

## **THE MIND OF CHRIST SERIES**

### **THREE BATTLES OF THE MIND**

II Cor. chapter ten and here Paul says something about the mind. We have talked about the various aspects of the mind. We need to also understand the hindrances that we face in this life. What are the battles of the mind? We all possibly by now are matured enough to know that the main battlefield in the spiritual world is in the mind. How the devil use the things of this life and thoughts to come against our mind. Our mind is the battlefield. We all possibly know that by now thoroughly. What we want to see is what is the battle about. What kind of conflicts will happen in the mind? What kind of battle will take place? We must know our weapons. Paul says that we war with spiritual weapons not with weapons of flesh and blood but with spiritual weapons. The warfare is in our mind. And having our weapons is not enough. We need to know what kind of weapon the enemy has. We need to know how the enemy works. Why he works that way and what are the areas that he seeks to affect our mind.

*So lets look at II Cor. 10:4-6 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, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (NKJV)*

*For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. (RSV)*

Now there are three battles mentioned there in regard to the mind. And in opposition to different forces that work against our mind.

No. 1 he tells us pulling down strongholds.

No. 2 casting arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

No. 3 bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ Jesus.

We know that the bible doesn't repeat itself redundantly. When some thing is repeated there is a reason. But here is not even a repetition of three things. They are talking about three separate areas of the battle of the mind. If we can win the battle mentioned in II Cor. 10:4-5 we will be able to possess, inherit, demonstrate, acquire the might and the power and the grace of the mind of Jesus Christ.

So No. 1 lets look at pulling down strongholds. The word *pulling down* and *casting down* are used separately and differently. The words *pulling down* and *casting down* are related but different. They are both from the same Greek word. The word *pulling down* is from the Greek word *kathairesis* and it is a noun. The other word in verse 5 *casting down* is from the same Greek word but a different usage. It is from the Greek word *kathaireo*. They are both from the same root word that talks about destroying. It is from the root word that say destroy or destruction. And that's a different word altogether from the English. To pull down is to remove. To cast down is to take away. But destroy is to annihilate, reduced to nothing. He doesn't

want us to just remove. He doesn't want us to just take away. He wants us to annihilate those things. So that's the root word of the meaning *kathai*, where we get the noun *kathairesis* and a verb form *kathaireo*.

Now *kathairesis* should be translated as a noun instead of being translated over here like a verb. It says here *pulling down*. Now pulling is a verb and an action word. In the Greek it is actually a noun. So we would have to translate it differently. In verse 4 it would be accurate to say *for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for the destruction of strongholds*. In other words they are to completely remove should there be any and should there have been those things they should be destroyed annihilated and taken off. In other words verse 4 implies that the strongholds should never exist any more. If they existed in our past in our minds they should have been destroyed. And if they try to come again they must be destroyed utterly. That is the weapons for our warfare are for the destruction, the total destruction of every stronghold. When something comes again it is destroyed. The weapons of God will completely destroy.

Verse 5 is a verb form and it says casting arguments and every high thing. The word *casting down* is from the same Greek word but it's a verb something that is still continuous. So you would have to translate that as *destroying every reasoning and every high thing that exalt itself against Jesus Christ*. So verse 5 talks about a continual battle. So when you read it in the Greek it brings it up in a lovely way. Strongholds must be removed utterly annihilated and prevented from existing. Its very existence in our mind must be removed, destroyed, annihilated. And verse 5 talks about a battle that we will continue to face. It talks about how we all have to use our reason continually. We all have to be continually be using our reason in this life. Even though we do not depend on reason, even though we do not depend on our understanding yet understanding and reasoning are part and parcel of life. You can't live without reasoning and understanding. But it talks about the battle that continues to be there even as we seek to reason not in man's reasoning but in God's method of reasoning.

