



**Sermon Series:** Cycle Breakers part 3

**Sermon Title:** tearing Down Strongholds

**Date:** 1/14/2024

Today, we look at the gift God gives us in breaking down strongholds. A Stronghold is an area in your life where you keep giving in to sin and the devil's ways. It's similar to a fortress that is set up to harass, overcome, or occupy another nation. To become a cycle breaker - If you are to live in freedom and victory – strongholds must be torn down!

**Big Idea: Tear down ungodly strongholds!**

That is done by following three key steps. To set the context, scripture tells us about Josiah's grandfather, Manasseh, the king of Judah. He was an evil king in God's evaluation. Manasseh went against God's commands and set up the worship of false gods. Manasseh's son, Amon, was no better; he was also evil, 100% like his father. After Amon's assassination, his son Josiah became king of Judah at the age of 8.

Josiah grew up with ungodliness all around him. But the Bible tells us that at the age of 16, Josiah began to seek after God. At the age of 18, King Josiah set in motion the restoration and repair of God's temple. **2 Kings 22:8-10**

**Step 1 - Know the truth: allow God's word to change you**

**2 Kings 22:11**

By tearing his robes, the king has expressed his deepest anguish. Josiah heard the truth; his heart was wounded, but after hearing/reading God's word, he knew the truth of his people's sin. This truth from God's word reveals one of the most prevalent sins today. **Deuteronomy 5:11**

Josiah is reading these commands from God and many more – and that knowledge changes Him. Are you taking in God's word? Learning from Him? Are you letting God's word change you?

**Step 2: Know God's response to evil and change!**

**2 Kings 22:13**

Josiah read God's law, and at the same time, he read about the consequences of disobedience - death and destruction. Knowing God's anger – fearing his judgment – is an ingredient to true repentance and godliness. Because Josiah was exposed to God's word, he was ready to make changes - and God replied to him. **2 Kings 22:20**

Because of Josiah's change and his cries to God, God favors him with peace and life.

### **Step 3: Act on what you know from God's Word!**

The scripture tells us that Josiah called together the elders, the people, the priests, and the prophets, and together they read the book that had been found. Josiah went further; his confession was not just a momentary tearing of his clothes but propelled him into action. Josiah tore down the areas of worship to Baal, Asherah, the starry hosts, the high places, and the Asherah poles!

The level of his destruction of these worship implements was to burn them and grind them to dust. He eliminated EVERYTHING that stood against God almighty – so that God would be honored and no one would have a place for idolatry.

Remember - A Stronghold is an area in your life or mine where we keep giving in to sin, like a fortified location, a place of security. It can be a Habit, a Thought, a Wound, or a Person. The danger for us is the way a stronghold, other than God, is very similar to an idol.

To have an ungodly stronghold is to have an idol:

- **Includes Acts of Worship** (you come back to it frequently, replay it, go over it, think about it, meditate on it)
- **Brings you Comfort** (maybe it's a habit, a substance, or a person that makes you feel good, helps you forget something, gives you peace)
- **Meaning or Identity** (this is who I am, I am a \_\_\_\_\_) vs. a believer in Jesus.

Know the truth: allow God's word to change you.

Know God's response to evil and change!

**ACT!** on what you know from God's Word

### Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **What are some common strongholds you see throughout today's culture? How could they be torn down?**
- **Why was it necessary for Josiah to completely destroy the false idols?**
- **Describe any strongholds you have torn down in your life. How did you overcome them?**
- **Are there any strongholds that are helpful to our Christian life?**