

Series: 2 Corinthians
Title: Pulpit Warfare
Text: 2 Corinthians 10: 3-6
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In 2 Corinthians 10: 1, the apostle Paul said, “*Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you,...*”

Now, picture the preacher stepping into the pulpit and suddenly, he wields weapons, including a sword. He begins to strike those in the pew. All their defenses are pulled down. They themselves are cast down and taken into captivity. It sounds like that preacher is engaging in warfare. That is exactly what every God-sent preacher does every time he steps in the pulpit. But it is not exactly like it might sound, it is pulpit warfare.

2 Corinthians 10: 3: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal,

God’s preacher is going to war but he is not using carnal weapons: not using excellency of speech or wisdom of men, not using titles and impressive resume’s, not using so-called contemporary worship, not speaking of philosophy or politics or civil rights.

2 Corinthians 10: 4: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God...

He is strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He has on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. So he stands therefore, having his loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, he takes the shield of faith, wherewith he shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And takes the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always that God might make him speak as he ought and make the word effectual in his people. (Eph 6: 10-18) These are the weapons of our warfare provided by God.

Proposition: Our chief weapon is the preaching of the gospel of Christ and him crucified because it is the power of God unto salvation.

Notice how effective this weapon is: 1) **2 Corinthians 10: 4...to the pulling down of strong holds;** 2) **5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and** 3) **6...bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;** 4) **6: And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.**

PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLES

2 Corinthians 10: 4 [It is mighty through God] to the pulling down of strong holds;)

As the gospel is preached it is used of God to break down the gates of hell.

A “*stronghold*” is like Jericho—with its walls up to heaven—no one got in or out without permission. The strong walls of the sinner’s stronghold are his sin, pride, self-righteousness, his refuge of lies. The sinner thinks he has wisely built his stronghold by his impenetrable arguments. His walls cannot be broken down

like these poor, weak, deceived Christians. But the sinner does not realize that he is the one who has been deceived. He is captive in the devil's stronghold.

Luke 11:21: When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

Still, Christ promised his church that not even "*the gates of hell shall prevail against us.*" (Mt 16: 18) So we preach Christ: we march around Jericho blowing the gospel trumpet. By the mighty power of God, he breaks through the gates of hell, pulling down all the walls of the sinner's strong holds.

CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS

2 Corinthians 10: 5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and

As God makes the sinner's stronghold fall, the gospel exposes and destroys the sinner's inward most imaginations of God.

Being conceived in sin, every thought the sinner has about spiritual things is wrong: he is wrong in his thoughts about God, about salvation, about his own sin, and about Christ. All his thoughts about spiritual things are from his sinful, corrupt imagination—so they are all imaginary. His every thought is *a high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God.*

You that have spiritual discernment, examine how a spiritually dead sinner reasons and you will see: his thoughts of himself, his will, his works are high; but his thoughts of God, of what God requires, of how God saves are low.

But through the gospel of Christ, the Spirit of God exposes all his vain imaginations. This sword of the Spirit, this gospel of Christ and him crucified, is mighty through God, so that it is

Hebrews 4:12:...quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Every proud, lofty argument is exposed as utter folly to the sinner himself. God gives him true knowledge making him understand *he has been exalting himself against the knowledge of God.* God makes him understand,

John 17: 3: this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

The more God opens the scriptures to him, the more the sinners own vain imaginations are cast down because...

2 Timothy 3: 15...the holy scriptures,...are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

As his imaginations and his high thoughts are cast down all the things he thought were gain become loss to him, all his high things become worthless things. He begins to say within his new heart,

Phillippians 3:8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ...

THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST

2 Corinthians 10: 6...bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

The power that breaks down his strongholds and brings low his thoughts is that through the preaching of the gospel, God reveals that Christ is the Righteousness of God. Now, all his thoughts are brought into captivity to behold salvation is, **NOT BY HIS OWN OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW BUT BY THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST HIMSELF**—*who on behalf of all God's elect, became obedient to God, even unto the death of the cross!*

Colossians 1: 14: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Colossians 2: 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

For the first time, *the sinner knows*—he knows the truth of the gospel—that we are not justified by our obedience but the by the obedience (the faith) of Christ. When we say we preach Christ and him crucified, we are saying we preach Christ and his obedience; Christ and his righteousness; Christ and his faith.

Galatians 2:16: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

For the first time, his every thought is about...

Philippians 3:9: be[ing] found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ [the obedience of Christ], the righteousness which is of God by faith [of Christ]:

Through the gospel, God has stripped the sinner and laid him in the dust and he is made obedient to cry out,

Acts. 9: 6: Lord what wilt thou have me to do?

Christ answers the sinner in his heart and teaches him what God would have him to do, what is true obedience in the sinner before God:

John 6: 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

READINESS TO REVENGE ALL DISOBEDIENCE

2 Corinthians 10: 6: And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

So lastly, by the power of God's might, as the sinner hears the gospel, Christ makes the sinner willing to take sides with Christ. He is now made willing—made ready—to take revenge on his own disobedience. He is no

longer “*ignorant of God’s righteousness*”, no longer going about to establish [his] own righteousness, he has been made ready and willing to submit himself unto the righteousness of God.

Romans 10: 4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

He takes revenge on his own disobedience by repenting from all his own works, by casting all his care on Christ, by confessing Christ publicly in believer’s baptism, by uniting with his people in Christ’s church to support and promote the gospel of Christ.

Not only this, God gives him a “readiness,” a willingness to take revenge against all Christ’s enemies. Not using his former vain, high thoughts, not warring after the flesh any longer. But he is made *the meekness and gentleness of Christ*, ready to use *the weapons provided by God*. He has been made to put on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. He stands therefore, having his loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, he takes the shield of faith, wherewith he shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And he takes the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God—the gospel of Christ and him crucified! (Eph 6:10-17)

By the power of God through the gospel, he has renounced the hidden things of dishonesty and God has given him readiness, willingness to use one weapon, so he says,

Romans 1: 15: So, as much as in me is, I am **ready** to preach the gospel to you...16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Amen!