, somebody rushes in front of you because they want to get there first.

I was driving up Princeton Pike in Lawrenceville this week. I was going down there at a speed I wanted to drive on the road and there was a guy behind me who wanted to drive faster than me and he was making that known because he was right on my tail. I have no idea what was going on in this guy's life, what was happening, but he's right on my tail and I'm feeling irritated by the fact that he's on my tail. I don't like this. I'm thinking about this passage and I'm thinking, "I already got my riches; this guy obviously doesn't have his. He's trying to get them somehow and he's on my tail trying to get them." So I just pulled over. I pulled over and he zipped by me and I pulled back and I'm going along. It turns out he turned into the same driveway I was turning into. Must have been embarrassing for him. No, we never really connected. He went to a different business than the one I was going to. But the point is I was able to pull over because I already got my riches. I don't need to be driving like crazy like that. I don't need to be cutting off people in line. Because God has given me my riches already.

What I'm suggesting here is that when we understand our standing before God and it becomes real to us, we're different people. We're more gracious. We hold the door open for someone else. Hey, I got time. I'm already here. You're still rushing. Rush through. Go. That's fine.

It always cracks me up when people try to rush to get on airplanes. We always get there at the same time. It doesn't do you any good to get on and beat the other people on. At any rate, I'm suggesting it changes who we are. And when you know God as your personal Savior, then it just changes your whole thinking about God and thinking about your life and what it does.

If you're not a Christian today, I would just encourage you to take a look at this particular truth. This truth I think would attract you to become a Christian. Because this means that you live differently. All that wrestling and heartache and all that stuff that's on the inside that you have, you can let go of a lot of that. You can let go. Because why? You already got your riches. It's already there. You have this opportunity to experience the care of God and the love that God has for you in a particular way. God does amazing things in our lives and the theology that we understand about who God is and what He's done for us transforms our lives. It makes us live differently than we would live otherwise. For that reason I think we can be very grateful for what God has done and for the standing we have in Jesus Christ.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come today wanting to thank you for the things you've done for us that give us so many blessings. Lord, sometimes our walk in life doesn't measure up to the standing and we find ourselves so influenced by the world that we're living under a tremendous amount of stress unnecessarily. Help us to know what parts of that stress we can release to you because you've given us your grace, you've given us your Son, you've given us the freedom in Christ to be the people you want us to be. So Lord, I ask that you would work that, massage that into our hearts. Make us a different people because of it so we can be a testimony to others, that other people will see "Why are you the person who has the glass half full instead of half empty? Why are you the person that's smiling all the time? Why are you the person that seems to be at peace?" We're reflecting who you are in our lives because you're different. We already have our riches. Thank you for that, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.