

Rock Solid Men

In Times of Trouble, the Rock Solid Man Stands

Edited Transcript

Brett Clemmer

Well. Good Morning Gentlemen. It is great to see you this morning. This is the best place to be on a Friday morning and, and so I'm glad to spend it with you this morning we have been doing this series called a Rock Solid Men and for six weeks now, this is the seventh week. So what I'm going to do today is I'm going to do a relatively quick wrap up for us to sort of review the things that we've learned this weekend. And I want to give you a, a tool to use to sort of assess where you feel like you are on your spiritual journey. Where are you with the, with the traits of a, of being a rock solid man that we talked about and give you a chance to talk about that in some discussion time, right? So here is a guy, here's a guy standing barefoot on an ice flow.

And if that doesn't describe what it's like to be a man today, I don't know what does, right? I mean, you're walking life, you're trying to have a good time, right? You're trying to, you know, sort of jump from, from parts of your life to parts of your life that you're, that you have to beat, play different roles in. We live in a society though that is like this ice flow. It's, teetering constantly. The expectations that they have for men are teetering constantly. We're, impacted by the bad decisions of some men that are out there that make terrible, terrible choices and do evil things. And we get painted with that broad brush sometimes as men and, the cultural expectations change. I mean, I was talking to a guy the other day just like, he's like, I don't know what to do and I get to a door now and there's a woman coming.

Do I hold the door for and be polite and chivalrous and nice or am I being patriarchal and insulting to her by thinking that she's so weak she can't hold the door for herself? You know what I said? Hold the dang door! Right. I mean we can be chivalrous, whether people misinterpret it or not, do what your conscience calls on you to do as a Christian man. And, but the expectations are hard. So how do you operate in a world where everything seems unsteady? You are called, we are called as Christian men to be rock solid men. And that's really what this time was about. So here's our outline. I'm sorry. Here's our verse. "Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith, be men of courage, be strong, do everything in love." And I love this versus at the end of First Corinthians, and it's Paul sort of at the end of this letter that he's really, if you read the letters, he's chastising this church that he planted and he's very unhappy with them. They're doing very many sinful things and yet he loves them deeply.

And so it's just like the church today, there's, there's churches are full of, of Corinthian church was full of sinners and they were, some people were trying to figure out and some people were trying to have their cake and eat it too. You know, have there, have there a church, but then live as worldly men and women. And so Paul is chastising them, but at the end then he gives this command, be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be men of courage, be strong, do everything in love. And if you remember, if you remember this verse, there's the English standard version or a more, a little bit more literal translation. The NIV actually translate this be men of courage to what anybody know. Act like men, act like men.

So Paul is basically saying, hey, we all know what a man is. Act like it, right? Stop doing all these sinful things that you're doing and act like it. And so he gives this great description of biblical manhood, Vigilance, Faith, Courage, Strength and Love, if you look at this verse. So this is what we're going to talk about today. Then here's our outline. We're going to talk about the traits of a rock solid man, the practices of a rock solid man. And then I'm going to give you an example of a rock solid man.

THE TRAITS OF A ROCK SOLID MAN

All right, so let's, let's, let's start with the traits of a rock solid man. All right, so we look at them, right? Right from this verse. Now, if you have your, if you have your rock solid man study guide, we're just gonna page through this together as we look at these things, all right, so the, in the first in you look at this verse.

The first thing talks about being vigilant, being on your guard. What do we have to be on our guard for? And, and we talked about you have to be on guard defensively. In other words, to protect vigilance has the idea of protection, right? If you're like guarding the wall, you're protecting the town that you're, that the wall that you're providing. But also being vigilant is about being opportunistic, being ready to take advantage of the opportunities that God gives you to build his kingdom, to spread the Gospel, to point your wife towards Christ, to your kids towards Christ. And so these are opportunities, these are opportunities to move forward. I'm going to brag a fair amount this morning because I had two major life events in the last two weeks. So on June 1st my son Jackson and got married to a wonderful woman named Martha.

Now the whole Internet knows about it, email me and I'll send you places, I'll send you the address to send wedding gifts. And on Friday night we had the rehearsal dinner and I asked the, we had the wedding party and just a few family members. And so I kind of put the word out, Hey, at the wedding, the best man and the maid of honor, get to talk at the reception, but nobody else does. So at the rehearsal dinner, I'm going to give you a chance to share if you'd like to share. And I talked to Jackson about it and he said, dad, please don't ask them to give us wedding advice. I've been at places where they do that and it's always really cheesy. And I said, no problem. So I of course told them, bring as much cheesy wedding advice as you can. I mean, really, he didn't know me better than that.

