

HAUNTED BY THE PAST

Haunted by the Strongholds in My Mind

2 Corinthians 10:1-5

What Is a Stronghold?

- A stronghold is a fortified place, a defensive structure **Psalm 9:9 (KJV) 9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.**
- In Bible days, strongholds were places with thick walls, often located in places that were inaccessible like cliffs or on top of mountains
- The thick walls could withstand an enemy attack, any threat could be seen, and the stronghold was difficult to get to
- In times of trouble, believers run to God *our stronghold*, our fortified place **Proverbs 18:10 (KJV) 10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.**
- A stronghold can work for your good, but a stronghold can also work against you
- A *spiritual stronghold* are arguments, lofty opinions, attitudes, and thoughts raised against the knowledge of God
- Ignorance and error of God and His ways can be more binding than bars and chains
- The enemy operates from these dark, *hidden*, difficult to attack places
- Strongholds are rooted in *pride* because they rely on self
- Anything we place our trust in besides God can become a spiritual stronghold
- The word *stronghold* means both *fortress* and *prison*
- A fortress keeps *outsiders* from getting in
- A prison keeps *insiders* from getting out
- The stronghold that Paul is referring to in 2 Corinthians 10 are the lies the enemy has deeply ingrained our minds and beliefs that they can exert power over certain areas of your life
- You may even *know* the lies the enemy deposits in your mind are untrue, these thoughts still wage war in your mind attacking your self-esteem, self-worth, and your ability to resist accepting them as true
- These lies are like the thick walls of castle that insulate you from people trying to break down the wall to help you see the truth
- Strongholds can be both *rational* and *irrational*
- *Rational strongholds* are lies the enemy tells us that seemingly makes sense, and we believe it, i.e., “you can’t own a business because you don’t have a degree, nor any business experience, nor or any money”
- *Irrational strongholds* are *unreasonable* fears, worries, doubts, etc., i.e., you have irrational fear of failure so you never attempt anything, you have irrational fear of sickness cause you to think any illness could be terminal, you have irrational fear of rejection and so you never build relationships, or ask for what you need

How Does the Enemy Build a spiritual Stronghold in Our Lives?

- The devil can build strongholds in our lives in many ways
- Many of the beliefs and attitudes we have may have come directly from the environment we were raised in at home, our neighborhoods, schools, jobs, etc.
- These attitudes and beliefs can develop into strongholds
- Strongholds may start with a hurt or disappointment we experienced, and the enemy uses lies about that hurt in our minds to erect a stronghold about people, about God, or about who we can become or accomplish

HAUNTED BY THE PAST

Haunted by the Strongholds in My Mind

2 Corinthians 10:1-5

- Strongholds can also develop as a product of traumatic experiences in our lives, i.e. death of family member, a divorce, mental or physical abuse, etc.
- It is true that you were betrayed by a person you trusted, but the devil lies about the betrayal to build a stronghold that you must be independent and trust no one
- You were told growing up, you were not as smart, athletic, or good looking as another sibling, over time we buy into the devil's lies and allow him to build an inferiority complex in your mind that you are less than other people and there's no use in trying to be the best you can be
- The devil can use almost anything and build a stronghold in our minds; here are few examples spiritual strongholds:
 - *Unconfessed sin*
 - *Bitterness and unforgiveness*
 - *Discontentment*
 - *Jealousy*
 - *Addictions*
 - *Lying*
 - *Low self-esteem*
 - *Relationships*
 - *Pleasing people*
- Any of these areas the devil will build a stronghold in your mind to take advantage of you and keep you in bondage

We Live in the World, But We Don't Fight Like the World

[3] For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

- Paul was being attacked by false teachers about whether he was truly an apostle
- Paul's accusers were saying that Paul was a coward because in his letters he'd write a stern rebuke to the church and but he was gentle when he was speaking with them face to face
- They were saying Paul was "carnal" or worldly, meaning he was really not saved
- Paul responded by saying although we live in the flesh, the war is not waged in the flesh ***Ephesians 6:12 (KJV) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***
- Virtually everything we do is in the flesh, we eat, sleep, do business, work, etc.
- We still live on earth, even though we're spiritual people
- What Paul is saying flesh and blood doesn't have an impact in a spiritual battle
- When I speak of human strength, I'm not just speaking only of physical strength, but intellectual, economic, cultural strength, too
- The word *war* means "strategy" or campaign, meaning if we are going to win this spiritual battle, we can't rely on an earthly strategy
- Paul knew to win the war, he would need a *divine strategy* and weaponry
- Although you only see a man, I don't fight like you, I fight on a whole different level

The Weapons of Our Warfare

HAUNTED BY THE PAST

Haunted by the Strongholds in My Mind

2 Corinthians 10:1-5

[4] (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

- If you are going to war, you must have weapons, and not just *any* weapons, they must be the *right* weapons
- Paul says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal
- What are these *carnal* weapons?
- Carnal weapons are our skill, ability, charisma, personality, genius, personal philosophy, etc.
- But the spiritual weapons we have at our disposal are not of this world and are extremely powerful
- Our spiritual weapons are “mighty through God”
- We have at our disposal literally the weapons of God, we have access to God’s arsenal
- What are our spiritual weapons?
- Your spiritual weapons are:
 1. *The Word of God* – is the sword of the Spirit
 2. Putting on the *whole* armor of God
 3. *Prayer and fasting* – strengthens you when you under attack and reveals to where your weaknesses are
 4. *The Holy Spirit* – empowers you to withstand and overcome any attack, helps you keep your commitment to God
- Jesus triumphed over death, hell and the grave using these weapons
- If these weapons worked for Jesus, they’ll work for you and me

Pulling Down Strongholds

Vs. 4 “...but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] **Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, ...”**

- What can these spiritual weapons do?
- *These spiritual weapons pull down (destroy) strongholds*
 - Strongholds are those fortresses, walls, fortified places the enemy has constructed in our minds and they must be destroyed
- *God’s weapons will cast down imaginations*
- Destroying *imaginations*, those *uncontrolled thoughts* that are evil, lustful, immoral, unjust, wrong, untrue that set against the word of God and are designed to control and ultimately destroy you
- *God’s weapons will destroy every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God*
 - God’s weapons will destroy false ideas about God, false doctrines, false teaching, human pride and arrogance, self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, etc. and anything that sets itself up against God
- *God’s Weapons will help you bring into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ*
- The battle we’re in is for the mind and the devil knows whoever controls the mind, controls the person
- You must take your thoughts captive, before they take you captive!
- You take authority using the Word of God

HAUNTED BY THE PAST

Haunted by the Strongholds in My Mind

2 Corinthians 10:1-5

What Has Been Destroyed Has to be Replaced

Vs. 5 "...and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;...

- Spiritual strongholds are not defeated and destroyed just by wanting to "do better" or "trying harder"
- You must *replace* the enemy's claim on your mind and emotions by *repenting* for allowing those strongholds to develop in the first place
- Confess and repent of the known sins in your life and receive God's forgiveness ***1 John 1:9 (KJV) 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***
- Renew your mind daily with the word of God ***Romans 12:2 (KJV) 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***
- Forgive the people who have hurt, not because they deserve it, but we forgive because Jesus forgave us ***Ephesians 4:32 (KJV) 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.***
- Be faithful in attending church and receiving the preached word of God
- Be in fellowship with and accountable to strong believers
- Reject the lies the devil had you believing about yourself and focus on God's truth ***Philippians 4:8 (KJV) 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.***
- The issue of your value and worth has already been settled at the Cross of Jesus Christ!
- You must take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