

Holy Spirit & Freedom from Strongholds

Holy Spirit & Kingdom Within 5

I. Intro —

Sequoia Christian School!

The Hill Farm... Growing after persecution.

Nepali converts baptized!

[sl. 1]

Josh & Sarah McGready ... Santa Maria Valley Healing Rooms

II. Holy Spirit, Abundant Life, Freedom

A. The Kingdom, the Thief and Abundance

Lk 12:32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Jn 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it **abundantly**. [sl. 2]

B. Stopping the Thief ... Three Weapons

Some friends gave us a little booklet by Ed Silvano on "Strongholds." In it, Ed identified 3 weapons the thief uses to rob us of the royal life of superabundance.

1. Sin — the **active** weapon of temptation, to entice us into sin which produces death.

Matt 4:3 And the **tempter** came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones ..."

2. Accusation — the **passive** weapon that paralyzes our witness. He reminds us our past failures and amplifies current difficulties.

Rev 12:10 ... for the **accuser** of our brothers has been **thrown down**, who **accuses** them day and night before our God. 11 And they **overcame** him by

3. Strongholds — the **dormant** or **hidden** weapon that makes our lives **inconsistent** and **unstable**, keeping us from consistent victory..

2 Cor 10:4 For the **weapons** of our warfare are not of the flesh but have **divine power** to **destroy*** strongholds.

II. Strongholds...Construction

A. How the thief enters and constructs a fortress prison...
Father of lies...

Praying and thinking about **how** the thief enters and builds a stronghold enters and gets built...

1. A Vivid Dream ...

I was on a large old property, an estate or university, many people around, but all unidentified.

Someone told me it was **time** to go up to a huge stone hall for a meeting. Perhaps a dining or lecture hall.

As I turned to go, I noticed my phone — suddenly half the screen was filled with vivid images representing a foreign foreign. It was graphic art, not actual photos, but fascinating images representing the beauty and intriguing nature of some far off land.

Quickly, this filled the whole screen with constantly changing images of different lands, overriding all other functions. I could not access any of the apps. It was out of control. I tried to turn the phone off and reboot.

I pressed and held the two buttons to turn it off, but they did not work! Feeling increasing panic, I hoped to wait until the battery died. Then I woke up...

Application: Like corrupted data floating in the cloud, the enemy's lies are around around us, waiting for an interface that accepts the signal. Similar to a virus entering a cell.

Once a lie enters and is established in our personality, it can distort and color everything else.

We can live like slaves, even though through Christ's Cross and Resurrection, we are more than conquerors.

2. Our Warfare... Identify... Demolish the structure... Dismantle the components... Build a Holy Culture (personal & communal)

2 Cor 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

4 For the **weapons** of our warfare are not of the flesh but have **divine power** to **destroy* strongholds**.

5 We destroy* **arguments** and every **lofty opinion** raised against the **knowledge of God**, and take every **thought** captive to obey Christ, **6** being ready to punish every **disobedience**, when your obedience is complete.

***καθαίρω** destroy completely: tear down and dismantling.

MESSAGE paraphrases:

2Cor 3:3 The world is unprincipled. It's dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn't fight fair. But we don't live or fight our battles that way—never have and never will.

4-5 The tools of our trade aren't for marketing or manipulation, but they are for:

demolishing that **entire** massively **corrupt culture**.

We use our powerful God-tools [of communication] for:

smashing **warped philosophies**, tearing down **barriers erected against the truth of God**,

fitting **every** loose **thought** and emotion and impulse **into the structure of life** shaped by Christ.

B. Strongholds and Perceptions

The MIND Structures Input (data) into associations or images. (Not the same as the brain)

If I say, "Coffee, Bacon, Eggs" you say breakfast

If I say, “Arguments, Opinions, Thoughts” you might say... “family gatherings,” but eventually eventually, you will come to “mind”

The mind structures our experiences and imaginations into a “personal virtual reality.”

But it may not be TRUTH. “Futile thinking”

We destroy* **arguments** and every **lofty opinion** raised against the **knowledge of God,**

The TRUTH will set us free... RENEWED MIND of mind ... mind of Christ

[s. 3]

There might be a Stronghold if.... We are powerless to change a situation that we know goes against the will of God...

Example 1: The Bible makes it clear that we are to **forgive** our enemies. It's a must.

But you may find yourself unable to forgive a certain person.

