

Strongholds – Bible Study

Introduction

We have been looking at how God is postured to partner with us to create new things. New experiences. New expressions. New levels. New territories. There are aspects of who you are that God wants to introduce you to in this season. There are old cycles of sameness that God wants to break you out of. And he supplies the grace, the sufficiency for it!

Please know that God in all of these messages God is preparing us for the future. So please pay attention. God said in **Isaiah 42:9, See the former things have taken place and new things I declare, before they spring up, I announce them to you.** Since the beginning of the year, God has been announcing the New Thing before it springs up. And I believe that we are stepping into a season that will demand the new thing that God is calling forth through you. So please engage the Word, pray into it, ask the Lord what you are to do about what He is saying.

Today I want to speak to you about strongholds. Because negative strongholds are probably our greatest reason for not experiencing the new. And what I would like to encourage you to do after this session is to identify any strongholds in your life, because in this season you are going to pull them all down!

Understanding what strongholds are

Mark 2:22

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk (new) cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and the tear becomes worse. No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the [fermenting] wine will [expand and] burst the skins, and the wine is lost as well as the wineskins. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.”

Mark 2:21-22 AMP

Without going into the key theological discourse in this passage, there are some key principles that Jesus is communicating here. Jesus is talking about the old dispensation of the law (the old wine skin) and the new dispensation of Grace (new wine). He is essentially saying that you cannot receive the new dispensation of Grace if you still have a mind that is set on the old dispensation of the law.

Here are 2 things to make note of:

- An old mindset can often be the biggest enemy of a new idea.

- We have to do something about the old in order to be able to accommodate the new.

So be brutally honest with yourself, what way of thinking is an enemy of the new things that God is calling you to?

Oftentimes we'd rather blame the economy, the colour of our skin, the devil, your haters, and right now the COVID19 is the problem! All of these external things, but the truth is that you will only experience new to the degree that your mind can accommodate the new. The problem with old mindsets is that when you've had something for a while, you tend to protect it. This is why the older a person gets the more difficult it is for them to change. We naturally resist invitations to give up the old because this old mindset has now become what the bible calls a **STRONGHOLD**.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NKJV 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,

Notice that God gives us weapons to pull down strongholds. Because strongholds need to be actively identified and dismantled if He will be able to birth something new in your life. Without consciously attacking strongholds, we struggle to give up the old to make room for the new, because it's no longer just about the thing, the person, it's about the thoughts, the emotions, the experiences attached to that thing or that person. Strongholds are often fortified by emotions. They are made stronger by and protected by your emotions! But they can be pulled down!

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 TPT

4. Instead, our spiritual weapons are energized with divine power to effectively dismantle the defences behind which people hide. We can demolish every deceptive fantasy that opposes God and break through every arrogant attitude that is raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God. We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One.

So here are some descriptions I've put together about what a stronghold is:

A stronghold is a fortress of thought that has been created over time. It can be positive or negative. But they are fortresses of thought.

A stronghold is a fortress of thought built with words, fortified by emotions and feelings. They are hiding places for people who are rebelling against the new.

Strongholds are defensive fantasies that oppose God, they are arrogant attitudes that are raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God.

Negative Strongholds are traps in the old. They are enemies of the new.

In researching this, I found out that we think about 60-70 thousand thoughts a day. However, here's the fascinating thing, most of these thoughts are a repetition of the thoughts we thought yesterday, the day before, the year before! So people hardly change because people rarely think different thoughts. People rarely adopt new patterns of thinking once they leave school. In fact most people only ever open themselves up to people who soothe and fortify their current way of thinking. This is why we are so quick to brand people haters! It's because they disrupt their thoughts with new ideas.

This is why you can get people to say amen, to jump...to shout, but the real work is in getting them to change. In fact I found out that by the time you are 35 years of age, 95% of who you are is a memorised set of behaviours, emotional reactions, unconscious habits, hardwired attitudes, beliefs and perceptions that functions like a computer programme.

The problem for Christians is that we say amen because we genuinely believe, but your body and your mind are on a whole different program. You get to a certain age, and you are no longer receptive to the new, because the old has become a fortress and we spend a lot of time defending old ways of thinking.

So I ask again, how is your way of thinking doing with helping you usher in the new? Are you defending the old way of thinking or are you dismantling them? Are you praying and fasting when you should be acting? As long as you are hiding behind something that is supposed to facilitate action, you will be limiting yourself and limiting God.

So unless the prayer, the word, the fasting, the coming to church is actually being permitted by you to change your mind, nothing will change! We can shout about grace for the new, but it's not going to happen until we do something about these fortresses that are holding you captive!

Ps 78:41-43 How often they provoked Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert! Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power: The day when He redeemed them from the enemy, When He worked His signs in Egypt, And His wonders in the field of Zoan;–

Strongholds, patterns of thinking can limit the Holy One! Even with your thinking, you can limit God.



Proverbs 23:7, tells us that as a man thinks so is he. The quality of your life depends on the fortresses in your mind.

Conclusion

These are spiritual truths that even demons understand! That's why they steal the Word! Even in a season like we are in right now, the enemy is not floating around with horns and a cape. He is looking to influence minds. By all means wash your hands. Self-isolate in this season, but above all, guard your hearts!

As believers what the enemy is after is our minds. Even if he touches your body, if the Lord has your mind, He will deposit something in your mind that will quicken your mortal body.

Don't be ignorant of the devices of the enemy, the strategy of the enemy, he has a great understanding of spiritual principles, so he knows how to pervert it. That's why God brings light to you to dissipate and destroy the works of Satan.

The good news is that God has chosen to partner with us to create the new, so He has supplied us with the weapons to demolish every stronghold that is keeping you in the old!

So I see you in a new season. I see your relationships in a new season of peace and joy. I see you in a new season of financial freedom. I see you in a new season of growth. I see you in a new season of purpose and wealth! Because we are going to employ the word... which is the weapon of our warfare to demolish strongholds!