

Sermon Series: Stand Strong
 To be used with: Session Five: God's Promise of Victory
 Sermon Title Possibilities: The God Who Plans;
 Victory in Jesus
 Scripture: Romans 8:28-39

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study of *Stand Strong: Building Your Life on God's Promises* these sermon outlines will use similar Scripture passages to reinforce the same themes as the study regarding trusting God's promises.

Introduction: My wife and I were appointed missionaries in 1998 to Guinea in West Africa. After a very long and prayerful consideration, we felt it was God's leading for us to take a position at a community center in the capitol. Sometime during appointment and arriving on the field, strategies were changed and the community center was to be closed. We were assigned to a people group team and settled far away from the capitol in a jungle city for language learning.

The living conditions were difficult. Electricity was scarce and unreliable. The water source was unreliable. There were no western style restaurants, grocery stores or other amenities. We lived there for a little over a year, all the while wondering why God had left us there without a "job." We felt God directing us to another position in another country. This city had reliable public utilities, super-markets and even delivery pizza. Our new position was to operate the regional guesthouse where missionaries could come and seek medical care or just relax from the intensity of living in the bush. Once we began our new work, we realized that God had placed us in Guinea to learn what it was like to live in hardship conditions in West Africa. Had we gone directly to our new position, we would have never understood the trials that bush missionaries face in living without electricity and water. God had a plan for us all along.

1. God has a plan and it is for our good. (28-30)

A. We may not always see how our current situation fits into God's plan. God, however, is not constrained by time and can see ahead to prepare us.

B. We must trust that God knows what He is doing and submit ourselves to obedience. Like a child holding the hand of their parent, we allow God to lead us to the next point along the way.

C. We must not confuse God's direction for our destination. If we realize that the direction that God sets us on is to prepare us for the next step in our journey, we can trust Him when it doesn't go according to our plan.

2. God already has given us His best: Jesus Christ. (31-34)

A. God is for us! It really doesn't matter who may try to come against us. In the end, we are on the winning side.

B. God sacrificed His Son for us! We matter to God and God wants the very best for us for the sake of Christ.

C. Jesus is interceding for us! There can be no greater comfort or encouragement than to know that the One who died for us continually brings our name before the Father.

3. Nothing can separate us from God's love. (35-39)

A. We are constantly exposed to all kinds of dangers. People, governments, even elements of the spiritual realm come against us to destroy us. They may kill the body, but our soul is safe in the arms of Jesus.

B. We are bound together with Jesus. We have been buried with Christ and raised to walk anew in Him. We can rely on His strength at all points along the way.

C. Nothing can separate us. It is His love that binds us to Him and that holds us safely to redemption. While we may dread death, it is in death that we fully realize God's gift of salvation. We can trust God in all things.

Conclusion/Application – Seldom does anyone begin to put a jigsaw puzzle together without a picture of the finished puzzle to guide them. We can work out the pieces because we can see the finished product. In life, we only THINK we can see the finished product. God knows where each one of the pieces of our lives goes together. He is working on making our life into a masterpiece; we can't keep trying to take the pieces out of His hand. He knows what He's doing. Trust God with your life by:

- Looking back over the different times in your life and see where God was with you to lead you to the next step of life.
- Looking back over the difficult times in your life to see how God used that to mold you into who you are now.
- Evaluating the current situation of life and seeing where it differs from what/where you thought it should be. Ask God to help you trust Him as He leads you to the next place.

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