

Westboro Baptist Church
August 17, 2014

We wrestle not (only) against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12).



Strong's says the word "wrestle" in that verse means a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down with his hand upon his neck. My take on that verse for this sermon is a little different. Beloved we are participants in a universal tug of war (with war being the operative

word) between Satan and the Saint. This is a face-to-face contest of strength and endurance. This is a team sport. There is no resting in this war, if you have someone not pulling their weight you instantly lose ground. I have watched brutal tug of war matches with big football players that sometimes took hours to conclude. What you get, you take by brute force, face-to-face from the other people/team. *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force (Mat. 11:12).* Gill says heaven "comes with force." It is a great and terrible struggle that the righteous get to heaven. In tug of war there is a center line with a white flag tied to it and each team tries to pull the center line towards them. Satan is trying to move the center line of sinful conduct so far to the left that the standards of God are completely forgotten among the sons and daughters of men. He is mightily trying to destroy all of the ancient landmarks, so no one will even remember what the standards of God are.



Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set (Pr. 22:28).

I have had the privilege of being here in this assembly for 35 years with you my brothers and sisters and I am thankful to say that God has not clouded our minds so that we have moved any of the landmarks. Beloved, in our particular tug of war with Satan the center line has not moved an inch in this place. There is no adultery or fornication in this body, we have no graven images or idols, and we have no women/Jezebel preachers. We have not changed our position of zero tolerance for homosexuality, same-sex marriage, abortion/murder, the doctrine of hell and reprobation or the hatred of God for the many and the love of God for a few. We

have not dumbed down the Word of God, caved to the hellish doctrine that “God loves everyone,” or given up the practice in the New Testament of the women having long hair and a covering like the Scripture says. You think this Church is weak? Think again! We are united and strong in and by Christ, and we know what we are doing here on this earth, and we fight for our King! You can shut your blasphemous mouth about this ship sinking! You are misinformed and wildly deluded.

Beloved, everywhere else in this world there has been great movement on those issues I just listed. Since I first came here, the gap has significantly widened between God’s standards, which this Church refuses to negotiate on and the rest of this world’s acceptance of blatant and outrageous sinful behavior. These last arrogant, stiff-necked and rebellious generations moved the ancient landmarks far. God will hold them accountable. I did not even know what a homosexual was when I was a boy. They were completely in the closet and certainly the matter was never discussed in churches – it would have been unthinkable. We watched a PBS Frontline television show on the catholic church where they had insiders at the Vatican on camera saying that homosexuality is rampant within the Vatican and

specifically within the Roman Curia which is the administrative arm of that whorish catholic monster. It is a literal "As the World Turns" soap opera of who is sleeping with whom there.

Beloved this Church is thankfully far apart from where this world is in terms of sin and the gap is widening every day. We are called "extremists" when they are the ones that have moved all of the landmarks of right and wrong. They are the extremists. Beloved, it has occurred to me that this fight is getting harder in this current environment. The fire is being turned up and that is exactly the way it is supposed to be as we head toward the return of Christ. We are being tested in every way and people do not stay here that are not absolutely committed to this endeavor. It is a separation of the "men from the boys." This environment, where we are so far from where the world is regarding sin, is not conducive to pretenders. Pretenders need not apply. There are no pretenders in heaven. No one sneaks through the gates of heaven or over the walls. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie* (Rev. 22:14-15). It is getting easier to determine the foolish virgins from the good virgins and the tares (weeds) from the wheat. Beloved it is hard work to grab this rope and hold on and not let up. *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* (1Th 5:21.) *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* (2Ti 1:13.) *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* (Heb 10:23.) ***But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*** (Rev 2:25.) ***Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*** (Rev 3:3.) ***Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*** (Rev 3:11.)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. (1Ti 6:12.) *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:* (Heb 6:18.)

It is grueling work. But we have exactly the number we are supposed to have. *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.* (Luke 3:17).

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. (Heb 11:24-27). This week I went to King Tutankhamun's (King Tut) exhibit that is touring around the country. King Tut reigned only a few years and died when he was only 18, around 1323 BC. This is the general timeframe of Moses, give or take a few hundred years. While the exhibit is reproductions it is amazing the wealth that was found in King Tut's tomb. The majority of the treasure remained intact, buried in the sand, and away from grave robbers for some 3,000 years. It was discovered in the 1920's in the Valley of the King's. The opulence is truly amazing. There were thousands and thousands of artifacts found in the tomb including a Treasure Room. Many of the artifacts were pure gold or gold encrusted. It took years to fully excavate the tomb because the sarcophagus' and treasure were so monstrously heavily and jam packed into the tomb. It is clear that the earthly fortune, power and opulence that Moses gave up was breathtaking, but it pales in comparison to the heavenly treasure he inherited.

