

Victory of the Lamb – January 6, 2019

Living Forward – God Strong – 2 Timothy 3:14-17

When my kids were little I would get down on the living room floor and wrestle with them. I would pick them up pretend that I was going to body slam them. I would put them in arm bars, leg holds, tickle them. I would pin them, I would let them climb all over me. We all had a great time. Often the dog would try to get involved. Which made the kids laugh all the more. Wrestling with my kids proved to be a great bonding time, a time when they would actually get stronger. And you know what one of my favorite parts of wrestling with the kids was? Feeling and hearing their heartbeat. I don't know if they were ever cognizant of my heartbeat but it was so special to feel and hear their heart beat.

As we move forward into 2019 our cultural setting is no longer the comfortable setting of God's living room. What we have thought our culture to be, our living room for fun, has now become an MMA ring bent on our destruction. This didn't happen over-night. We have been sliding into it for decades. This slide that we have jumped that sends into the muck and mire is known as relativism. See if any of this sounds true to you from what you have experienced in the world and maybe even in your own heart. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 **But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.** Relativism is the denial of absolute truth. In our media, all ideologies are presenting as equal. In fact, if there is a bad ideology out there it is considered to be Christianity. Here is an example: Did you know that Princeton began as a Presbyterian University. Princeton recently revoked an award Pastor Tim Keller was to receive because of his position on sexual morality. Closer to home do you know what the motto of the University of Wisconsin-Madison is: Numen Lumen – Latin for God is Light. And yet many of the professors and policies stand in stark contrast to the light of God's Word. We live in a post-Christian, post truth nation. That doesn't mean that there are no longer any Christians but what it does mean is that Christianity is no longer our culture's stabilizing center.

While in America we are being inundated with the false teaching that all ideologies are equally true it is not that way around the world. In 2017, an Indonesia Christian Governor was sentenced to two years in prison for blaspheming Islam; China still bans unsanctioned Christian gatherings, churches are being burned to the ground and Christians arrested, this has all happened in the last two months. When I correspond with friends in China there are certain words I don't use because of internet surveillance. I bring this to your attention because many of us didn't realize we aren't wrestling with the kids on the living room floor any longer we are fighting vs ideologies that are bent on the destruction of Christianity that come from within and without of our country. Truth based thinkers look to an outside, fixed, unchanging written standard to define right and wrong. Post truth thinkers look to their feelings, intuitions, cultural norms, and peers to define right and wrong.

Here are 5 forces that are shaping world events today: **1. Humans are sinning 2. Satan is scheming. 3. Ideologies are warring. 4. Western civilization is unraveling 5. God and his Word will stand firm forever.** Last November a large earthquake center just centered outside of Anchorage AK. It shook houses, schools, business, and people's lives. Right at 100% of the people understood that there was an earthquake. There is a spiritual quake that so many of us are numb to. And I want you to know we can

be God-strong in the storm. And we all need number 5. Like the time of 2 Kings the Word of God is around but it doesn't necessarily abound in our lives. We need to around and to abound!

We need strength in our lives. Tyler Strong. Tyler Trent passed away on New Year's Day. Tyler was a student at Purdue University. And he was a huge Purdue football fan. There were stories about Tyler and his cancer and the team on ESPN. Tyler made it to the Purdue/Ohio State game and Purdue pulled off the upset in his honor. Tyler made it to Purdue's Bowl game as well. The out come of that game was not as good for Purdue. Tyler touched a lot of lives and a lot of people helped make TylerStrong. There is a strength without compare, it actually transcends our space and time and strength. It is God-strong. To live forward we need God Strong in our lives.

As your pastor, I need to not only let you know about the difficulties in our world, acknowledge the difficulties in our day to day relationships, but also let you know we can do more than survive, we can thrive because of God in the midst of wrestling matches of ideologies, storms in life, etc and equip you to be followers of Jesus 2 Timothy 3:14-17 **But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

Without the truths of the Bible, we are *all* in a bad state (Revelation 3:17 - ¹⁷ **You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.**), because we cannot see the most obvious and the most necessary thing in the world — we cannot see the glory of God, the very thing for which we were made (Romans 11:36 - **For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.**).

But in his word, God opens blind eyes. Through his word, God answers Moses's prayer, the prayer of us all, if we know what it is we should ask for: "Show me your glory" (Exodus 33:18 - Not by coming to us mystically while we read, as if Bible reading were a magical incantation. God reveals himself *in* his word. He shows his glory through the ordinary words on the page (Ephesians 3:4, 8 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,).

So,, I want to set up some framework for you today so you can Live Forward, and live GodStrong. Your blue sheet has four spots for you to get Linked to Christ. The four are: Small Steps Facebook Group – facebook.com/victoryofthelamb; Let's watch a **brief video** so you can see how to go it! YouVersion – free Bible App with many, many Bible reading plans from reading the whole bible in a year to plans that are specific to families to simple living and so on; Your Time of Grace on facebook; and What About Jesus.com. It will have tons of answers to questions you have as well as the opportunity to sign up for daily devotions delivered to your email. Don't expect perfection but progress, don't look for behavior modification but look at life transformation as the Holy Spirit works in our life through the word.,

This past week Thursday when I went for my run, I listened 4 books of the Bible Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Now to be honest, I was out of it that day. I was running tired, I don't know where my mind was but it wasn't on the Scriptures and so while I was listening to it. I didn't get a ton out of it but this is what I got. Philippians – Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Colossians –

in Christ all the fulness of Godhead lives in bodily form. 1 Thessalonians – pray continually 2
Thessalonians – God is faithful even in times of persecution. (I needed a little help on this one so when I
got to my office I looked it up. I didn't have an audiographic memory but I was blessed with some very
powerful truths for life and for eternal life.

God wants to wrestle with you in his Word. Kinda like my children and I wrestling on the living room
floor. God is never going to hurt you, that doesn't mean it will always be easy, he is strengthening you
for what is next, and here is one thing you can always count on, he loves to hear and feel your
heartbeat. And when you wrestle with God in his word if you aren't careful you will hear and feel his
heartbeat. Because it is about relationship and not rules. It is about doing life together.

Keep in mind, Jesus won our match against the sin, death and Satan by wrestling with it on the cross.
Even though he died, he rose again. When we cling to Jesus, when we hold on hard, even when we have
hardships, we will notice that Jesus is and has and always will be strong for us. He will never let go. He is
God-strong.