

Verse: Jeremiah 12:5

Questions for reflection:

1. Who are the 'footmen' who weary you in your life and ministry?
2. What are the 'horses' the Lord wants you to run with?
3. What should we be doing in our 'land of peace' to prepare for the flooding of the Jordan?

Joshua 6 - The Story of the Fall of Jericho

In tearing down Jericho, what are the keys to victory?

1. Be under the Lordship of Christ.
2. Obey the instructions of the Lord.
3. The voice of faith.

Hebrews 11:30

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

If you recall, at the end of Joshua chapter 5, Joshua encountered the Commander of the Lord's army. In chapter 6, he was given the strategy to conquer Jericho. They were to march around the city once every day for six days and seven times on the seventh day, the last of which the priests would blow the shofars. The blowing of the shofars and the shout of the people created the frequency in the natural and because they did so by faith, the supernatural came and they had enough power to tear down the wall. It was not just the natural. Something happened in the supernatural environment. Each day that they encircled the city, a layer of the demonic protection was removed. It's like hitting a brick wall. Nothing appears to happen with the first blow; then hairline crack begins with subsequent blows and at the 30th blow, it comes down. Every blow is not wasted. When we pray, every rebuke and every utterance against the evil ones is not in vain.

Jericho is about tearing down strongholds.

Some people consistently trip in life; some continue to have financial woes, habitual sins, gripping fears, prolonged relationship conflicts, etc. Perhaps there is a Jericho that stands in the way of entering the Promised Land. Let's look at the passage below to see how we can tear down the strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

5 issues:

- I. Know our spiritual weapons.
- II. Seek the true knowledge of God.
- III. Understand about strongholds.
- IV. Tearing down strongholds.
- V. Taking captive every thought.

I. Know our spiritual weapons.

1. The Name of the Lord Jesus

Not every so-called Christian is a believer. For believers, Jesus said, 'In My Name, you will cast out demons.'

Mark 16:17-18

17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

We end a prayer in Jesus' name; not in any name or any force out there. Whenever we pray in groups, we use the word, 'We' not 'I'. Why? It is the principle of agreement. If there is no agreement, don't say 'Amen.' If someone's prayer is one of criticism and tearing others apart, don't say 'Amen.'

2. The Blood of Christ

Revelation 12:11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

The Blood cleanses and purifies so that nothing unclean remains. Rubbish will attract the pests and flies. We need to clear them. Likewise our lives and spirits must be cleansed. The Blood cleanses and protects.

3. The Word of God

Ephesians 6:17

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The sword of the Spirit is the specific word, the rhema and not the logos. If we grapple with fear, we need a scripture to whack fear.

Psalms 27:1

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 Tim 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Fear is first an emotion. We feel fear and secondly, fear is a demonic spirit which must be cast out.

4. The Keys of Binding and Loosing

Matthew 16:19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Whenever two or three get together to pray, there is prayer of agreement. What do we bind? We bind the positive things such as the relationship between a husband and wife. We bind the negative things such as the works of the evil ones. There are things to loosen. We pray that God will loose and release revelations, illuminations, blessings upon families, companies, business deals, favor. The positive things are what we loose. The negative things to loose are addictions to computers, unwholesome company, etc. Parents have authority over children. We 'loose' the person from unwholesome activities.

II. Seek the true knowledge of God

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

The true knowledge of God is evidenced in a life that is more and abundant. John 10:10b It is:

- Freedom from bondages
- Vibrant walk with God
- Victorious living
- Able to handle stress, anxiety and fears
- Overcomer of sin, the world and the evil one
- Increasing wisdom and revelation

If we are consistently gripped with fear and increasingly having fractures in our soul, we are not living the more abundant life.

The true knowledge of God is the Promised Land.

- a. The path of life
- b. The presence of joy
- c. The pleasures of God’s right hand

Psalm 16:11

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

III. Understand about strongholds

1. Definition of Strongholds

They are mindsets, thought-patterns, ideas, attitudes and beliefs that are contrary to the true Knowledge of God.

Thought patterns are a function of who we sit under. We may read books or hear from pastors but there are things that are not entirely scriptural. We need to re-sync our thinking systems. When they are contrary, we will not experience the true knowledge of God.

2 Corinthians 10:5

... strongholds... casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God ...

Two components of strongholds are seen above.

A. Arguments/imaginings

King Jehoshaphat put his worship team before the army when he went out to battle against his enemies. That doesn’t make sense to our natural mind. It doesn’t make sense for the Israelites to march round the wall of Jericho. James talks about the wisdom that is of the world.

James 3:15

Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly/natural, unspiritual, of the devil.

The wisdom above is natural and soulish and if we persist, it becomes demonic and we give ground to the devil.

B. Every pretension/every high thing

2 Corinthians 4:4

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God ...

How do we strengthen the concrete blocks? We put steel bars, making them reinforced concrete. The steel bars strengthen the blocks. Likewise, what strengthens the argument? It is every pretension and every high thing. It is the spirit of error that reinforces the wrong mindset. That's why Jesus came to bring sight and to open the eyes of people, turning them from darkness to light. We need to ask ourselves what are we thinking? Don't trivialize the things of God. We need to know what's common and what's holy. Don't touch the anointed of the Lord lest we open a ground.

How are strongholds established?

They are established via foothold, ground or doorway.

1 John 5:18

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch/harm him.

As believers the devil cannot touch us. So how can he influence and affect us? It is when there is a doorway.

Ephesians 4:27

...and do not give the devil a foothold.

Strongholds established via:

A. Consequences of Generational Iniquities

Exodus 20:5

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me ...

An iniquity is a bent, inclination towards same inherent trait. God, in His mercy, will stop that at the 3rd or 4th generation. The devil will try to trigger it and start another cycle.

Consequences of Generational Iniquities

- e.g. 1 - Sickness and Diseases
- e.g. 2 - Sexual and Marital Problems
- e.g. 3 - Financial Problems - Inability to handle money
- e.g. 4 - Character Flaws - constant anger; outburst of wrath; lying habits; tongue problems
- e.g. 5 - Addiction - to substance / negative behaviour

Doctors will ask whether we have a family history of cancer, stroke, diabetes, liver problem, etc. The medical world understands it only through the genes but for us, we understand we have the spiritual weapons to cut off the consequences of generational iniquities. On the surface, a couple may have problems in marriage but there may be a demonic spirit working through the generations. His parents may be divorced or infidelity might have been committed by his forefathers, etc.

Some people may be plagued with the urge to gamble and spend beyond means and get themselves into financial woes. Some have character flaws, outburst of wrath.

B. The fractured-wounded soul

1 Thessalonians 5:23

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our soul can be fractured due to hurts, unresolved issues and unmet needs.

Hurt is where something bad that should not have happened occurred in the person's life, e.g. verbal abuse, been called 'stupid', etc and the word has stuck with you. The abuse may also come from your bosses or cell members.

Unresolved issues are when we were incapable, at that time, to process the experience in a positive manner. We wonder why things happen this way or another.

Unmet needs - this is where something good that should have happened didn't happen. There is a void. We all want to be accepted but sometimes, the message may not be conveyed. We join a cell and feel rejected and the devil will add his portion to reinforce the thought.

C. All personal habitual sins

Matthew 6:14-15

14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Hebrews 12:15

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Galatians 5:19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like ...

D. All sins directly involving the evil one

When we place anything above God, that's an idol.

Exodus 20:4-5

4 You shall not make for yourself a carved image - any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them ...

Deuteronomy 18:10-11

10 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, 11 or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

Isaiah 47:13-14

13 ... Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month ... 14 Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame ...

IV. Tearing Down Strongholds

How do we tear down strongholds? 2 passages – James 4:6-10 and 1 Peter 1:5-9.

