

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 Pulling Down Strongholds, Pt 2

Whenever I hear stories on the news like the one this past week – Murder Yale University { wall

A) Reminded there is a **spiritual battle afoot!**

There is a war going on for souls – for truth

B) There are strongholds all around us – that need to be pulled down!

C) Paul mentions **strongholds** in our text today – this is the only time in the NT that this word is used

1) It is easy understood because it is made of up two greek words which really mean *a place of strength*.

Cc) A place that is essentially and inherently strong.

D) It is not out in the open easily exposed and overthrown, but it is **well defended, a fortress** with walls and moats, difficult to attack.

E) **Spiritually speaking** it refers to places and situations where evil is entrenched, where it cannot be dislodged easily, it is powerfully defended.

But Paul declares that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal – fleshly – but mighty in God for the pulling down of Strongholds

A) They are not of the flesh – not of a physical nature

B) Spiritual nature – Mighty in God - The power of God is behind them.

That is why they are able to break through the strongholds and pull them down

A) Weapons capable of transforming lives / families / Churches/ cities/ Communities

B) Setting captives free – powerfully changing and transforming lives.

C) I want to consider this passage from 3 Angles today.

#1 Paul's Battle

#2 Our personal Battles

#3 Our Church Battle

Start with Paul's battle because we need to understand the context of what is being said.

A) That will help us to understand what these weapons are.

B) Too often when this passage is taught the context is ignored - -

1) **Weapons become random** { Do/Do/Do { It must mean this Speaking in tongues { taking authority over demons

C) That is not what Paul is talking about here: Not random at all.

To understand Paul's battle we have to remember the overall conflict or theme in the book

A) Paul's defense of his ministry & credentials

B) Paul had founded this Church – ministered there a year and ½ - but now he was gone.

1) They were waiting for a visit from him.

C) Paul had previously written a letter to dealing with some problems in the Church @ Corinth

1) The problems had been dealt with the pp were generally doing well

D) The first **nine chapters** of this letter are pretty positive and encouraging.

But there was this group that was still lingering in Corinth – who's true colors were coming out

A) Their lack of repentance and continued resistance of Paul and his teaching were becoming an issue.

B) Paul labels these men as false Apostles in Ch. 11:13

C) It is this group that Paul focuses on in Ch. 10-13

These men were trying to undermine Paul's ministry and credentials – to prop themselves up.

A) If they could be successful in getting the people to question Paul's heart – motives – calling

B) Then they could get the pp to question Paul's message. **The gospel**

C) Self promoters – boasting in themselves

Accusations: Spreading lies

A) Paul delayed his coming – can't trust him – how do you know his message can be trusted.

B) They accused Paul of being Manipulative –

1) Weak in person – Strong in his letters

C) Paul was a glory hound.

Those were the attacks they were bringing against Paul.

A) In fact in v. 5 Paul identifies that his battle was against arguments or reasonings - **prideful ideologies** that seek to exalt themselves above the knowledge of God.

Aa) Paul says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal of the flesh.

B) Paul was not interested in defending himself – he wasn't interested in winning a popularity contest

C) He wasn't going to stage rallies and try to win public approval.

1) Blogging his opinion of them

D) Many of these false teachers were self promoters

1) **Tearing down** each other in order to make themselves look better.

D) Paul just wasn't even going to go down that road

V.12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Paul was not going to stoop to that level – instead he would let his ministry speak for itself.

A) 4 Weapons that comprised Paul's warfare!

B) Truth, love, righteousness, Prayer

Truth: Paul would let the message of Christ do it's thing –

A) Paul said in 1 Corinthians – 1 Cor 2:1-5

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should

not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

C)Paul knew that there is a power in the message of the Cross to transform lives { not all of Corinth **

D)The Power of the truth was evidenced by the transformation that took place in the lives of the pp.

1)v.11 They were a part of his sphere of influence

E)Which was really the result & the impact of the truth that he preached.

Paul showed them THAT to take every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ was to simply embrace and apply the truth.

Example: They were having problems in the area of sexual immorality – temple prostitutes

A)Paul would write to them and share the truth – that their bodies were the temple of the HS 1C ch6

B)Belonged to God – to engage in sexual immorality wasn't just a sin – but defiled their temple.

C)Now listen: You embrace that truth: Your body is God's temple: His Spirit lives in

1) You will view Porn- premarital sex – any other form of sexual immorality in a whole different light

D)That was how Paul dealt with every situation and every stronghold

1)That is how every thought is taken captive unto the obedience of Christ.

D)Not going to rely on my feelings – my wisdom –

Line it up in relationship to God's word

1)Apply that to the situation – let that dictate the outcome.

So relying on the truth of God's word was Paul's primary weapon for ministry and battling the false accusations of these false apostles.

A)His other weapons of Love Righteousness and prayer are clearly outlined in the next 4 Chapters

B)Paul's Love for the body and his personal righteousness gave credibility to his message

C)His love was seen in that Paul in Ch.11 will say when I ministered there – purposely

didn't take anything from you. Not a burden to you

1) **Relied on other Churches!**

His love would also be seen – despite his beatings and trials – that were horrendous

A) Paul just kept coming back for more – kept sharing – energizer bunny –

B) IN Chapter 12: Paul will say that – **he was gladly spent or poured out on their behalf**

1) Even though the more he loved them the less he was loved in return.

