

Pushing Back the Darkness! Part 7: "Demolishing Strongholds!"

"People whose minds are made up to advance the kingdom of God take their objectives by force..." – Jesus Mt 11.12

2Corinthians 10.4-6 *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

2Corinthians 10.4-6 (Again) *For the tools of our warfare are not carnal but powerful in God for demolishing arguments, demolishing computations and every elevated thing that rises up against the knowledge of God, and making a captive of every perception for submission to Christ, and being prepared to vindicate all disobedience when your submission is fulfilled.*

Last week... Jesus came walking into our lives to begin realigning ourselves with the word and His words! We are called to aggressively advance the kingdom of God... "Jesus called the twelve disciples together and gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and disease..." **Matt 10.1ff Lk 9.1ff** "and seventy other disciples, two by two to go to every place where He would be going..." **Lk 10.1ff** **We are empowered with the Holy Spirit to do it...** "wait for the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that was coming soon: 'You will receive power from on high to be a witness of Me, to life's end, to the uttermost parts of the world!' And He came!" **Acts 1-2** **We have the ability to pray in faith, rending the darkness/find it!** **Acts** Helps if we know the word... See, hear and know THE WORD! And have made up our minds to advance the kingdom, forcefully!

THE PLAN IS THAT THE REDEEMED ARE EMPOWERED AND THE EMPOWERED SHOULD BE REDEEMING FOR A LIFETIME! But things don't always work out as planned!

Strongholds!

Too often the sons/daughters of God don't believe they're worthy, prepared, equipped to "fight!" An event, circumstance or person has a negative effect! Abuse, divorce, sickness, poverty, rejection, dysfunction, fear... We register the pain/shame/fear and begin building a "stronghold!"

The secondary problem is that what keeps us safe, keeps us "in!" And it keeps out the all the ones God sends in to save us! **The primary problem is that it's not the event...** Nothing stops them from coming! "In the world you will have trials..." **But the lies we believe in the events, that build our prisons!**

"I was abused/I am powerless!" "I failed/I'm stupid/incapable!" "My mate left/I can't be loved!" "I'm hurt/I must cover up!" **We must separate the events from the lies!**

2Corinthians 10.4-6 *For the tools of our warfare are not carnal but powerful in God for demolishing arguments and computations and every elevated thing that rises up against the knowledge of God, and making a captive of every perception for submission to Christ, and being prepared to vindicate all disobedience when your submission is fulfilled.*

Our "strongholds" are the "arguments" and "computations" that we make in the midst of events!

Strongholds! *What we believe will drive what we do/accomplish... What we believe about ourselves will determine if we "drive!"* So, we looked at the "names" and "tags" we hear and accept! Who gave them to us? Event? How long we've had them? How does it feel/fit? Would we accept a new name if God gave it to us? Would we reject the old one if He did?

Oddly, maybe surprisingly, the answer isn't always "YES!"

Stronghold Asides!

Some won't take this "word" and "name" topic seriously! God created what we see w/words! In His image, we live in the worlds we create with our words! If you believe your name is *Fearful One*, may die in torment! If you believe your name is *Poor One*, you will die broke! If you believe in *Never Whole*, you will die broken! If your name is *Defeated*, you will never see opportunities ahead!

Others have simply adapted to, and tragically, adopted their "tags" and won't let go! Serious!

John 5.1-7 Now there is a place called Bethesda, having a pool and five porches. A great multitude of folks; impotent, blind, halt, withered, wait for the moving of the water. Whoever steps into the water first is made whole of whatsoever disease he had. A certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty eight years. When Jesus saw him, and knew he had been like that a long time, he asked, Will you be made whole? The impotent man answered him, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: *but while I am coming, someone else gets the blessing before me.* **[Read and heard in our minds as: but while I am coming, someone else gets the blessing instead of me.] This is a commonly believed lie!**

We are His sheep, and we know His voice, and the voice of a stranger we are to run from! John 10.3ff
If we believe anything less than God's words about us/idolaters! **Putting false gods in control! If we embrace anything less than complete freedom/life is vanity! When God's voice is different from ours or others we must flee from them and draw near to Him!**

What you believe about yourself... What you call yourself or allow yourself called... Has a lot to do with how life, purpose and mission turn out! And if you have allowed yourself to be named by the "Stranger..." Instead of your Shepherd... You may live and die without ever knowing the opportunities set before you for freedom and mission!

NO ONE BUT GOD GETS TO GIVE US RESIDUAL NAMES!

We know this... "Judge (krino) nothing before its time, not until the Lord comes, who brings hidden things to light and exposes the counsels of the heart!" **1Cor 4.5** "Judge (krino) not that you be not judged!" **Matt 7.1** "Who are you to judge (krino) another man's servant." **Rom 14.4** **No krino: to try, condemn, punish and avenge!**
A residual, final judgment/naming! (others/self!)

"The saints will judge (krino) the world, can you not now judge (kriterion) the small matters between yourselves?" **1Cor6.2** "If we judge (diakrino) ourselves we will not be judged (krino)!" **1Cor 11.31** **So, we do kriterion: set ourselves to live and rule according to the criteria set by God... We do diakrino: sort out/discern/discriminate our differences (gaps).** But, we leave the final judgments and "naming" to God! We are who and what He says we are...

And we must aggressively demolish every argument and submit every contrary perception of ourselves to Jesus!

Strongholds! By design, are arguments we make and computations we accept as a defense against pain! **By function,** keep us in and everyone else out! **As a result,** hinder us from being an aggressive champion of kingdom advancement! **Must be torn down from within if we are ever going to know the freedom for which Christ set us free!**