The cry around us is getting louder, more intense and with more malignity. Beloved, the pretenders are willingly giving up their positions. They have become distracted and *are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection* (Luke 8:14). *They have no root, and for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away* (Luke 8:13). They have failed in their duty to *endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ* and instead *entangled themselves with the affairs of this life* (2 Tim. 2:3-4). They made the choice to stop the fight, put down the rope, drop their cross and *enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season* (Heb. 11:25) and head back to Egypt. Listen to the Apostle Paul: *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things* (Phil 3:18-19). People leave here for one reason, because they want to mind earthly things.

Make no mistake about it, this is an endurance test.

*Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: **but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*** (Mark 12:12-13).

*All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. **But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* (Mat. 24:8-14).



Beloved, this is playing out exactly like our Captain said it would. We have to endure the hatred of this world, we have to endure the betrayal of our loved ones, we have to endure great deception and we must endure iniquity all around us and focus on preaching and dig in and keep the rope in our hand and endure until the end. This is an endurance test and then the end shall come. Beloved, Satan is going to try and distract us, to wrestle the rope out of our hand. He and his minions will try and entice you with lusts, covetousness, and pride to deceive you to abandon your post and give up your spot holding the rope.

Beloved, if you are not actively engaged in the ministry and the work of Christ, then the rope is sitting limp in your lap. If you are not pulling your weight then the spot you occupy is wasted. *The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings (Isaiah 33:14)? For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God (1Pe 4:17).* Laziness is the difference between the five foolish virgins and the five good ones. Who will join us in this good work? Who will hold the rope with all your might? Is there not a cause?

When a person leaves this Church, their worldly burdens are immediately gone. Bang! The world no longer hates you, the religious strife is instantly over! But it is a shameful and a cowardly thing to their soul and it comes at an insanely high price. They have given in to self-seeking. Remember beloved, the strait and narrow path is difficult and arduous and the wide and broad way is easy, but it leads to destruction. Beloved, it is an easy thing to give up. It is a hard thing to stay focused

and hold on with everything you have. It was a hard thing for David to run to the battle with Goliath. When we were in Alaska we rafted down Class 5 rapids which are the most intense and dangerous. The guide in my boat was screaming at us to row as hard as we could as if our very lives depended on it. The upper core of my body hurt for three days after the rafting because I rowed so hard. That is the level of effort this task requires and which Christ demands and deserves, nothing less. What are you saving yourself for? *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* (Luke 9:23.)



Remember, there is a great reward for those that overcome, endure and hold the line. *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?* (Mat 5:11-13). The people that left have lost their saltness! *Let no man beguile you of your reward* (Col. 2:18). There is a great effort underway to beguile each and every one of you. *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* (Re 3:11) *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* (Re 22:12) *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.* (2Jo 1:8) Do not leave your posts beloved and give up your reward. You want the full reward beloved. *Behold, the Lord GOD will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.* (Isa 40:10)

That rope that we hold on to is the commandments of God, it is the righteous behaviors of Godly people and it is preaching in a waste howling wilderness these true things of God to a people that will not have it. That rope that we hold leads to heaven.

The rope is anchored by none other than our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, this is the time of the Church militant. Warfare is not fun. The strait and narrow path is not one of leisure, (Mat. 7:13-14) and of taking your ease and of self-seeking. Beware of self-seeking.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. (Heb. 12:11-12)

I have spoken with some of you that have told me that sometimes, for no apparent reason you are in heaviness. That is okay beloved. We get tired, our insides hurt because we are rowing so hard and because of great afflictions.

Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are

all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. (Psalm 69:18-20)

That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. (Rom. 9:2)

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up (James 4:8-10).

