

# Hold Fast

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One chapter in Philippians, chapter three, I think. Let's see, still in chapter two, chapter two of Philippians, chapter two, verse 16, Philippians 2:16, Philippians 2:16. Holding fast the word of life so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. Yes. And if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

For the same reason, you all shall be glad and rejoice with me. Let's pray. Oh, Father. As we approach the scripture, Lord, I just ask, Lord, that the benefit that comes from it would be one that impacts our life, that leads us to an understanding spiritually of the conditions that confront us and what we have to do in them. I thank you for this time.

In Jesus name, amen. We were. I came back yesterday and I was out at the farm and there was hay bales out there, old hay bales, slimy, heavy, old soggy hay bales. They normally stand up, you know, they're four by four. But these are just kind of.

Just kind of like a heavy wet mass. And so I thought, well, I'm cleaning up the farm, I'm going to put them on the trailer and bring them back and then we'll. We'll throw them off and use them in the gardens. But they just kind of plopped on the trailer. And so when I got the trailer back here, I tried pushing them off and they were just like.

They wouldn't push, you couldn't grab. They were slimy. And so we had the whole crew out there hooking chains to them and some pushing, some pulling. We tried boards and we got these slimy bales off. But in the meantime, our cow, Buttercup, she just came and just wanted to hang out.

She was roaming free and just came and just hung out by the trailer, was just nosing around, tasting, smelling, checking everyone out. And Obed was watching her. And Obed had the idea, I want to ride that cow. I want to get on that cow. And so the cow would kind of go up to the dump truck and then Obed would climb on top of the dump truck and I jump on her.

And then she would go alongside the trailer and he would go over to the trailer. How do I get on this cow to ride her? Right? And Buttercup may sound nice, but she's really quite the fierce cow, right? But so Obed gets on the cow and the cow, you know, just makes a few moves.

And here goes Obed he falls off, and Obed wants that. He's looking for another chance to get on. Buttercup gets back on her and she bucks him off again. And so he said, we need a strap around her. So we got a strap and we tied it around her like a bull strap.

And Obed got on there and. And he held on to Buttercup and she gave her a couple little kicks or bucks. And Obed stayed on because he had something to hold onto. This was a slippery thing to hold onto without something. And so here we see in verse 16, the idea of holding fast to the word of life.

The truth is that the position you and I are in is not near as secure as we think it is. So my question to you today is, what is the slipperiest position you have been in? The slipperiest position that caused you to lose your footing. Anyone? The slipperiest position on a pair of skis, they feel slippery until you catch that edge, right?

Until you know what to do with it. Anyone else? Slipperiest position? Skateboard. On a skateboard.

Yeah, that's slippery for me. It's scared under attack. Okay, slippery position for me. It was last. I don't know, it was last year.

We had that frozen black ice on the road and we decided we got to go feed our cows and we made it to the top of Langley Hill. Then I was like, you know, I don't know if I want to be on top of Langley Hill with it all ice. And so we got over to the side, put one

wheel in the gravel and then had one person pushing on the car from the front and just inching down the road so it slide down the hill and would push and slide more. I was like, I don't like being up here anymore, just sliding. Some tow trucks tried to make it up from the other side and they couldn't make it up Langley Hill.

It was just ice. Slippery, slippery. Well, the truth is, this position we are in on this earth feels secure. But the truth is, it is actually a slippery position spiritually that we need to hold on in. Here in verse 16, we're told to hold fast.

The word of life. Jesus describes himself as being the way, the truth and the life. This is this word that was delivered to us once and for all to give us hope from the darkness that we used to live in. And it's been delivered to us. But it's our position, our need to hold fast to it.

In a slippery world, we have to hold, hold fast. And so I'm going to look at some of the areas or reasons that it's important for us to hold fast to this word of life. Just like Obed on that cow, we need to hold on to something firm because of the slippery positions we find ourselves in.

Go to 2 Corinthians first.

It's interesting in this we think of things that we are to do, and sometimes we're focused on those great things, ministries or opportunities. But there's a whole bunch more said in the Bible in the New Testament about holding fast than doing something great from God. Just keeping on in the place that God has for you. 2 Corinthians 4.

Okay. In 2 Corinthians 4:16, it says, Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The reason we hold fast to that word of life is because it is actively working in us. A spiritual work. It is not one that is physical or can be seen or felt externally. It is an inward work that God is doing. When we do not hold fast, that work which God is doing in us falls apart.

It is necessary to hold fast to that work which God is doing in us. Back in Hebrews we see some dangers here of not holding fast.