You can even say the words, I forgive ... but it comes back up again and again, incapable of doing something God expects of us. Obedience.

Example 2: He who finds a wife finds good (TOV). [Prov. 18:22](#)
matsa isha matso TOV and gets favor from the Lord.

Yet, two people can have so much trouble relating, that they start wondering if this is the best God can do.... How we perceive or the STATED WILL OF GOD. Strongholds are common

A SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLD is a mindset impregnated with HOPELESSNESS from which we accept as UNCHANGEABLE situations we know are contrary to the will of God. [s. 4]

A Distorted Truth will keep us imprisoned....

These “arguments” or speculations are conclusions based on an assumption that cannot be proven.

Lofty opinions are proud attitudes that rise up and stop us from truly knowing God in a particular area of our thinking, trusting, knowing, and loving.

C. How an STRONGHOLD Fragments Our Hearts and Minds.

When we read the Word of God or hear it Preached, we sincerely believe it, even saying AMEN or crying or rejoicing.

But as we walk to the parking lot, it can be put into a compartment.

Later, someone disappoints us, or a situation overwhelms us, or a fear, an addiction, a too good to be true investment, a tempting thought hits us and a totally different system of thinking and behaving can take over. Sometimes we ask, "Where did that come from?"

Too often, we sincerely believe that we are justified in our fear, greed, pride, lust, or whatever our response.

Where is this coming from? Trauma, offense, cultural pollution.

[s. 5]

James wrote about it.

Jas. 3:9 With [the tongue] we **bless** our Lord and Father, and with it we **curse** people who are made in the likeness of God. **10** From the same mouth come **blessing** and **cursing**. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

What is going on? [s. 6]

A stronghold has raised itself as a fortress against the full moment by moment knowledge of God and His great love. James calls it a double mind (two-personalities). One who questions, doubts God's clear revelations... "is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (**Jas. 1:8**).

The instability and compartmentalization robs our peace, makes it impossible to enjoy the fullness and superabundance of the

kingdom of God. Righteousness, SHALOM, and joy in our hearts, our marriages, our businesses, our ministries, our relationships in everything we do.

D. Characteristics of Spiritual Strongholds

1. Located in the mind. Sincere belief, but sincerely wrong.

Rev 3:15 “ I know your works: you are **neither** cold nor hot. ...
17 For **you say**, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, **not realizing** that you **are** wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

The **not so bad, not so good** seems ok. The good is enemy of BEST.

2. Often made up of good intentions and thoughts

Peter was a strong natural leader, outspoken. Jesus spoke of his suffering. Peter spoke up

Mt 16:21 “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen!”

23 Jesus... turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, **Satan!** You are a hindrance to me. For you are not **setting your mind** on the things of God, but **on the things of man.**”

Peter’s mindset was natural, not spiritual. The most dangerous part is our mind. Thoughts are very powerful. SOLUTION?
NEXT VERSE

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him **deny himself** and take up his **cross** and **follow** me.

Taking every thought captive!

2Cor 10:5 We destroy* **arguments** and every **lofty opinion** raised against the **knowledge of God**, and take every **thought** captive to obey Christ,

Sometimes I have found “good reasons” for not doing something that was the will of God. I sincerely thought I was being do-

ing the right thing, being longsuffering or submitting to authority or... at the time, but a stronghold kept me from seeing what was really going on.

3. Often develop in the shadow of our strengths

Forts are usually built on hilltops, not in the bottom of valleys. Because we are confident in our strengths, we can relax and not be as alert. Overconfident is only one step away from confident.

“ I never thought I would go for something like that... ”

Make a list of perceived strengths... make a list of the avenues the enemy could exploit to access your flesh.

4. Often activated by painful trauma and detonated by crises.

“I will never forgive again. Never!” — gift of mercy

“I will never give money to the church!” — gift of giving

In this world we have painful experiences. Don't let the enemy construct a fortress with natural thoughts and reactions.

5. Strongholds create a double mind resulting in spiritual and emotional instability.

SIMPLE APPLICATION:

A Stronghold will separate Feelings from Truth

Our prevailing culture exalts FEELINGS over TRUTH [s. 7]

Pray for the Holy Spirit to GUIDE us into ALL THE TRUTH [s. 8]

Sets us FREE — INTEGRATES OUR LIVES — [s. 9]

— SHALOM —

Absolute Freedom — Single Focus!

Part 2 Next Week