And so the amazing part about the sharing time was how many times young men told me that my son had sat with them through a difficult moment in their lives and he had taken that opportunity to point them to Christ. They're like, you know, a couple of guys said he didn't try to make me feel better. That's what I want. I want him to make me feel better. He didn't try to make me feel better. He tried to point me towards Christ. He wanted me to understand the gospel so that I could find my comfort in Christ, not find comfort in, in, in kind words. You know, being nice to me was not what Jackson is about, he's about understanding the Gospel and helping people find Christ and so gratifying to hear that. That's my, luckily, I mean, I'm not supposed to say luck, right? Blessedly is that the right way? Providential. My son's a opportunist and he's vigilant looking for those opportunities to point people towards Christ.

That's the idea of being vigilant, a standing firm in the faith. You know, there's, there's times when you're going to have to stand firm and if you don't know what you believe, you're not going to be able to stand firm in it. And so we need to know the scriptures because that's the solid rock that we stand on. The foundation that we stand on to be solid, sort of the base that we're being vigilant from is the base of the Word of God, knowing the Scriptures and understanding it. And so the key to standing firm in the

faith is to be in God's word, to understand the scriptures so that you know what you believe. If you don't know what you believe you, you'll fall for anything, right?

If you don't know what you believe, then you're like, you're just like, well, dust in the wind, right? You just, you just get tossed to and fro and whichever way the wind blows, that's the way you go. And that's what the culture wants at once. That's just to go with the flow. But we don't go with the flow is Christian man, we're solid. We stand firmly because we know what we believe. And then this idea of being men of courage being men of courage. And courage is not about fearlessness. Okay? It's not being fearless, which can lead to recklessness, right? But courage also means that we have to be willing to do things that make us afraid. We can't be cowards. And so at the intersection he sort of at the, at the midpoint between cowardice and recklessness is this idea of courage.

And it's, I think it was Mark Twain that said that courage is the mastery of fear, not the absence of fear. And so in spite of our fears, we act courageously and spite of sometimes wondering if the, the Gospel is really something that people want to hear. We share it anyway, in spite of thinking that the values that the Bible espouses are really acceptable in a modern culture. We live those values out anyway because we're courageous men. We know what we believe, and we know who God is. Standing firm comes from knowing what you believe. But courage comes from knowing whose you are. Courage comes from knowing who God is and understanding that well and so out of that knowledge of your relationship with God then out of that, you can't do nothing but be courageous. It will flow out of that naturally.

The next attribute that he gives is to be Strong. And you know the key to being strong is to not be a lone ranger. The key to be big and strong is to be in relationships with other men. And you know, I love the metaphor of redwood trees. You know, redwood trees are hundreds and hundreds of feet high, right? But no redwood tree has a root system big enough to hold up a redwood tree. The only way a redwood tree can stand is because it interlocks its roots with the other redwood trees around it. And so the root system of the group of the grove of trees is holding up each individual tree. It's a great picture of the Christian life. If you want to be a man of strength, you have to live in relationship with other guys. And then in those relationships you practice the Christian life together and you become stronger and stronger.

Then the fifth attribute that Paul Lists is doing everything in Love, doing everything in love. And love at its core is about what I call other-ish ness, right? We can be selfish or we can be other-ish. Love is about not looking after yourself first. It's about looking after others first. When you love your child, you will do anything to protect them, right? I mean there's not a man in this room who has a child who would not push that child out of the way of an on-rushing car and let the car hit him instead. It's the way we're built, right? Why? Because we love our kids and it's when we forget about love that we start becoming inwardly focused. We start losing track of the call that we have to love each other.

We forget the example that Jesus set dying on a cross for us. That's how much love he had for each of you that he would die for you on the cross. We forget that. And so the key to living a life of love is living that love out, serving other people. And then the last week we talked about something that Paul didn't talk about specifically in these verses, but we talked about Sabbath, right? We talked about having rest and that if you never have rest, then you will burn out. You will come to the end of yourself. If you never rest, you will come to the end of yourself and you won't have enough left over to deal with some kind of a difficult situation. And it'll be brutal. It could lead to failure at worst or it could just lead to emptiness and brokenness. And when you face the tough trials of life, if you're not well rested, you are going to fail. All right, so these are then the traits of a rock solid man.

