

# The Water Oak

Hymns from "Favorite Hymns of Grace."

## Greeting and Opening Prayer

### Hymns of Worship

'Tis So Sweet	p. 12
Only Trust Him	p. 13
Rock of Ages	p. 14

## Devotional Summary: "The Water Oak"

***"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1-2 KJV***

**Prayer:** Holy Father God Almighty, we thank You for this time You have given us to gather together. We worship You and we ask Your blessing upon us as we reflect on Your marvelous Word. Minister to each of us just as we have need today...in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

### Devotional:

We are saved by grace through faith. What a wonderful gift our salvation is! Let's talk about faith for a minute. Not faith in just anything – it is believing in the person and the work of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. And there is a very important component in this great action that we call faith: faith does not stop believing! It just keeps on believing and believing. When it stops believing it is no longer faith, is it? This "non-stop believing" is also called perseverance, or endurance, or patience, or (*drum-roll*) faithfulness.

Faithfulness is **the strength** to stand. The grace of God is **the only good ground** on which we can stand. All else is quicksand. **"On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand!"** [words from "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less" by Edward Mote, 1797-1874] We cannot stand on our good works, though we strive to be the best God empowers us to be. We cannot stand on how much money we put in the offering plate, though we strive to be generous to others as God gives us the means. We cannot stand on our church attendance, though we rightfully long to be in fellowship with other believers every chance we get. We cannot stand on our father's or mother's relationship with God, though we are grateful for their influence in our lives. We cannot stand on how big the church is that we attend, or who our preacher is, or any other created thing in the universe. No! We rely only on the precious grace of a loving, faithful, merciful Father God who has paid all our debt for sin on the Cross of Calvary through the unselfish sacrifice of His only begotten Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ! **On this we stand! In this we place our persevering faith.**

You will notice in our text the phrase, "wherein we stand." When the temptations pull...we stand. When the sorrows roll over us...we stand. When the fears assail us...we stand. When the doubts creep in...we stand. When the devil accuses...we stand. We stand on the promise of God, that whosoever believes in His only begotten Son, **shall not perish but have everlasting life.** We stumble, we struggle, we cry out in pain...but we stand. We stand and we keep on standing on the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider, as illustration, some trees that grow close along the seacoast. In your travels you may have noticed some beautiful old trees that stand firm against the winds coming in off the

ocean. It is obvious that they have grown there and survived through good weather and through bad. There is one type of tree along the Atlantic coast that stands out: the water oak. Some call it "live oak."

The water oak is striking with its thick trunk, stout sprawling limbs, deep green, narrow leaves, and its coarse, furrowed bark. Though not the tallest trees, they are the picture of sturdy and strong. These stately trees form a huge canopy of cool shade where children can play in the summertime. Adding to the impression of their strength is the way the prevailing ocean winds have shaped some of them over the years. Those nearest the ocean look swept away from the shore, with limbs leaning and bending inland. But they are just as vibrant and lush as they can be! They sway and give, but the howling Nor'easters of the Atlantic Ocean cannot break them. They are strong. Through all the children climbing and playing in their limbs, all the decades of cold fronts, all the summer thunder storms, all the hurricanes crashing in from the Atlantic... through it all the water oaks endure, they stand!

This is a picture of the perseverance of Christian faith. Through our "standing faith" God is lovingly, graciously working in our lives with each trial and tribulation that we face. He is nurturing our eternal hope by building it on this gift of enduring faith in our hearts. Stand against the storms of pain and suffering. Stand against the howling winds of fear and doubt. Endure the trials. Trust Christ's saving grace: He is with you.

Listen as I read the three verses that follow our New Testament Lesson today: **Romans 5:3-5 (KJV) And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**

In the face of life's battles we can rejoice, because we know *"that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."* And this hope is special as it *"does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* Here is the strength that every child of God can draw on and rely on. God is our Helper and He lives in our heart! Oh indeed, Lord Jesus, abide with me!!!

**Prayer: Father, please give each of us a fresh revelation of your abiding presence! Teach us to rely on Your strength to stand in our faith in Jesus Christ. Please grant that each of us be faithful till we hear our name on Your lips calling us home...in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.**

#### Closing Hymn

My Faith Looks Up to Thee p. 7

#### Prayer Requests and Corporate Prayer

#### The Lord's Prayer

#### Recessional

© Copyright, 2015, Christian Concourse Ministries, Inc., Norfolk, VA. All rights reserved.

Unaltered copies permitted for non-commercial use in long-term care ministry.

Web: [www.christianconcourse.org](http://www.christianconcourse.org)

Email: [chco@christianconcourse.org](mailto:chco@christianconcourse.org)

Phone: 757-714-3133