Adapted from Thomas Brooks: There may be, and often is, true grace, yes, much grace, where there is not a drop of comfort, nor ounce of joy. Though my comfort is gone, yet the God of my comfort abides; though my joy is lost, yet the seeds of grace remain. Spiritual joy is a sun that is often clouded. What though your comforts are gone, yet your union and communion with Christ remains (Jer. 31:18-20). Though your comforts are gone you are still a son, though a comfortless son; an heir, though a comfortless heir; a saint, though a comfortless saint. Your condition is no different than what has been the condition of those precious souls whose names are written upon the heart of Christ, and who are now at rest in the bosom of Christ. In this bloody spiritual war we sometimes hear Satan accusing us, our own heart condemning us, God's countenance turned and frowning upon us, the gates of heaven closed to us, the creation poised and armed against us and the mouth of the infernal pit of hell opened to receive us. But, remember this, Christ will come to your amazed soul and say "I have trod the wine-press of my Father's wrath for you; I have laid down my life a ransom for you; by my blood I have satisfied my Father's justice and pacified his anger, and procured his love for you; by my blood I have purchased the pardon of your sins, your freedom from hell, and your right to heaven! A pardon given unexpectedly into the hand of the malefactor, when he is on the last step of the ladder, ready to be pushed off, will cause much joy and rejoicing."

Beloved, just because we are in temporary heaviness and without joy or comfort do not let Satan get the advantage of you. This does not mean we are without God and without grace.

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to

buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Cor. 12:7-10)

Now, I want to give you something to rejoice about!

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? (Song of Solomon 6:10.)

Song of Solomon Chapter six is a discourse between, the Church, the daughters of Jerusalem and Christ. Verses 4-13 are Christ talking about the Church. This is specifically true of verse 10. This is eloquent language where Christ speaks of his love for and admiration of the Church.

The big picture of creation is not just that God created the universe down to the smallest detail and spun it out for eternity, made and created each angel and each man and each woman, that man sinned and fell from grace, that God through Christ provided a savior and elected some men to be saved and go to heaven and others to damn. The amazing part of this spectacle is the love story between Christ and the Church that overshadows everything else created; that Christ, so perfect, so pure, so true, so honest, clothed with light, (Rev. 1:13-16) and the best qualities ever conceived could take up with the Church, comprised of fallen man, so ugly, deformed, filthy, abominable, and made up of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores from head to toe.

Beloved, my proposition is that the most precious part of the reward we will receive if we endure to the end is not the crown (...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Re 2:10) No! We are going to throw that at the feet of our King (Re 4:10), for our love for him. It is not the heavenly bliss or the magnificent new body, or walking the streets of the New Jerusalem that is the main draw. The real reward is that you will spend the next life in the bosom and favor of Christ, and doing His work there, like you do His work here. One of our loved ones said, what about the eternal rest? *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God* (Heb. 4:9). Gill says this means the spiritual rest that believers have in Christ. You will

have eternal rest from affliction. You will have eternal rest from only seeing Christ in faith, but instead you will be in His presence. Beloved the true people of God are like the house of Stephanas, they were *addicted to the ministry of the saints*. 1 Cor. 16:15. *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...* (Heb 12:1). *You are going to judge angels* (1 Cor. 6:3). If we suffer with him we will reign with him (2 Tim. 2:11). The four and twenty elders in Rev. 4 on their four and twenty seats around the throne of God were reigning and doing the work of God. Heaven is not like the Muslims whose concept of heaven for their martyrs is that they get 70 virgins. Shut up with all the sensual talk. Your thoughts of God are too human and completely satanic, wrapped up in your lusts. The godless and endless pursuit of your lusts does not prepare you for the next live. But, this good work, this collection of fruit” does. You will love it.

And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures? (Mat. 24:32) Beloved your new and enlarged perfect hearts are going to burn within you every second of every day if you will hold on. Gill says: *Christ's words came with such evidence, power, and sweetness, that they were ravished with them; their minds were irradiated with beams and rays of divine light; their hearts were warmed and glowed within them; they became fervent in spirit, and their affections were raised and fired.*

You will personally take part in the most beautiful love story ever told or conceived. Christ is smitten with the Church and He talks of His great love for and totally inspiring affection for the Church in detail in Chapter six. Christ is not like man fickle with His affections to His spouse. He is completely enamored with and given over to her as the arch type of how a man should treat his wife in total devotion to and love for her. The strongest thing ever conceived in this universe is the love and loyalty Christ has for His Church.

Beloved, the Lord willing, next Sunday I will expound:

***Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?* (Song of Solomon 6:10.)**

I love you all Amen.