In chapter 11, chapter 12, it says, Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down and the feeble knees in chapter 12, verse 12, and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. There is a danger if that spiritual work which God is doing in us, if we don't hold fast to that work, that that slipping becomes a permanent condition. Everyone knows that if sliding is corrected, it leads to a destruction. It just never stops. If you don't stop sliding, the end result is some sort of destruction.

There needs to be a recognition that God is doing a work in me and to hold fast to that work so that that thing which God is doing may be built up. One of the reasons we need to hold fast. I'm going to go to Revelations chapter three is because God has been doing a work in an area before. You and I are here in chapter three of Revelations, chapter three of Revelation, verse two.

As a church, I believe there is a necessity for us to hold fast in chapter three, verse two of Revelations, Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die. For I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard. Hold fast and repent. Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

Here we see that here is a portion of the church that is danger of sliding away that which had been alive, dying. We live in a community that has been blessed because of a group of people who have held fast to the faith before us. They felt that the preaching and the teaching, the communion of believers was of such an important part in the community that they sacrificed to make a church happen. We look at our

spiritual ancestors here in Kapelis, and they held fast in the midst of difficult times to ensure that we have a place, that this community has a light. And so you and I are encouraged spiritually, our own self, to hold fast.

But we're also encouraged communally as a body to hold fast that this community may have a witness in the future. We see so oftentimes that churches are not holding fast. Oftentimes that witness which was in the community is extinguished and goes out that that community, the witness that they received, is no longer there. I'm going to go back to Hebrews, a scripture that we already read this morning in Hebrews, chapter 5. Let's see where we are in chapter 4, verse 14.

Seeing we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with us in our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. We're encouraged to hold fast because Jesus himself passed through the heavens.

Does someone just want to go ask him if he wants to sit down? Maybe that would be better.

Okay, verse 14. Seeing that we have a great high priest who passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. The most important reason we have to hold fast is because Jesus himself passed through the heavens. This is not talking of him being like a shooting star, like the moon or the sun crossing on his zenith. Right?

This is. He passed through the heavens. He broke through a barrier that separated you and I from. From God the Father. And he passed through the heavens because of that work which he did upon the cross, offering himself as a sacrifice that you and I might partake of spiritual blessings, the grace of God in our lives.

We who had previously been only aliens and at warfare with God because Jesus made that breach, opened up that door for us, that we might partake of those blessings because he offered this great spiritual service to us. Hold fast. There may have been

an opportunity in your life where you have gone through a great deal of trouble or finances to provide something for somebody else, right? A gift of some sort, and they didn't want it, they didn't appreciate it, they didn't receive it. And the feeling is, oh, that's discouraging, that they would not receive what you offered them.

But here we see that Jesus has gone through this work to offer us a spiritual lifeline, a sacrifice, an ability to enjoy blessings. And we're called to hold fast because of that sacrifice. Hold fast. We're going to go back to Philippians, back to Philippians.

My desire today in looking at this, this holding fast in a recognizing that the situation or the circumstances, the life that we are in, is a slippery one. It's my desire to encourage people strongly to hold fast. That whatever position you might find yourself slipping away, letting go, thinking that a little sliding down is not such a big deal. My encouragement to you and your spiritual condition is to stop the sliding and hold fast. Hold fast.

Because sliding never corrects itself. It's a downward slope that has no end. It leads into a pit of destruction. If we want to stop sliding, there has to come a moment in a person's life where they hold fast and stop the descent. There are many reasons to do that.

We're going to continue in Philippians. Philippians, Philippians 3. It says holding fast. The word of life. That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Paul's encouragement to these Philippians is to hold fast in the midst of all the difficulties you are encountering. Hold fast. In the slippery position and all the persecution and what you're going through. Hold fast. The time is coming when there's going to be a redemption, there's going to be a work done.

We're going to see in the end why it's necessary. But for now, even though you don't understand, hold fast to what you've been given. His desire is that you hold fast so that he would see a return on his labors. A return on his labors. I can't help thinking about my dad.

Praise God, is feeling better and has more energy and courage. But a couple of months ago, it wasn't that way. Right. I think there was a feeling of dread in some of our lives, that that descent in his health might continue. But one of the things that made the most difference to me was we were in a board meeting and my dad was commenting on his health and where he was and feeling like, hey, my life might not continue much longer if this line keeps going.

