

WEEK 4

Stand Strong // LESSON OUTLINE

BIG IDEA

Following Jesus isn't always easy, but it's always worth it.

BIBLE

Philippians 3:10; John 16:33

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Jesus' plan wasn't just to save individuals but to form a family—a community marked by radical love. In a world full of division, drama, and cliques, Christian unity stands out. This week we'll explore what it means to love one another deeply, fight for peace, and be the kind of community where people feel seen, safe, and supported.

WHAT?

Have you ever signed up to do something thinking that it would be easy, but instead you were surprised when something unexpected happened? Maybe you signed up for the basketball team thinking you were the only one trying out for a position only to realize that someone bigger, taller, and more athletic was also trying out? Or maybe you offered to help someone with something that you thought would be a quick task, but turns out it required a lot more time and energy than you initially thought?

Following Jesus can feel the same way. We sign up because we trust that following Jesus is the best way to live, but sooner or later we come to learn that following Jesus gets difficult when opposition arises. Following Jesus costs us all something: popularity, comfort, or even friendships. Although it may feel like you're the only one going through it, the truth is that the first Christians felt this tension too. Followers of Jesus have been facing pressure, pushback, and persecution for over 2,000 years. So the question isn't "Will it be hard?" It's "Will you stand strong anyway?"

SO WHAT?

So what does this mean for us?

It means if you've ever felt uncomfortable standing up for your faith—you're not crazy. That tension is real. When Paul wrote, "I want to know Christ... and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, (Philippians 3:10)" he wasn't just talking about physical pain or prison—he was talking about choosing Jesus even when it costs you something.

And that still happens today. Maybe not in the same way Paul experienced it, but here's what it can look like for you:

- People making fun of you for believing in God.
- Feeling left out because you don't go along with what everyone else is doing.
- Getting weird looks when you say you go to church or don't want to mess around like everyone else is.

Sometimes persecution is loud and obvious... and sometimes it's quiet. It's a text you're not included in. A conversation that shuts down when you walk in. It's feeling like the only one in the room who still believes this stuff matters.

But here's the truth: **you are not alone. (John 16:33)**

Not just because there are other believers who get it—but because Jesus gets it. He faced rejection, mockery, betrayal... and He didn't run away from it. He stood strong so you could have a faith worth living for.

The same Spirit that gave Jesus strength lives in you. And when you suffer for your faith—even in small ways—you are actually getting closer to Jesus. You're sharing in what He experienced. That's not something to be afraid of. That's something to *stand strong in*.

So... now what?

What do we do with this?

First—**be honest** with yourself: Where are you tempted to hide your faith? Maybe it's at school, in a friend group, in the locker room, or even at home. Where are you staying silent because you're afraid of what people will think?

Start there. Name it. Own it. Jesus isn't disappointed in you—He wants to give you the strength to stand in those moments.

Second—**take one step of boldness this week.**

That might look like:

- Praying before lunch, even if no one else is.
- Inviting someone to church or youth group.
- Posting something about your faith on social media.
- Speaking up when someone mocks what you believe.

You don't have to preach a sermon or start a movement. You just have to be faithful in one moment—and God can use that.

And third—**pray for those who face actual violent persecution.**

There are teenagers your age around the world who are risking *everything* to follow Jesus. No youth group, no worship band, no lights—just courage. Let their stories inspire you to stand strong right where you are.

Standing for Jesus won't always be easy. But it's always worth it. And you don't stand alone.