

SYNC: Tearing Down Strongholds

(II Corinthians 10:1-6)

Introduction

A) “It is a popular, almost legendary, story that innumerable civilians armed with picnic baskets followed the Union Army out from Washington in July 1861 to watch what everyone thought would be the climactic battle of a short rebellion. These naïve citizens, the tale goes, then impeded the Union retreat, adding to the panic. Hollywood’s representations of Manassas have, unfortunately, perpetuated the notion that large numbers of civilians were actually under fire on the battlefield. Indeed, there were a few, like Gov. William Sprague of Rhode Island, who accompanied Burnside’s brigade and had two horses shot from under him on Matthews Hill. The majority of spectators, however, were well out of harm’s way on Centerville Heights, some five miles from the fighting

Near Centerville, Capt. John Tidball witnessed a “throng of sightseers” approach his battery. “They came in all manner of ways, some in stylish carriages, others in city hacks, and still others in buggies, on horseback and even on foot. Apparently everything in the shape of vehicles in and around Washington had been pressed into service for the occasion. It was Sunday and everybody seemed to have taken a general holiday; that is all the male population, for I saw none of the other sex there, except a few huckster women who had driven out in carts loaded with pies and other edibles. All manner of people were represented in this crowd, from the most grave and noble senators to hotel waiters” (<http://www.civilwar.org>)

“And very quickly they realized that it wasn’t just a little Sunday afternoon scrimmage, a little skirmish; it was a major war, a battle to the death where thousands, and scores and scores of thousands of people would give their lives.

Now we have to understand that’s the nature of the battle we’re involved in; we often think that we’re involved in a little Sunday afternoon scrimmage. We live our lives and act our lives and carry on our lives; we prepare our lives as if that’s what we’re facing. But what we have to realize is, this is a battle to the death, and it’s either us or them in this spiritual warfare” (James Packer III).

B) Contextualize this sermon in the series, SYNC.

C) Contextualize 2 Corinthians 10

This passage is Paul's defense of his ministry against the enemies of the gospel in Corinth (10:1-2), revealing how Satan has gained a spiritual stronghold in the congregation through those that opposed the message of the apostle.

Amid his defense, Paul instructs us on the means to recognize how the dark systems of the devil work in this spiritual warfare.

But more than that, we must learn the processes of overcoming the systems of the devil.

I. The Reality of Spiritual Warfare (10:3)

Principle: *Since his fall to sin, Satan has launched a long war against God in an attempt to establish himself an equal to God.*

A) Satan's rebellion (Ezekiel 28; Isaiah 14)

B) Satan's attempted destruction of Israel (Book of Esther)

C) Satan's temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4)

II. Your Involvement in This Warfare (10:4)

Principle: *The enemy's goal is to deceive, defeat, or damage you to the point that that you have no spiritual victory or effectiveness for the cause of Christ.*

Illustration: Peter experienced repeated defeat before grasping the means of victory in spiritual warfare (Matthew 16: 21-23; Matthew 26:51-54; Acts 2:36-41).

III. The Enemy's Tactics in The Warfare (10:4)

Principle: *The Enemy's methodology includes establishing a stronghold or deception (lie) about God that leads to a defeated life.*

A) Society says, "All roads lead to heaven." Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father, but by me."

B) Society says, "A woman has reproductive rights." The Bible says, "Before you were formed in the womb, I knew you."

C) Society says, "People have a right to be happy, therefore, people should be free to love and be with whomever they choose." The Bible tells us that God created them male and female and they shall leave father and mother and become one."

D) Your sinful nature says, "Life is all about you." The Bible tells us life is all about God.

E) Society says, "You only go around once, so grab all the life you can." The Bible reminds us that this world is temporary and brief in comparison to eternity.

IV. Your Defense Against the Enemy (10:5)

Principle: *Your defense against the enemy is bringing every thought into captivity or in agreement with the Word of God.*

"There is nothing more valuable than that we understand the Scriptures, refresh our minds with them all the time, for in this constant bombardment with illusion and error it is easy to drift back into thinking as the world around us thinks . . . [and] acting just like everybody else" - *Ray Stedman*.

"When we read the gospels, we see that Jesus is a Man who understands life. He does not act like anybody else because He really sees what is happening. He ignores much of the visible symptoms and strikes right at the heart of problems to the direct cause of events" - *Ray Stedman*.

A) Read the Word.

B) Study the Word.

C) Submit to the Word.

Conclusion.