

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Demolishing strongholds in our Mind

Strongholds act against us and distance us from God. A stronghold is a wrong way of thinking, a mindset that is contrary to the truth. It came about through a mental acceptance of and meditating on a falsehood, a lie that the Evil One has planted in our mind. Without the light of the Spirit of Truth, we are not able to recognize a stronghold as such, and persist in our erroneous opinion and way of thinking, thereby not living in the fullness of truth, paving the way to error, confusion and sin.

Satan would like to build up strongholds in our minds that will lead us to have a false impression of what God really is like.

Many souls have no great desire to draw closer to God because they have a false impression of what God really is like. Their impression of God is a distant, powerful spirit that is quick to punish and not involved in their lives. This false belief could be shaped by some past painful experience, dwelling on it and believing that it constituted an unfair punishment by God. The Father of all Lies started this falsehood and will continue to plant all kinds of lies in the mind to make sure the stronghold continues to control the thinking pattern of that soul. When Jesus, God's only Son was borne incarnate as a human baby, He identifies Himself as one of us. This is not a distant, impersonal God. When Jesus uses His own pain, suffering, blood, sweat, tears, His life and death to atone for the sins of all, He demonstrates what He meant when He said: *There is no greater love than laying down one's life for one's friend (cf. John 15:13)*. This is not a God that is quick to punish but one who loves us to the extent of bearing our punishment.

Another popular stronghold Satan likes to establish in the minds of souls is how we see ourselves.

The Enemy of our souls would like to sow doubt into our hearts that God has not fully forgiven us our sins. The Diabolical One would like to bind us to the unhappy past and prevent healing from our brokenness. As a result, some poor souls do not see themselves as precious children of God for whom God's only Son die but as poor, unclean sinners unworthy to approach God. God says to us through Isaiah: *Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)*. Yes, the Blood of Jesus Christ can justify us so completely and perfectly that in heaven we can stand before the throne of God as if we never sinned!

Fighting error and falsehood with the Truth which is God's Word.

Every mind is under some demonic deception in varying degrees. We need to counter falsehood and lies through the power of the Spirit of Truth. By this, we need to constantly reject whatever thought, ideas, way of thinking that has the end result of putting distance between us and the love of God. Instead, we need to meditate on and proclaim to ourselves the Truth contained in Scripture that exposes the falsity of the stronghold in our mind. There is power in God's Word. It is through His spoken Word that creation came about. *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12)*. The Word of God is part of the armour of God, and is the sword of the Spirit (cf. Ephesians 6:17). It is a powerful weapon to demolish falsehoods and lies in our minds.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You love me more than I love myself, and You are closer to me than I am to myself. You rejoice with me when I am happy and feel my hurt as Your own when I am hurting. I am Your child, the apple of Your eye (cf. Zechariah 2:8) and You willingly bear the punishment for my sins on Your own sinless Body. I rejoice that I have a wonderful Lord and God who will share His glory, joy and Kingdom with me when my life on earth is over. Purify my mind of all strongholds that work against my relationship with You. Flood it with God's light, truth, knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Close my heart and mind to deceit. Deepen in me the virtue of holy humility. Help me build my life on Your Word so that all my thoughts, words and actions are rooted in holy love which is holy truth. For it is only through holy love that I can live in holy truth. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk