

2 Corinthians 10:1-6, “Spiritual Guideposts, Destroying Spiritual Strongholds”

9.5.21

You know, we’ve been singing all morning about “battles.” Did you notice that? Look at the screens. We were singing about being “Surrounded.”

“Surrounded”

It may look like I'm surrounded

But I'm surrounded by You

It may look to the world that the Enemy and his demonic hoards have surrounded us to take us down, but the world can’t see the Lord’s army of angels and they can’t comprehend His magnanimous power in the Spiritual realm...the Lord is stronger and He surrounds us and protects us. We were also singing:

“See A Victory”

There's power in the mighty name of Jesus

Every war He wages He will win

I'm not backing down from any giant

'Cause I know how this story ends

Battles...wars...victories... If anyone knew about these things it would have been the Apostle Paul. Talk about battles...this man was under constant attack. He literally knew any day could be his last. He was hated and despised by many. And all of this was because he was battling to protect the truth of Jesus Christ from being tainted and watered down by Satanic error.

In essence, Paul battled to preserve the honor and glory of his Commander-in-chief, Jesus Christ. Paul battled relentlessly to keep the churches from falling into doctrinal error. He battled against demons and men influenced by demons...he battled against philosophies and false religions, all of which, like wolves, threatened to devour the church. These battles consumed Paul’s life.

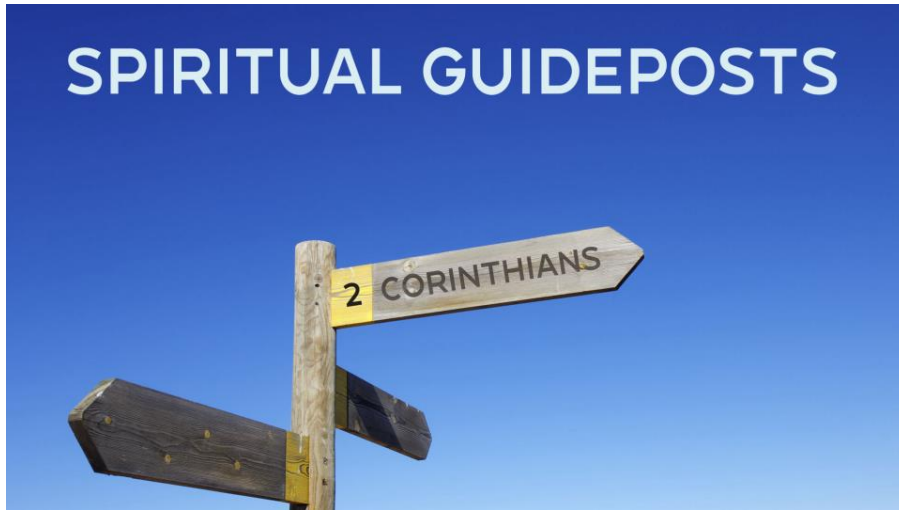
Paul was a man whose body was scarred from the battles. Think of all that he’s endured: Whip marks and marks from rods on his back, chain marks and stock marks on his ankles and legs, scars from the lacerations and pummeling he took when stones were used to attempt to crush out his life. Who knows what injuries he had from the three times he was shipwrecked? He’s even had bite marks on his hand where he shook off a snake that had bitten him on the island of Malta.

But listen...even enduring all of this...nothing was more ongoing and unrelenting than the spiritual warfare waged for the preservation of truth in the Corinthian church. Little did he know when he launched the church in Corinth some eight years earlier, it would almost crumble right before his eyes. And this is why he wrote 2 Corinthians.

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians because he knew there remained rebels in Corinth who wanted to wage war against him and the truth of the Gospel, so as to destroy him and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, Paul had been told by Titus that there had been some repentance of the people, but there remained a poisonous river against him and that meant the battle continued.

This morning we’re going to begin a new series...a new series that will begin to look at the last section of 2 Corinthians, (chapters 10-13). We’re going to break down these four chapters by beginning this new series today that we’re calling:

SPIRITUAL GUIDEPOSTS



“Spiritual Guideposts.” Over the next several weeks, we’re going to see spiritual guideposts or markers that will guide us in staying spiritually strong on our Christian journey, and we begin today by seeing how we can: **“Destroy Satanic Strongholds.”** This morning, we’re going to see a detailed, tactical, battle strategy on how to deal with the craftiness of Satan and his attempts to spiritually tear us down through spiritual warfare. This passage is so good! Let’s see it...

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

¹I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!— ²I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh. ³For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Yes, Paul’s in a battle, a battle for truth. False teachers, “Judaizers” they’re called, have been in Corinth for years. They’ve been accusing Paul of being untrustworthy, fickle, unreliable and a gold-digger...just wanting their money. Of course, that’s not Paul’s goal.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

¹And I, when I came to you, brothers,^[a] did not come proclaiming to you the testimony^[b] of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men^[c] but in the power of God.

Paul came to the Corinthians in humility...seeking ONLY to get the life-saving Good News of Jesus to the Corinthians. Yet, these false teachers...Paul’s critics, said the opposite. Watch the sarcasm he uses in verse 1.

2 Corinthians 10:1

¹I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!—

Paul’s critics said, “When he’s with you face to face, he’s wimpy and cowardly, but when he’s not in town, he sends these letters that are mean and foreboding.” No, that’s not Paul at all. He comes in

the meekness and humility of Christ. Paul was always trying to lovingly, lead people to the truth and to keep them from falling into error. Remember, Paul was writing to a divided church. They had chosen sides. They were fighting with one another. They were taunting one another... "I've got this spiritual gift that you don't have." There was sexual immorality...and as this information arrived to Paul, he had to address it. He had no choice.

Church, we all know what this is like. You hear the kids fighting in the back of the house...but, you're busy and you kind of hope they work it out and it'll die down...but, it doesn't. It only gets louder... So, what do you do? You have to address it. You've got to deal with it. That's what Paul does with his letters. Listen, Paul was so patient, just like Jesus. Long suffering. And so, as we read 1 and 2 Corinthians, we can see Paul's hesitancy to drop the hammer on their disobedience and in-fighting and open rebellion. Yet, at some point...you have to address the issue, and that's where Paul is.

2 Corinthians 10:2

²I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.

Paul in essence is saying. "Look, if I had my choice, I would like to come to Corinth and NOT have to be bold with you. That's why I'm urging, that's why I'm begging, that's why I'm pleading with you. NO! I don't want to be bold, but if I have to, I will." And church family...did you catch the accusation they made against him in verse 2? Look at the end of the verse again...

2 Corinthians 10:2b

...some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.

They were saying that Paul is carnal...he's ungodly, full of the flesh, full of himself! Church, that's the pot calling the kettle black... Are you serious! These men have the gall and the audacity of accusing Paul of being full of himself. But, that's how it goes with people who are working for the Devil...they'll seek to convince everyone else that YOU are full of yourself. They'll seek to go around and stir up trouble and slander you. And that's what they were doing to Paul and so, he called them out...and he did so in CONFIDENCE, because he had the truth on his side.

Watch verse 3...Paul actually agrees with his accusers that he is in the flesh...not carnal, just human...

2 Corinthians 10:3

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

Paul says, "You're right...I'm human...I am in the flesh...but, I'm not operating in an unspiritual, carnal, worldly way." Listen, Paul didn't want to have to engage these guys and their accusations...but, they gave him no choice. But, Paul was being led by the Spirit of God and he said, "I'm not going to get into a mud-slinging contest with you...I'm not going to wage war the way you do...NO...the weapons I use are not of this world." You say, "What's he talking about?" Watch verse 4. It's the key to the passage...