PRACTICES OF A ROCK SOLID MAN

Let's look at then the practices of a rock solid man. These are the ways that we build these things up. So if we're going to be vigilant, if we're going to be aware and ready and protect our families well and be opportunistic to spread the word of God, we need to be in prayer. We need to be talking to God every chance we get. The verse that we used for this was Ephesians 6:18. So if you have your books, it's right there. It's the key passage for this as the memorize this verse. And Ephesians 6:18 says, "and pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests with this in mind, be alert."

This is the same thing that Paul says in First Corinthians. Be vigilant beyond your guard. Be alert and always and always keep on praying for, for all the Lord's people. So, Paul in Ephesians puts these two things together, prayer and vigilance. And so, prayer is the way to give yourself a foundation that you can be vigilant from. The next attribute we talked about was Faith. And so the tool, the practice that we talked about for standing firm in the faith was to spend time daily with God. And so we use this phrase, a DAWG, how's your DAWG going? That's your Daily Appointment With God. Do you have a daily appointment with God? You know Pete Alwinson? This is Pete Alwinson's phrase. Pete's taught here before and has a ministry called FORGE here in Orlando. And I love, I love the DAWG. When he taught us this, when he was my pastor, he taught us about DAWGS.

And once in a while when he would do this in our, in our men's Bible study (we had a Bible study called Ironmen) and he would about every year or two you would really get into a teaching us how to do a DAWG effectively and why it was so important. And you'd see guys in the lobby at church going, "Hey man, how's your DAWG going?" Right? And the women would be like, "What are you talking about?" You know, we'd say "Nothing". That was our thing, right? The DAWG. So how's your DAWG? Are you having a daily appointment with God? Are you spending time in the Word? Remember we talked about to be firm in the faith, you have to know what you believe. You have to know the Word of God and you can't know the Word of God if you're not in it regularly.

Okay. The verse we used for that was Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double edged sword. It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Let me tell you this thing, this book, this book is an amazing book. There is not a question that you can ask that the principles that you need to know to answer that question correctly or well are in this book. I've yet to have somebody say, well, what about this? And not be able to find a passage that helps you understand the underlying principles to help you answer that question correctly and it's alive. It's active. I love to read and they say, men don't love to read. I know every man I know likes to read something, even if it's articles in ESPN.

I mean we like to read. It's just what we like to read, but here's the thing, I like to read and I'll read a book over. Sometimes I'll read a book over and over again and you know what? Every time it says exactly the same thing, right? **Now**, every time I read the Bible, it says the same thing too, but every time I read the Bible, I get something different out of it. I could read the same passage a hundred times and God will teach me a hundred lessons out of that passage. Why? I mean, no Clive Cussler novel does that for me. No business book does that for me, but the Bible does that for me because it's alive and active. It's the living word of God and that's why it's so awesome to spend time in it daily because you're going to keep learning and keep learning and keep learning.

Then we talked about being men of courage and how to be a man of courage. Well the verse we use for this was "Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth. Worship the lord with gladness; come before him with

joyful songs. Know the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people; the sheep of his pasture.” We can have courage because of the shepherd. We can have courage because we know whose we are; because we know that we are all sons of the king of the universe. We are adopted into his family. We are heirs. I don't know what else I can say. I mean, how can you not be courageous when you know that you're a son of the king of the most sovereign Lord of the universe? So we need to live in that identity.

The only way to live there as to worship God, to know him, to spend time in his presence and that will make us courageous men. Then to be strong. And so the key to being strong, we said it was relationships. And so you need to be in relationship with other guys being at this Bible study or the Bible Study Group that you're watching this Bible study with today. This is a key to your strength. When you isolate, you become weak. When you are weak, engage, connect. Be honest about your weaknesses. And what you will find is your brothers will lock arms with you. The roots of their faith will support the inadequate roots of your faith and give you everything that you need through the power of the Holy Spirit. That's, that's how it works. That's how God designed it.

And then if you're going to love, then you need to serve. You can't just say, well, I have you say to your wife, wife, I love you and you like ignore the trash and the chores around the house and never help her with anything. You know? She's like, yeah, sure you'll love me. Really? Show me. That's what our wives say. And here's the thing, the more you serve, the more you love; the more you love, the more you serve the these things they build each other up. And the more you do it, the more you'll want to do it. And the more you focus on others instead of yourself; the more you'll see your heart growing and your love growing as well. You've all seen it in relationships, in your parents' marriage or in your own. You've seen the impact of somebody who is selfless and sacrificing or somebody who is selfish and unwilling to sacrifice.

