

“Primitivizing” and Prevailing

Text: Ephesians 6:10-19

II Timothy 4:7: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

“The month is March 2034 and two national security crises are playing out at once. U.S. warships have just been targeted and sunk by the Chinese navy. Hundreds of American sailors now lie at the bottom of the South China Sea. Meanwhile, a U.S. Marine Corps pilot testing stealth technology from the cockpit of his F-35 has just been captured in Iranian airspace. Iran and China, it emerges, are plotting together. The U.S. is plotting revenge.” You have just read the beginning of a fictional military thriller entitled, *2034: A Novel of the Next World War*. Although it is fiction, it becomes very sobering when you consider the two authors are Elliot Ackerman, a Marine Corps veteran who served five tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Jim Stavridis, retired four-star admiral and former supreme allied commander of NATO.

It is estimated by these dual authors that in approximately 15 years China will have reached a point where they can be successfully combative with any country in the world, with the expressed desire to defeat America. According to the book, by 2034 China will have advanced with equal or superior high tech methods with America. And one would surmise that the only way to defeat China would be through high tech. In the book, one of the American admirals observes that the way to defeat technology isn't with more technology; it is with no technology. In a recent interview Admiral Stavridis was asked about this and he gave a most interesting answer, “The word that I have used for this is primitivization, in other words, making something primitive. When I graduated from Annapolis, we learned how to navigate our ships using sextants and charts. Over time, we became very reliant on the Global Positioning System, GPS. And now today, the Navy is stepping back and recognizing that those exquisite electronic systems are in fact penetrable. They're jammable. They can be destroyed. So we are primitivizing, if you will, becoming extremely adept again at using our sextants and our paper charts. We need to expand that idea broadly. We need a Plan B in case our exquisite front-line systems can be defeated.” Then Ackerman chimed in, “I worked as a journalist as well and covered the war in Syria. And as I was speaking with this former jihadist, he said to me at one point, Albert Einstein predicted everything that's going on right now. Einstein said that the third world war would be a nuclear war, that the fourth world war would be fought with sticks and stones. And this old jihadist looked at me and said, you know, that's how we beat you in Iraq - with sticks and stones. So I think it's also a just a growing awareness that technology and an overreliance on technology can make you complacent to war's true nature.”

Five years ago I was asked to be part of the Pastoral Advisory Panel at Pensacola Christian College. Last week, I was part of this same panel of twenty-two pastors from around the country, along with the president and administrative officers of the college. It was rewarding, enlightening and instructive. But some of the most important part of those few days came on Wednesday when

horrendous storms between Houston and Pensacola caused a five-hour delay at the airport. It did not take long for all the preachers who were stranded along with me to come together and continue our discussions. This time there were no premeditated topics or questions. Everything was on the table. The preachers I was fellowshiping with were all twenty years or more my juniors. We talked about everything. They all seemed intrigued with my acquaintance and fellowship with some of the greatest preachers of the twentieth century. Then one forty-two year old pastor of a great church in the west made some comments, followed by the most penetrating questions: "Those were great days. There were many preachers in your early era, great preachers. What happened? Where are they now? Where did they go?" It should be fair to bring this truth to our attention and that is that there are many out there still serving Christ; the trouble is many are not traceable through the monster of social media. And many in our ilk, when recognized are scorned and mocked. On the other hand some have ventured into sin, thus disqualifying them for the specific calling of their lives. Then there are some that have become complacent in their situation. As one preacher said to me after a blessed ministry of several decades, "I just got tired of the fight."

Taking these two thoughts together, i.e., how to fight the good fight (in a high tech world), thus "primitivizing" and prevailing.

1. THE GREATEST THREAT IS FROM WITHIN.

In Mark 7:1-23, Jesus gives a very convicting teaching explaining that man's great problem comes from within, not from without. Proverbs 23:7a: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...." It is those secret sins that lay the groundwork for the great transgression. The Psalmist said in Psalm 19:13, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

In a January 1838 speech to a group in Springfield, Illinois, over two decades before being elected as the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln stated: "At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it -- shall we expect some transatlantic military giant, to step the Ocean, and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."

During the War of 1812, the United States Navy defeated the British Navy in the Battle of Lake Erie. Master Commandant Oliver Perry wrote to Major General William Henry Harrison, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." In 1970 cartoonist Walt Kelley used his cute little Pogo to parody this famous battle report to perfectly summarize mankind's tendency to create our own problems. In the now famous cartoon, Porky Pine (Pogo Possum's best friend) is raving about the beauty of their swamp home, which he calls a primeval forest. But Pogo

complains how difficult it is walking and then Porky Pine says, "It's hard walkin' on this stuff (referring to the superfluous pollution of the accumulated trash). Then Pogo gives the statement, "Yep, son, we have met the enemy and he is us."

2. SPIRITUAL WARFARE WILL BE WON BY PRIMITIVE TACTICS.

Jeremiah 6:16: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."

A. Separation: Jeremiah 10:2

B. Sanctification: Joshua 7:13; Joshua 3:5; II Corinthians 6:17, 18

C. Supplication: Psalm 30:8; Ephesians 6:18, 19

3. PREVAILING IS THE GOAL.

II Chronicles 14:11; I Samuel 14:6

CONCLUSION: Zechariah 4:6: "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

-Pastor Pope-