2 Corinthians 10:4

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

Church, as believers and followers of Christ, we can't fight like the world. We can't get into the mud with people who want to fuss and fight and sling mud. All that does is make us look like fools. That's fighting "in the flesh," and that's folly...foolishness and hurts the cause of Christ. Listen, you

can have great courage and conviction and determination, but if you fight like the world, and you act like the world in defending your position, then you'll have mud on your face and look like the world. **Listen, we're all human, but we don't use human weapons.**

I want to show you something. I want to remind us of what Paul said about WHO WE ARE. The fact that we're just "jars of clay." Remember that? Look at verse 7.

2 Corinthians 4:7

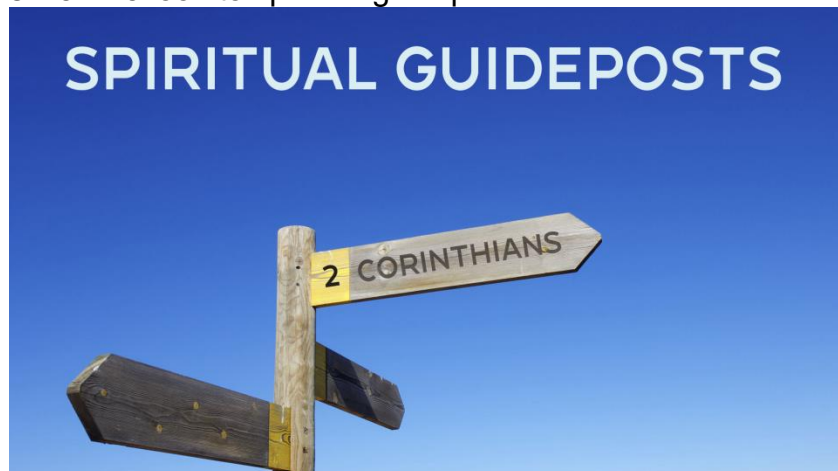
⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

Jump down to verse 16.

2 Corinthians 10:16-18

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self^[d] is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Listen...we're just pilgrims passing through. This is not our home. Our home is in heaven and we must constantly remind ourselves of that fact and have a "heavenly perspective," so as not to get so torn out of our frames about what happens down here, because this is all going to pass away. No, we're to have a heavenly perspective on life...we don't look to the world or the world's ways to navigate through this life. We look to spiritual guideposts...that's our series...



We must remember where we're headed and WHO WE ARE. We are children of God...we fight for the honor of Jesus Christ. We're fighting for the salvation of souls, and for the strengthening of the church of Jesus Christ...our brothers and sisters!

The point is this: We must not fight with human weapons. Human weapons don't work against the kingdom of darkness. And never forget, it's the kingdom of darkness that we're fighting against, not one another. Paul told the church at Ephesus.

Ephesians 6:10-12

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Our battle is against Satan and his forces and Jesus told Peter...hell itself will not prevail against it:

Matthew 16:18

¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock^[b] I will build my church, and the gates of hell^[c] shall not prevail against it.

The rock is Jesus...and that's who we look to when fighting against Satan and his kingdom. Remember when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness for 40 days? What did Jesus use as His weapon? Did He get into an argument with Satan? Did He try to outwit Satan (oh, He could have), but He didn't. He gave us the example to follow...the guidepost to follow... What did He use? Jesus quoted Scripture. See the INDENTATIONS?

Matthew 4:7-11

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Jesus used the Word of God and we should too. I mean, if the Son of God felt it was good enough to use Scripture, shouldn't we? If your answer is YES, then, do you know the Bible? Do you read it? Do you immerse yourself in it? Listen to it on an APP? The Word of God is supernatural.

Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The Word of God is our sword and it along with prayer are our weapons. Oh, Church family, the weapons of the flesh, (of this world), will not work in our spiritual battle. We've got to use the Word. Just think of all the admonitions in Scripture to read the Word. Psalm 119:11 says, "store up God's word in our hearts so that we might not sin." Joshua 1:9 says, "Don't let the Word of God depart from you, meditate on it." Do you? Do you meditate on the Word of God? Listen, we waste so much of our lives meditating on stuff that we're looking at on screens...get the Word of God in you! It's your weapon against Satan.

