

Sunday, August 11, 2013—The Battlefield of the Mind—Pulling Down of Strong Holds

### Introduction/Review

- Ephesians 6:11-17—for the past 7 weeks we have been studying the armor of God described by Paul in Ephesians 6:11-17. In doing so we have observed that each piece of the armor is related to the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - Christ is the truth (belt of truth)—John 14:6
  - Christ is our righteousness (breastplate of righteousness)—I Corinthians 1:30
  - Christ is our peace (sandals of peace)—Ephesians 2:14
  - Christ's faithfulness i.e., the faith of Christ (shield of faith)—Romans 3:22, Galatians 2:16, 20
  - Christ is our hope (helmet of salvation)—I Timothy 1:1
  - Christ the living word is equal to the written word (sword of the spirit)—Hebrews 4:12-13
  
- The armor of God provides a complete defense for the believer allowing him/her to stand and withstand against the wiles of the devil.
  - *Belt of Truth*—midsection or core (the loins of your mind)
  - *Breastplate of Righteousness*—the vital organs i.e., your heart and lungs
  - *Sandals of Peace*—footwear to anchor, ground, and provide proper footing
  - *Shield of Faith*—protects the whole body and quenches the fiery darts of the wicked
  - *Helmet of Salvation*—protects the head/brain the command center of the body
  - *Sword of the Spirit*—is two-edged and defeats the enemies attacked when quoted in the heat of battle. Needs to be hid in the believer's heart that he/she might not sin against God.
  
- Last week I showed you how Jesus Christ dealt with Satan's attacks when He was tempted in the wilderness. Jesus quoted Scripture ("It is written") and had complete reliance upon God's written word. We need to have the same confidence in the Scriptures that Christ exhibited when under attack.
  
- II Corinthians 10:3-4—hopefully you recall what led us into a study of the armor of God in the first place. It was Paul's statements in II Corinthians 10 regarding the nature of our spiritual warfare/weapons not being carnal or fleshly. We cannot fight a spiritual enemy with fleshly weapons. Therefore, we needed to understand our spiritual weapons systems before proceeding further in the passage.

## Pulling Down of Strong Holds

- II Corinthians 10:4a—hopefully after studying the armor of God everyone is clear regarding the spiritual nature of our weapons. Remember that Paul used the armor of the first century Roman soldier to illustrate spiritual truths regarding the battle and our weapons.
- II Corinthians 10:4b—“but mighty through God. . .” the weapons of our warfare find their strength in God almighty. Notice how the word “but” set up a contrast in the verse between carnal things and the things of God.
- Mighty—the underlying Greek word appears 35 times in 35 verses in Greek text supporting the King James Bible. In English the word is variously rendered by the translators.
  - Matthew 19:23—possible (13 times)
  - Luke 24:19—mighty (6)
  - II Corinthians 9:8—able (10)
  - Romans 9:22—power (1)
  - Romans 15:1—strong (3)
- The English word “mighty” carries the following relevant meanings according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*: Having great bodily strength or physical power; very strong or vigorous; as a mighty arm. 1) Very strong; valiant; bold; as a mighty man of valor (Judges 6). 2) Very powerful; having great command. 9) Very forcible; efficacious.
- Exodus 15:1-10—the Lord was a man of war for Israel delivering her from the hands of the Egyptians by destroying them in the Red Sea. God in his mighty power delivered Israel his physical nation from hands of a physical enemy.
- Since the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (fleshly) they find their strength and might through God himself. Notice how they are “mighty through God.” God himself is the active agent behind these weapons.
- Ephesians 6:12--God is not going to draw our enemies in the Red Sea because our enemies are not physical (flesh and blood) and our battle is not “after the flesh.” Therefore the weapons of our warfare find their might, power, and strength through God. This means that “the weapons of our warfare” are able, capable, competent, and possess the power to enable us as believers to be victorious. These are weapons which God himself makes effectual.
- II Corinthians 10:4—how mighty are these weapons through God? They are capable of pulling down strong holds.
- The Greek word translated “pulling down” contains the idea of destruction or demolition.
  - II Corinthians 10:8, 13:10—“destruction”

- Through God, our weapons are capable of demolishing and destroying the enemy's strong-holds.
- The Greek word that is translated "strong holds" is found only this one time in the New Testament. According to *Strong's Concordance* the underlying Greek word means: 1) a castle, stronghold, fortress, fastness 2) anything on which one relies
- The English word "strong-hold" means: A fastness; a fort; a fortified place; a place of security. (*Webster's 1828*).
- What strong-holds, fortified places, places of security on which you rely have you allowed to take root in your life and thinking? What are you rely and trusting in for your protection and defense that is not related to who God has made you in Christ. What incorrect and unsound thinking has crept into your thought life and established a strong-hold in your mind?
  - Doctrine
  - Relationships with and others and God
  - Job
  - Your past: failures and hurts
  - Pornography
  - Finances/Gambling
  - Spiritual Life/Church
- The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to pull down and destroy these strong-holds not erect and build them.
- Ephesians 4:27—if you give the devil a place in your thinking he will establish a strong-hold a deeply entrenched and forfeited position in your thinking process. From that command center he will wreak havoc upon your personal life and the life of the greater body of Christ.
- Colossians 3:1-3—we need to have our affections set in the right place and evaluate everything we do from the perspective of eternity. We need to have the mind of Christ towards the things in our lives and function in that reality and pull down the strong-holds.
- Next week we will study how to address these strong-holds and pull them down. Over the course of the next week I want to challenge each and every member of this assembly to evaluate their own lives. What strong-holds have you allowed to gain a foot hold in your thinking? How do these strong-holds affect your attitudes and actions? How do these attitudes and actions affect your spiritual life and service in your personal life and in this assembly?