And then finally we talked about rest. Taking a sabbath is so important in this culture is so hard to take a sabbath. It's so hard to rest. And 2 Corinthians 5:17 it says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here.” This is what rest is about. It's about renewal. God himself gave us the example of resting on the seventh day. And I think, you know, this is like Christian chotsky at this point to talk about this... But I mean, look at Chick-Fil-A seriously, right? They're now, I think, the third largest, second largest?, thank you, second largest fast food, a company in the country, if not the world and they're closed one seventh of the time. Why? Because they understand the concept of rest and the, and the impact that that has.

This isn't some like holy roller, obey, obey, because you're supposed to and whatever happens, happens. No, this is a truth that when you take some time to rest and rejuvenate and makes the rest of your time more productive, more impactful, more effective. So rest. Take a rest. We need to do that.

All right, so these are the, these are the attributes, Vigilance, Faith, Courage, Strength and Love. These are the practices to build up those attributes. Vigilant, I'm sorry, Prayer, Devotions, worship, relationships, service, and Sabbath.

EXAMPLE OF A ROCK SOLID MAN

So let me talk to you now about the example of a rock solid man. So some of you know my dad, Bill Clemmer. Bill worked at a Man in the Mirror. My Dad worked at Man in the Mirror for a little while,

helped Pat with some development projects. And my dad is a great example of a rock solid man. And my dad died last week and he passed away at age 86 after a wonderful 61 year marriage to my mom.

And you can pray for her. But my dad lived this out. My dad was a Rock Solid man. And as I look at these attributes, I realized that every single one of these was present in my dad's life. My Dad was a prayer warrior. I know that he prayed for me and I know that he prayed for a lot of other folks. And in his career, my dad worked in the financial services industry. You worked in Boston and DC first than in Boston, New York City, Indianapolis, in different mutual fund companies. And in the finance world, that's a cutthroat world, right? But my dad was known for his faith and integrity while being successful in that world. He built teams in companies, national sales teams, and when he changed companies, a lot of those guys would go with him. Even if he didn't ask them, they call them up, say, hey, you got a spot for me, because they knew who my dad was and they wanted to go with him. So he was always ready for the opportunity to build into men's lives.

He had a daily appointment with God. Some of my earliest memories are walking by my, I was an early riser when I was a little kid, and I would walk down the hallway. My Dad always had a study, a den in the house and there would be my dad early in the morning with a Bible open in front of him and a notebook. And he would be studying God's word and writing in his notebook. And over the years, he used lots of different tools. He used Navigators tools and devotional books and he was always, every few years he'd do something different just because he wanted to keep coming at it from different direction, different direction, different directions. And up until the time he went into the hospital, sitting on the table there in my folks little apartment that they had was this Bible and a table talk magazine and another little devotional book.

And when I looked through that devotional book, I looked at that table talk and up until the day that he went into the hospital, there were notes written on those pages as he was reading God's word, spending time daily with God, praying for people. My Dad worshiped. My Dad didn't care what church you went to. We grew up in a church and I'm one of those, one of the original big box nondenominational churches in New England. We were there and at the end of his life he was in an Episcopalian Church of all places. Surprised the heck out of me. I said, why? He said, I can worship God there. I can worship God in the, with the praise choruses and the PowerPoint screens and I can worship God with the incense and the hymns and the liturgy. Doesn't matter. I can worship God in those places and I love being able to worship God and I can worship God in this church. That's why I go there. My Dad spent his life in relationship. The other early, early memory I have is a Saturday morning at 6:30 in the morning getting up and going downstairs to watch cartoons and not being able to watch the cartoons because my dad had a stupid small group of young men meeting in the family room where the TV was. At 6:30 in the morning on a Saturday! What was he thinking? And my dad always, always had small groups of men that he was meeting with. And building into their lives. And he had friends who, who challenged him and who lifted him up when he had difficult times and he lifted other men up in difficult times too. He was so committed to being in relationship with other guys.

Six or seven years ago I went to Troy, Michigan where my dad and mom had moved at that point and I did a Success That Matters event in a church there at Faith Lutheran Church. And my dad, because he was my dad, went to the event to hear me speak. In all of our seminars, we get men in small groups at the, at the event. So I thought, well my dad's just here to support a son. Well my dad joined a small group at this Lutheran Church that you didn't even go to.