C) There was no way they could question his heart – His sincerity his love for them and the Lord.

Concerning His righteousness

A) Paul's life and ministry would stand in stark contrast to these false apostles – self promoters

B) In fact Paul uses the word boast or boasting 20 times in these last 4 chapters { definite theme

1) **They boast in themselves –**

C) Paul says I boast in the Lord

1) In fact if I boast in anything about myself it will be my weakness –

D) God's strength & power are perfected in my weakness – **He gets the glory**

Those were Paul's proven weapons – they are still being used today to pull down strongholds

A) Example Wed Night – DVD inside the Rev

B) The strongholds of Islam are being pulled down today in countries like Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan

C) Message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached –

1) **Lived out by believers** – reaching out in love to enemies –

D) The Personal example of their lives living for Christ – impacting how they treat others

1) Christians all over the world praying

Result millions are coming to Christ

Those same weapons are used in Marriage

A) Wife married to a man not following the truth

B) Peter says don't nag preach – condemn

**1) He will be one by your godly conduct –
Living for Jesus**

C) Love and respecting him

D) That opens the door for him to hear the truth.

Powerful weapons mighty in God pulling down of strongholds

#2 Our Personal Battle

A) Strongholds today – Addiction / sex / Bitterness

B) At the heart of these strongholds is an argument that seeks to exalt itself against the knowledge of God

C) Lie: **You exist for you! Life is about you –
Your happiness – your pleasure – what makes you happy.**

D) My personal happiness is to be my Chief objective in life. { **You deserve a break today.....**

1) God wants me to be happy right

E) **Believing that lie – buying into **THAT** philosophy of life – pp rationalize all sorts of sin**

They get divorced without any Biblical precedence to do so

A) They get wrapped up into materialism – get in debt up to their eye balls

B) They commit Fornication –

1) **They hold on to bitterness**

C) All of these strongholds have at the core this fundamental lie – You exist for you.

1) Life exist for you! **At the heart of 99.9% personal strongholds**

What is the truth? – You exist for God –

**A) Made you – Sent his son to die for you –
Called you to repentance**

B) You exist for God – not the other way around – God doesn't exist for you.

1) Happiness is found in Holiness

C)Embrace that truth – The lie seeks to take God off of the throne in your life – the truth puts Him back

Listen those strongholds are torn down when we embrace truth and apply truth.

A)Believing truth must lead to behaving truth

B)God's commandments are God's enablements

1)God isn't going to tell me to do something that He isn't going to empower me to accomplish

Example: Flee youthful lust – Abstain from Sexual immorality –

A)I can do that

B)Don't steal – gossip – give into bitterness

C)Love your wife – Don't know her

1)respect your husband – Lord Him?

Embrace truth and step out in faith and walk in that truth – that is when the Power of God will be seen

A)Example Jericho} Didn't make sense – seemed stupid –

B)But God said it they believed it and acted on it

Bb) John 5 Do you really want to be made well?

C)Stronghold is my identity – comfort area

Excuse –

D)Strongholds are pulled down when truth is embraced and applied.

Another Great way of embracing truth and applying truth: is in worship

A)Paul in the prison songs in the night –

1)Not the blues – Big Al – blood on the saddle

B))Songs of Praise declaring the faithfulness of God

1)Job – though he praise him

C)Quit waiting for the desire to Change – You act and watch what God does!

D)My dad – quit drinking – acted – then his desire changed

#3 Our Battle as a Church: Community strong holds

Gangs – drugs – broken families

A) Pessimism is not our weapon – Oh things are getting so bad -

B) Waiting for the rapture is not our weapon

C) Retreating into isolation is not our weapon

Primary weapon: Preach truth – the answer is found in Jesus Christ!

A) I didn't die for anyone – Jesus died for you

B) Loves you He will not forsake you if you give your life to him –

**C) Problems might not get better – I can't promise your marriage will be better –
Unbeliever**

1) Your life will be better

D) Joy in the midst of your problems

1) You will discover The Grace of God is sufficient

Our Community: Ten different outreach ministries aimed at pulling down strongholds

**A) Solutions for change – ministry to the Homeless
Rehabs & D/A**

B) Jails

C) Camp Pendleton { Mainly serving now studies

D) Convalescent homes

1) Birth Choice

2) PRC

3) After School program

4) Salt and Light

4) Food Pantry

Ebo – Public schools

Highlight: Birth Choice and PRC

A) Love on women considering abortions

B) As well as those who have already had them.

1) Help them thru the guilt { that stronghold

C) Sharing truth – **sharing love of Jesus – Sharing what the Bible says about when life begins**

1) Ultra sound bus – See the baby – hear the heart beat - **TOUR IT TODAY**

C) Some of the volunteers – Had abortions – relate

1) Not condemn – but from a place of understanding

I love this prayer vigil idea – Not going to Protest

A) Wave mean signs and shout – hatred –

B) They are just going to pray - Pray for the doctor pray – to close the clinic

C) Great ministry – Get involved

1) I know PRC is in need of volunteers

Listen: Close with this – not here – playing Church

A) There is a battle going on – what we do here is meant to equip you to fight in the battle

B) If you are not in the Battle – { all about you}

You need to get in the battle – start serving

C) Living in the last days -