



June 2, 2020

Where the True Struggle Lies

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. -
Ephesians 6:12

When considering the power of ideas the important thing to remember is that we live at the intersection of two landscapes, the visible landscape and the invisible one. Paul speaks to this when he warns us that our battle is not against flesh and blood - it is not ultimately with people. This can be a hard pill to swallow especially when the list of those to blame seems to be endless, but what we are up against is much more formidable. The forces of darkness mentioned above are spiritual agencies that work with the ideas systems of the world. These are ideas we accept without thinking about them, and significant change can only come by breaking the stranglehold of the ideas and concepts that push Jesus aside, "the Author of life," when matters arise concerning the best way to live.

These evil systems dominate humanity through fear and self-obsession, so what is uppermost in our minds is usually our selves. We see ourselves as the main character and everyone else around us is playing a bit part in the story of our life. This is why considering the life and teachings of Jesus are absolutely critical for us to regain our footing. Over and over again he emphasized the importance of death to self, giving up our life, and not seeking to save yourself. What does Jesus say? "If you seek to save your life, you will lose it."

Now I'm not sure about you, but for me, this seems to be a familiar pattern in my life. When my thoughts are fixed on the visible landscape I'm living according to the wisdom of this world. What results is that we spend our time trying to save, enhance, and enrich our lives. This ultimately results in losing the most important things in life: an intimate relationship with God and others.

Practice: *When reflecting on the invitation of losing our life, the words of William Penn come to mind when he says, Christ's cross is Christ's way to Christ crown - a life possessed of power and love. As you consider the day's activities, what are the small ways God is inviting you to die to self as an expression of your love for Him and for others who are in need?*

With the Affection of Christ,