

# **This is the Day...Thursday**

**June 16, 2022**

## **The Strength of Kevin**

*“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.” (Psalm 46:1-3)*

In 1978, I graduated from Ashbrook High School in Gastonia. Ashbrook was one of the newer schools in the county. It was on the growing east side of Gastonia and close to many nice neighborhoods and communities. Most people don't know much about Ashbrook. But if you were a resident of Gaston County and a sports fan in the late 1970s and early 1980s you knew that Ashbrook's claim to fame was James Worthy. James led the Ashbrook Green Wave basketball team to a state championship. James went on to play ball for UNC and spent several years in the NBA with the Los Angeles Lakers.

While James was a nice guy and a great ball player, but he is not the first person who comes to my mind when I think about my high school years. That person is Kevin Stamper. No one ever heard of Kevin, and he did not become rich and famous. But when I was a young tenth grader, Kevin was a friend I could count on.

Kevin was a man in fifteen-year-old boy. In the tenth grade he was already over six feet tall. I'm not sure what he weighed but it had to have been over 200 pounds. He had a mostly full beard and a deep, thunderous voice that did not squeak like the voice of most of the boys our age. But inside his intimidating exterior lived a heart of kindness and compassion. Kevin could have wreaked havoc with his size and strength. His stature alone was enough to intimidate those around him. But Kevin's strength was not his size or his muscles. His strength was in his heart.

In 1977, at the funeral of one of our classmates who had been killed in an automobile accident, I stood beside Kevin at the gravesite. With tears in his eyes, he placed a small flower on the casket of the student who had been killed. Amazingly, Kevin had never met her.

God is our strength. God is our power, our muscle, our defender. God is the one with the loud, thunderous voice in our times of need. But God's true strength is found in His compassion and love for His children. God's strength is found deep within His heart and that is where your strength is found. We may not have a body of strength like Kevin's. But that is not where our true strength lies anyway. Your strength is found in your heart. It is found in your heart filled with the confidence that in your weakness, God is strong.

On this day which God has given you, be strong and courageous. Have a heart filled with compassion and love for those around you. Even for someone you have never met. That's where God's strength becomes your strength.