James 4:6-10

6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

1. I must humble myself before God

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He will forgive because the price has been paid.

2 Corinthians 7:1

... let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Because of the Jerichos, the sins we commit, there is contamination and defilement. We need to be cleansed.

Numbers 33:52

... destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; of reverence for God.

We must identify, remove and destroy all the physical things. We need to clean up our computers. We need to deal with the root cause that causes us to stumble so that we may live more abundantly. There is a difference with worldly repentance and godly repentance. We need to produce fruits of repentance. Be serious about dealing with our Jerichos otherwise we will trip again.

2. I must submit myself to God.

1 Corinthians 12:3

... no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

A gangster has a big brother, the bigger gangster. When the big gangster comes, the bullies go away. We have Jesus. When He comes, all the lesser demons will have to go. Jesus is the Lord of lords, the King of kings. To Him every knee will bow.

3. After (1) and (2), I can now resist the evil one. This involves:

- a. My will – choice
- b. My faith in the Word of God
- c. My exercise of the authority and power God gave me.

4. I must draw near to God.

- a. Partake/stand on His Word
- b. Pray/Connect with God continually
- c. Give thanks to God
- d. Praise and worship God

5. I must not be a double-minded man.

James 1:8

he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

6. Continually submit myself to God.

James 4:10

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Romans 8:6

... to be spiritually minded is life and peace ...

V. Taking captive every thought in obedience to Christ.



1. 3 source of all thoughts: man, evil one, God.

2. In obedience to Christ is to conform to the true knowledge of God. i.e. salvation, deliverance, healing, peace, protection, victory, wisdom, grace, freedom, vibrant walk...

CONCLUSION

Joshua 6:26

Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho ...

Curse is the opposite of blessing. Jericho stands in the way of entering the Promised Land. For anyone of us, when we create and erect a stronghold, thinking pattern, attitude, belief system that is not in sync with the Scriptures, the evil ones will come and reinforce it.

God does not send cancer. God is not punishing the world. Right thinking leads to right living. Don't build Jericho in our lives lest the evil ones have a ground.

Jericho is the stronghold that blocks the knowledge of God and Joshua cursed it. We can conquer Jericho by obedience to the Word of God

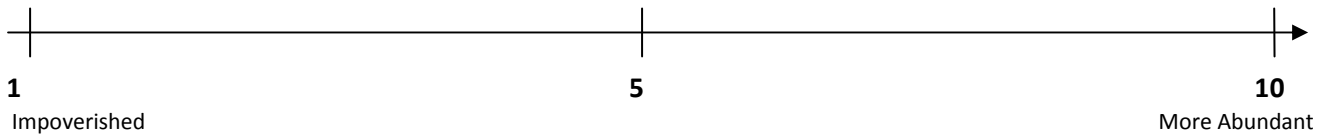
Do you want to be free from the strongholds that block the true knowledge of God, the blessings of God in your life?

Rise up and fight!
Tear down the Jericho!

End

Questions for Discussion

1) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your spiritual life: 1 for impoverished and 10 for more abundant spiritual life.



2. Honestly, examine if there is a Jericho standing in the way of your entering the Promised Land. If not, is there a potential Jericho you may be erecting?

3. Are you in need of help to tear down your Jericho? What are some weapons you could use to tear it down?

4. What are evidences of someone who has the true knowledge of God? Do you see that in yourself? If yes, great, press on. If no, what steps would you take to move on? Is there someone whom you may call upon to account to and to push you on?

5. There are various grounds for strongholds to be established.

- a) Consequences of General Iniquities
- b) Fractured-wounded soul
- c) All personal habitual sins
- d) All sins directly involving the evil one

Are you alerted to any? Are there some things which you ought not to be carrying or doing or keeping? If you need help, you may take the issue further and make separate appointment with your shepherds – cell leader, supervisor and pastor.

6. Share what you have gathered from the message and what are some of the applications you can draw from it.