Listen, Satan is slick...he's a trickster and a deceiver. Just ask Adam and Eve. He'll make you think that his way is right and God is wrong. And he sets up traps and then slams them shut, imprisoning us in strongholds, fortresses of lies, error and sin. See the verse again.

2 Corinthians 10:4

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

You may ask, "What are these strongholds, (some versions say: "fortresses")?" Well in the minds of the Corinthians, they knew what they were, because they had a fortress in their city. Take a look at the ruins of the Acropolis of Corinth.



Here's a bird's eye view of Corinth and their acropolis as you look back toward the Mediterranean Sea.



Ancient cities were usually built on a hill. Jerusalem is. A city on a hill. Cities on hills provided a way to build a fortress so you would be able to better protect yourself. You could hide behind the fortress...usually built with massive, thick, stone walls. These fortresses had great towers, parapets, from which people could scout and see encroaching enemy armies and from which they could fire whatever weaponry they had at their disposal. So, in that sense, the word "stronghold or fortress" is good a thing.

But, the word stronghold or fortress can also mean: **prison**. And that's how it's being used here. Satan wants to imprison us in his fortress of darkness...and yet, he'll seek to make us think that it's a place of safety and pleasure. Satan waves his arms on top of the walls and says... "This is the way...you deserve it, come here...and once you're inside, all will be well." It's a LIE! The very place Satan lures us to...making us think is our refuge... is really the place of imprisonment...a place

where we discover shackles and chains...great suffering...pain and anguish. And this all happens in our minds.

But, there is a battle tactic that we can use to overcome Satan and his lies. Watch verse 5.

2 Corinthians 10:5

⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

The fortresses are “arguments,” “**logismos**,” in the Greek and it means: “thoughts and ideas, opinions, reasonings, philosophies, theories, ideologies, religions.” These are the fortresses of Satan. And it’s from the top of these walls that men and women shout and propagate the lies and error of Satan that are diametrically and diabolically opposed to the truth of God’s Word. Philosophies and ideas and opinions that are filled with PRIDE. The very thing that got Satan kicked out of heaven. Pride. The pride that says, “I’m smart...I’m intelligent...look at me...” and they seek to use their intellectualism to overwhelm those who question their “morality” and if they don’t feel they’re winning, they summarily dismiss the questioner with vitriolic, personal attacks that’s acrimonious and mean, all the while claiming to have the moral high ground as being the kind, nice ones.

It reminds me of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. Chapter 3...

1 Corinthians 3:18-20

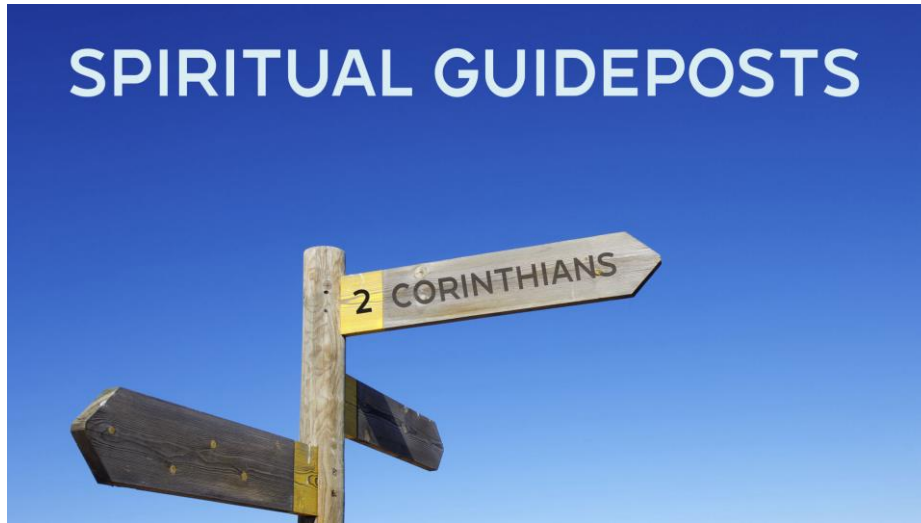
¹⁸Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” ²⁰and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”

