



Stand Up! Step In! Speak Out!

By Pastor Haywood A. Robinson, III

Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, “Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words. Acts 2:14



We've heard it. We've thought it. Or, perhaps we've even said it: "Don't just sit there, do something." Whether we witnessed an accident, coached a sporting event, or observed a mouse in the house, this urgent cry is often sounded: "Don't just sit there, do something." Imagine with me, how often God, as He observes our lives, thinks or says about us, "Don't just sit there, do something." Actually, He's done it over and over through the years. It may not look or sound the same in each circumstance, however, God sears this challenge into our inner being.

Now, God is action oriented, isn't He? When introducing Himself in Genesis 1:1, we find Him taking action. And this pattern continues throughout the Bible. Made in His likeness, we, too, are designed to take action -- to work for God, to witness about Him, to walk with God and to worship only Him. In many instances God instructs or inspires His people to employ any one or a combination of three actions: to Stand Up, to Step In and to Speak Out. Yes, there is a divine expectation that we take action.

For the preservation of her people, Queen Esther took these actions before her husband King Ahasuerus (Esther 5-7). Likewise, David, infuriated by the insults hurled at God by Goliath, took action (1 Samuel 17). Naaman's servant girl and soldier, for the sake of Naaman's healing, stood up, stepped in and spoke out (2 Kings 5:3, 13). More could be said. How about Boaz, on behalf of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 4:1-12) or Barnabas, in the interest of John Mark (Acts 15:36-41)? Then, there's Elijah on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-40), Rosa in Montgomery, Martin in Washington, and Jesus on Calvary (Luke 23:33).

Beloved, the Church of Jesus Christ is not exempt from this divine expectation and directive. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit pushed the Church to take these very actions. Notice that each believer stood, stepped and spoke. I find it significant that Luke, as he pens this Book, chooses to highlight Peter as one who illustrates this pattern. Let's quickly take a look. When the believers were mocked as being drunk with wine, the text says, "But Peter stood up with the eleven" (Acts 2:14). Ah, he Stood Up! What does it mean to do so? It means to shift one's position. Peter shifted his position; he **Increased his Visibility**. This is so important. Why? When Christ was arrested, Peter withdrew his visibility and association with Him. But once filled with the Spirit, he heightened his visibility. This perhaps is the first action we must take as witnesses for Christ...Stand Up!

The next action could easily be missed because it appears to be subsumed in the third action. Here it is: Peter **Increased his Volition**. Yes, his will was raised to a new level. Although he stood up *with* the eleven, he alone stepped in the conversation. All of them spoke about the wondrous works of God, but,

when mocked and challenged, only Peter stepped in and positioned himself for rebuttal. Let's not ever forget that deciding to speak or to sacrifice or to shield is, in fact, a critical action. Stepping in on behalf of others is among the most Christ-like actions disciples can take. It wasn't for himself, but for the nation of Israel that David stepped in to take on the giant. It was not for herself that Ruth stepped in to care for Naomi. And, it was not for himself that Jesus stepped in to be our atoning sacrifice on Golgotha's hill. During this period of isolation prepare yourself to step in as would Christ for the lifting and liberation of many.

Finally, we must Speak Out. Only after Peter elevated the position of his visibility and volition, did he **Increase his Vocality**. This is the third action. The text says that he raised his voice and addressed them" (Acts 2:14). And did that action ever make a difference. By the time he finished speaking, the people were "acutely distressed" (Acts 2:37). He had spoken with such clarity, courage and conviction that all they could do was to inquire, "What should we do, brothers?" (v. 37). When we speak out as witnesses for Jesus Christ, we can expect something powerful to occur. In this instance, 3,000 people from many regions of the known world were saved and baptized by placing their faith in the risen Christ. Because of the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit, they continued in fellowship, study, prayer and worship. People were left astounded by the supernatural feats they were performing through the power of the Spirit.

That was then. This is now. The presence, purpose and power of the Holy Spirit have not changed. What He was able to do during the infancy of the Church, He retains the ability and aspiration to do now. The question is, "Will we respond?" Will we take action?" How should the Church manage the madness of the malady paralyzing the world? Be Salt. But, that will require action. How should the Church respond to the midnight of sanctioned hatred and authorized criminal behavior? Be Light. Again, that will require action. The world is wasting away while we wait for someone else to act. So, don't just sit there, do something!

The events that took place on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 should inform our actions. As a gospel pearl from the past reminds us, "God specializes in things thought impossible." Like Peter, make the shift now! Let's Increase our Visibility -- Stand Up! Let's Increase our Volition -- Step In! And, let's Increase our Vocality -- Speak Out! Then we'll discover that God still can do "what no other power can do."