And the day before he died, guys from that small group were in his room visiting with him. Seven years later, he was still in that group. They met every Thursday at McDonald's. Do you know how hard it was to get my dad to go into McDonald's when I was a kid? It was impossible. But he went with that group of guys cause that's where they wanted to meet and he wanted to be in relationship with them and they, and they loved him. He knew the scriptures. Whenever they had an issue or a question, they would ask my dad and he would say, well, in Hebrews it says, in Ephesians it says, in John it says, in Ezekiel it says, in Jeremiah it says, in Psalms it says... he would know where to go because he loved the scriptures and he loved his brothers and he wanted to build into their lives.

My Dad served constantly. He was always active in some ministry in the church. Ran a huge evangelism and visitation program in New England. When I was growing up, taught Sunday school, like I said, led small groups. He just loved to serve. He looked for opportunities to serve other people. It's why his guys always wanted to go with them from place to place. Because he served them. He loved them. When he was in his early forties in the mutual fund business at one of the offices, he met a really young broker in his early twenties named Mike. And Mike and he hit it off. And so my dad kept in relationship with Mike over the years. And when I called Mike to tell him about dad passing away, Mike broke down. He's 62 years old. My Dad had maintained relationship with him for 40 years. My dad served him and loved him and sent Christmas gifts to his girls. And, you know, went on trips with Mike and his wife and my dad and mom would go on trips with them just to pour into their lives, just to serve them. He was a rock solid man. He lived to that.

Now, one thing my dad was not good at was Sabbath. You know, it's so easy when you love to serve and when you love to be in relationship with guys in church. And when you're the Sunday school teacher in the small group leader and the ministry leader, it's a very easy to forget sabbath; to say, well, I'll get to that at another time. If I, if I were to tell you the one thing that my dad could have done a little bit better, That's what it would be. It would be Sabbath. He tried, he tried. He wasn't great at it and that's okay. And that's okay.

But I love my dad. He's a great example of what it meant, what it means to be a rock solid man. You know, a lot of guys have father wounds. There's guys in this room that have father wounds, deep unhealed puss seeping father wounds. And I'm so sorry that you suffer with that. There's guys that have scars from father's wounds there. They've healed over there. Still a little effect from them, but they're pretty well healed and there's been some resolution and reconciliation. I don't have, I have father bumps, you know. My father wounds never broke the skin. My Dad loved me and took care of me and my sister and so I don't have those deep father wounds. And it's a wonderful gift that he gave me. But I will tell you what, my dad did not fail to inflict father wounds on me because he was a great guy and figure it all out. He didn't inflict father wounds on me because he was a godly man who was so much in the word of God, who is so much in relationship with other Christian men, who is so much in connection and talking with God all the time, that those things prevented him from ever getting too far off track to the left or to the right. It kept him where he needed to be and that made him a great dad. It was not his effort that made my dad a great dad. It was not his effort that made him a rock solid man. It's the fact that he put his faith in Jesus Christ. And so, when I was looking for the title today, my initial title for today was, "in times of trouble, the rock solid man stands". And I was trying to think of the trait and I use the word endurance. That was my first word. But what I realized as I was sort of finishing up preparing is it's not about endurance guys. It's about victory. It's not about just making it to the end. It's about being victorious at the end.

And I can stand here and talk to you about a man whose life was well lived, not that just sort of stumbled across the finish line at the end, but a man who went across the finish line with both arms in the air breaking the tape guys. And it was not because he tried hard, he did try hard. But it was because his faith was in Christ. And so the key to victory is not your own effort. Resting in Christ is the key to victory. Building a relationship with Christ and then letting that permeate the way that you live the rest of your life. That's the key to victory and it's never too late to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. It's never too late. And if you want to live a life of victory, if you want to finish well, be on your guard.

Stand firm in the faith, be a man of courage, be strong, do everything in love and rest, rest and Christ. He has done it all for us and we can live in that victory now and have it till the end. Let's pray. Father, we're so grateful for your grace, for your mercy. Lord, I'm so grateful that you gave me a dad who showed me these things in his life every day. Not Perfectly Lord, but diligently. Father, I pray for every man that's listening today, that's watching, that you would give us strength and courage to live as rock solid men, that you would draw us to your word and to relationships with other men, Lord, that you would help us to serve you with all of our heart, mind, and soul and strength. And love you and love our neighbor. And Lord, that you would help us to not feel like our striving is accomplishing anything more, but that you accomplished at all, so that we can rest and be victorious because of our relationship with you. In Jesus' name, Amen.