The end is only death not too far away. Praise God, that that has been postponed for the time being. But in the board meeting, Jeremy and Jason and I couldn't help but recount the spiritual involvement from his life that enabled us to stand in the position we were in. And it was probably the most powerful board member meeting that I can remember. Just the recounting his spiritual involvement and where it has left us as people.

I can't not think about Pastor Newt, Razor and Ann and some of the people that were part of that church originally, way back when, that their desire is to see individuals hold fast to that ministry, that energy that they put forth into their community, into people's lives, a desire to see that energy, that investment bring spiritual fruit. Paul here has compared himself at times to a hard working farmer. And his goal is not just to play in the dirt. He wants to see spiritual fruit from his labor. He compared himself to an athlete, and as an athlete that he wants to run in such a way as to receive a crown.

He compared himself to a soldier whose desire is to please the commanding officer. And as a result, his desire is that spiritual involvement that he has in people's lives would last, would bear fruit. If you think of your desire for your children, you want them to stand strong in the ways that you believe are right to that which you committed to them. And so here also Paul is encouraging these Philippians to hold fast. Hold fast.

The truth is that you and I, at some point in our life, we'll have to give an account for our labors. We don't want to be the people who hid our labors in the ground, but rather we want to be those people who had received a good inheritance, a good recompense

from that investment. And so Paul, as I'm sure anyone would be in my position today, is encouraging people to hold fast. I want to see as someone, as a father in my children, as someone who is seeing a growing influence in a family as my children marry, as an individual who works with people, has involvement as a community, but also as someone who's been given the opportunity to preach publicly. I want people to hold fast, to stay strong, that there is a way which has been shown, given to us by God through that work of Jesus Christ, which cannot be compared by anything else in the world because there is a real spiritual work happening in the lives of every individual.

God is actively working behind the scenes. My encouragement to people is that they would hold fast. Stop the sliding, grab hold, find something to grip on and plant your feet and stop the downward momentum. Hold fast. Because this community as a whole needs an active witness of Christ.

It needs individuals still here in the future to demonstrate who Christ is. We don't want the light of Christ's witness to be extinguished anywhere. So I encourage people to hold fast. We need people who have a firm footing who can rescue others. Everyone loves the individual who is on slippery footing.

Maybe at an ice skating rink or something and they can barely stand up themselves and there they are trying to save someone else lighting, they both crash down. We need individuals who will hold fast so that there's someone else someone else can hold on to, someone who has good footing. In verse 17 it says, yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Paul is saying, look, if it takes my life as an investment in you to get you to hold fast, it's worth it. It's worth it if it takes me and my life.

Paul's saying here, being poured out, all the things that he may have wanted, he may have desired, giving that up for their footing. He says it makes him glad. I am glad and rejoice with you all. If I can go back to maybe my dad and Newt, thinking back about their years of service in this community, the lives that they have impacted, everyone, just to give you some idea, the spiritual investment that you place in someone else does not mean you have nothing else to do. The time that they invested in hurting and



broken people, it wasn't just because they were boring people.

No, it was a spiritual sacrifice that they chose because of the belief that the return on the investment was worth it. And here Paul says, I am glad and rejoice with you all. I can think of my dad in the board meeting. I hope that he was encouraged. As Jason and Jeremy and I related the change in our lives as a result of the investment of his life.

I hope that he felt that his sacrifice was worth it. I hope that there was a joy in him like John says in John, I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth. You might do a lot of fun things, you might like a lot of doing things, you might like to have lots of fun. I'm saying friends. Fine, fine, Nice.

But I'm saying John said there's no greater joy that he experienced than seeing his children walk in the way of truth. And I hope that Newt, upon his dying, he could also say, I am glad. I think I pray. My dad says I am glad and rejoice for that investment. But it's also an encouragement for us to finish in verse 18.

For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me that our investment because of holding fast, will produce that same joy and gladness in our lives as we influence the lives of people around us. If I can just say to you one more time as if you respected me, or if I could say something to you that you would take from me, everything you say about me is actually not true. It's actually a whole bunch worse. Let's just get that absolutely out of the way.

No questions. But if I could say something good, it would just say, hold fast. Hold fast. There's nothing been delivered to us that has the same quality. Quality as that work which Jesus accomplished by passing through the heavens.

There's no Lord worth serving like Jesus, so hold fast. There's no Word of God that gives us the ability to confront this life like this Word of God. So hold fast. And we're going to see God's work accomplished at some point. Let's pray.

Father, we do just give you this time. And Lord, if you could encourage us to hold fast, to hold on tight, Lord, in this slippery and sometimes challenging world, Lord, just ask

you to do it in Jesus name, Amen.