

## Standing in the Stead

Ezekiel 13:5 Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.

Ezekiel 22:30 And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

Joel 2:17 Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

How would you define the term friendship?

A friend is one who walks in when others walk out.

A friend is one who knows you as you are, understands where you've been, accepts who you've become and still gently invites you to grow.

Friendship is the greatest asset you can ever give someone!

Henry Penn, former president of the Society of American Florists, tells what he calls one of the most memorable incidents of his life as a florist. One day two boys and a girl about ten years of age made a visit to his store. They wore ragged clothes, but had clean faces and hands. The boys took off their caps when they entered the shop. One of them stepped forward and said solemnly, "We're the committee and we'd like some very nice yellow flowers."

Penn showed them some inexpensive spring flowers, but the boy said, "I think we'd like something better than that."

"Do they have to be yellow?" asked Penn.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Mickey would like even better if they were yellow, because he had a yellow sweater."

"Are these for a funeral?" the florist asked quietly.  
The boy nodded. The girl turned to keep back the tears.  
"She's his sister," the boy explained. "He was a good kid... A truck... yesterday... He was playing in the street... We saw it happen..."  
Then the other boy added, "Us kids took up a collection. We got eighteen cents. Would roses cost an awful lot, Mister? Yellow roses?"  
Touched by the story of the tragedy and the loyalty and love of these youngsters, Penn replied, "I have some nice yellow roses here that I'm selling for eighteen cents a dozen."  
"Gee, those would be swell!" exclaimed one of the boys.  
"Mickey would like those," the other one confirmed.  
"I'll make up a nice spray," promised the sympathetic florist, "with ferns and a ribbon. Where shall I send them?"  
"Would it be all right, Mister, if we took 'em now?" asked one of the boys.  
"We'd kinda like to take 'em over and give 'em to Mickey ourselves. He'd like it better that way."  
Penn accepted the eighteen cents. The "committee" carrying the kind of flowers "Mickey would like" walked out of the shop. Said Penn, "I felt uplifted for days. Unbeknownst to them, I had a part in their tribute to their friend."

Our responsibility to our friends goes beyond the normal level.

### Luke 5:15-26

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Which is easier?

“arise thy faith hath made thee whole” or “thy sins be forgiven thee.”

God is unlimited in his ability to work in our situations!

We must be the friend that brings them to Jesus.

God is looking for someone to be the liaison between Him and the world...

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Where are the people who will not be denied by their loved ones?

Where are the people who will not be denied by their cities?

Where are the Caleb's of this generation?

Hell has our families, friends, community, and city in its Hall of Fame.

## Why?

Because we are not Standing in the Stead!

Ezekiel 22:30 And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

Nobody! Nowhere! No one!

Genesis 18:22-33

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.

23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

30 And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

33 And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Abraham went from 50 all the way down to 10 in bargaining with God!  
God wants to give us revival in our city!  
We need intercessors!

Luke 5:20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Our faith can turn the tide, we can stop the insanity, and wreak havoc on the devil's kingdom!

**Someone must Stand in the Stead!**