

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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## WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?

By Andrew Dow

Last October our hometown Astros played the Los Angeles Dodgers to determine which was the best team in Major League Baseball. At one point during that series of games I went to a drive-thru for lunch. The employee at the window—excited about the Astros chances—told me about a shirt he liked which simply read, “Beat LA.”



Don’t misunderstand me: I find friendly sports rivalries and banter to be innocent fun. I couldn’t help but notice, however, that this fan seemed to be more concerned about Los Angeles losing than Houston winning. He wasn’t *for* something; he was *against* something.

Have you ever noticed that we tend to identify people (both ourselves and others) more in terms of what they are *against* rather than what they are *for*? We see this a lot in political discussions where terms like anti-choice, anti-guns, anti-welfare, and anti-establishment are common.

You may think nothing of this subtle shift but this is especially problematic when it invades our spiritual lives.

Of course, Scripture expects us to be against certain things. Paul lists works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19–21. These are obviously things we should be against. Paul

rebuked the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 5 for not standing in opposition to the sin going on under its nose. To be sure, Christians are expected to oppose sin and error, but let me suggest that our stance against sin should not be our defining characteristic.

Christians are equally—in fact, probably more so—expected to stand for what is righteous, wholesome, and godly. Galatians 5:22–23 relays the fruit of the Spirit against which there is no law. We should stand for and promote these things in our own lives and in the lives of others. Peter tells us to resist Satan while “**standing firm in the faith**” (1 Pet 5:9).

Jesus sets the example in this: “**God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him**” (John 3:17). Jesus did not come to the world for the purpose of standing in opposition to it (although he was forced to do so from time to time). Jesus mission was positive. He came to do something, not merely oppose things. We should follow this model.

What stands out about the beliefs of this church? Are we strong against premillennialism? Are we anti-calvinism? Are we opposed to musical instruments in worship? I believe these are all things worth standing against. What good have we done, however, if this community knows all of the things we oppose but knows nothing about the things we stand for? What do we stand for?

We must take a positive stand for the Gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ (1 Cor 15:1–11). We must work relentlessly to broadcast this message to a world that so desperately needs the new life Jesus offers. Stand against error, but stand for truth!

## **SPEAK YOUR TRUTH?**

By Andrew Dow

One of the most frequently heard catchphrases today is the call to “speak your truth.” Listen to graduation speeches, award show acceptance speeches, or political and religious discussions and you’ll likely hear someone encouraging captivated listeners to “speak your truth.” At first this tagline might sound innocent enough. Perhaps what most people mean by this is that we should all have the courage to say what we believe whether others will agree with us or not. That is not necessarily a bad thing. However, this phrase—“speak your truth”—demonstrates a misunderstanding about truth and its nature.

You see, to say, “speak your truth,” implies that truth may be different depending on who the speaker is. This is the foundation of ecumenical, all-inclusive religion: *I’m ok, you’re ok; we can all be saved in our own unique ways.* This way of looking at the world ultimately rejects that truth exists in an absolute way. The truth, in this way of thinking, is whatever you or I want it to be at any particular moment.

First, let me point out that the notion that there is no such thing as objective truth is self-defeating and, therefore, illogical. If one man says to another, “There is no such thing as absolute truth,” all the second man must say is, “Is that absolutely true?” From a logical perspective the first man’s argument defeats itself and should not be taken seriously.

Second, however, we should note that the rejection of absolute truth is problematic from a biblical perspective. The Bible declares that “[God’s] **word is truth**” (John 17:17). Elsewhere we learn that “**grace and truth were realized**

**through Jesus Christ**” (John 1:17) who is also declared to be **“the truth”** (John 14:6). The God of the Bible does not allow His creatures to define truth for themselves; rather, He instructs and corrects them.

Truth is not personal or individualized. Your truth is not different than my truth. There is an objective, absolute standard of truth: God is that standard. All who reject God reject the truth. All who embrace God embrace the truth. Jesus said, **“If you continue in My words, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free”** (John 8:31–32).

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**AM LESSON:**  
Problems Comfortable  
Christians Face

**PM LESSON:**  
The Importance of Hospitality  
in an Inhospitable World

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”**  
**(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**