Where do we find these walls today, church? Oh, that’s easy...these walls of pride and intellect and godless ideologies are found in the halls of many of our universities and schools. These walls of pride are found lurking in the halls of our state houses, the halls of Congress; and unfortunately, many of our courtrooms. These walls of pride are found in our mainstream media, our social media platforms, sports, music and entertainment. These walls of Satan’s pride and Satan’s thinking are literally everywhere...and their cronies shout from those walls...WE KNOW THE WAY...follow us! Adolf Hitler once said:

“I have freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality.” Adolf Hitler

Hitler was full of Satanic pride and in that evilness, he destroyed Germany. Listen, don’t follow the wrong guideposts!

SPIRITUAL GUIDEPOSTS



Where are you looking to get your information? Oh, be careful not to look to the wrong signposts. And be warned...if you choose to follow the Lord...if you choose to believe in Jesus and the Gospel and the Bible...then people on top of these fortresses of pride are going to describe you as irrational, unkind, unloving, and to protect others, they will say that you must ONLY be allowed to have *limited influence* in the public square.

You see, from the fortresses of Satan, the prideful will shout down at you... “God has no place in public life. KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT! God has no place in education. KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT! God has no place in government, social policy, law, courts, and certainly not in determining morality, sexuality. KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT!” And you see, this wholesale “rejection of God,” (which is what it is), will be purported to be intellectual, scientific, loving and inclusive; but what it really is, is pride and the love of self, sin and darkness. It’s a “fort of fools” and like the walls of Jericho, the walls of these Satanic fortresses must come down, or those who reside behind those walls will one day be destroyed as they collapse on them in judgment.

So, what do we do? Look at verse 5 again and then watch the flow to verse 6.

2 Corinthians 10:5-6

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

Let me see if I can describe the powerful imagery used in these two verses. The verb “to take” used in verse 5, “to take every thought captive,” literally pictures taking a prisoner at the end of a sword. You see, we must take every thought captive or prisoner and put it to the sword...to the sword OF THE WORD OF GOD. We march that thought up to the fortress of God, using the tip of the sword of the Word of God, to the back of the thought...right up to the fortress of God’s truth to determine if that thought is worth thinking, pondering, or if we’re to kill it. We have the ability to control what we think about. Watch...

Philippians 4:8

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Listen, there’s a battle that rages in our minds. What will I think about? Will I listen to Satan tell me how worthless I am? Will I allow him to plant seeds of doubt in my mind and water those seeds? Or will I choose to think on that which is true! Listen, lies end when they’re brought before truth.

Hallelujah...Jesus crushed the lie that was told in the Garden of Eden, that man could thumb his nose at God and get away with it. Sin is a fortress of death. But, because Jesus came...and then died and rose again, we can be free! You see, Jesus came to get me. He walked into Satan's fortress of sin and death and pulled me out, because I couldn't and he saved my soul and marched me to the fortress of God. Truth met Error face to face and truth won!

Rebellion ends when truth prevails. And so today, we have our marching orders: we preach the truth, JESUS; we teach the truth, JESUS; we proclaim the truth, JESUS; we live the truth, JESUS! How do we do that? In obedience to his commands...our Commander in Chief.

So how are you living? Are you taking every thought captive? Are you putting the sword of truth to it? Are you reading the Word of God or are you being held prisoner in Satan's fortress of lies, pride and sin? Do you want victory...turn to Jesus...and you'll "See A Victory."

"See A Victory"

**There's power in the mighty name of Jesus
Every war He wages He will win
I'm not backing down from any giant
'Cause I know how this story ends
Yes, I know how this story ends**

**I'm gonna see a victory
I'm gonna see a victory
For the battle belongs to You, Lord**