Just for foundation let me give all the foundations and Greek words first. The word *strongholds* in verse 4 is a word that is normally translated as *multitude of crowds*. It usually refers to people. It has a tie to the word *oklause* which Greek scholars say it

means crowds or multitude. But here is a longer word and it is what we will call *ochuroma* the meaning is multitude. In my spirit I picture it as tiny strings, bondages like that come upon people's life. You could tie some one with a string. Then you could take more strings and you could tie some more around him. It would be just like an abundance of strings. So a stronghold has reference to an abundance of that wrong kind of thoughts, ideas, words and conclusions that the devil gives to people. So all you start with is one wrong thought. Then you would be having bondage as you allow more wrong thoughts. No wonder here it is not just being deceived by one thought. Usually the word deception is a major thing that you are deceived in and then it could be other sub-areas. Of course when people are totally deceived it is an accumulation of whole ideas. But here is not just deception. It is worse than deception because deception has gone so deep that it becomes a part of the life muscle and fiber of the person's thinking. It function as if it's the person's personality itself. The wrong thought, the wrong imagination, the wrong things that go on. *Ochuroma* is a multitude of those wrong things. No wonder the bible says have them totally and completely annihilated; destroy them utterly.

The second battle in verse 5 speaks about two areas that we have to continually battle because of the continuous tense of the word *kathaireo* that it will continually be present in our life until Jesus comes. The first must be utterly removed. The second is something realistic that we continue to face is the battle of the mind. Here in the second it says in verse 5 *kathaireo* or destroying casting down arguments. The word *arguments* is translated as reasoning and is from the Greek word *logismos*. *Logismos* speaks about logical argument and things. Logic in itself is neutral. But if the logical reasoning is not in line with God's Word it may make a person an enemy of God. You could reason your way out of God's will. You could reason your way out of a miracle. You could reason your way out of the providence of God. You could reason your way out of healing. So I would say there are two types of reasoning. The higher reasoning from God where God says His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and the lower reasoning of the flesh.

What do we talk about when we talk about reasoning? Lets give an example. Logic came originally from God. In the Old Testament God said *come lets us reason together*. When you come to know God you realize God has a higher form of logic. The wonderful thing about logic is this. If you have insufficient data and evidence your conclusion though coming through logical reasoning would still be wrong. The

difference with absolute logic that is found in God is all data are available. If you have insufficient data and you apply logic, you will come to a wrong conclusion and to the opposite of truth. So I want to show how logic in itself and reasoning in itself is not bad. That's why the bible says to continuously *kathaireo* or cast down arguments or continuously battle with wrong reasoning. We need to recognize what are the things that are logical, reasoning that are not in line with God and reasoning that are in line with God. It's a battle that we continually face every day. And the difference is the sufficiency of data.

Lets give an example from the bible. Acts 28. I use to tell the story of how one guy was walking down the road. He sees people engaged in different activity in the evening. He came across this house from a very far distance. He saw this guy sitting down in his chair and doing the gardening. He says what a lazy bum this guy is. Imagine doing gardening on your chair. As he came nearer suddenly he realize this guy is lame. His conclusion was the opposite. More data was perceived. And he realized he is not a lazy bum. He is hard working. Most people in his position would be in the house. In spite of the condition of his legs he is out there doing gardening. How different the reasoning of the world is. All the difference it makes is how much data you have. The less information you have, it leads you to wrong conclusion. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. That is why before you conclude you have to have sufficient data.

Acts 28:3 Paul as he was gathering sticks a viper came out of the heap fastened itself on his hand and bite him. Paul didn't scream. He just took the viper and killed it. Conclusion No. 1 verse 4 *When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."* Doesn't that sound very logical? That's the logic we talk about that we had to destroy. Wrong logic, we are not against logic. They have jumped into a wrong conclusion. They are saying something that is quite reasonable. Based on their insufficient data conclusion one they say he is a murderer. "No wonder this happened to him."

Have you ever heard people reasoning about your life? Or you were reasoning about your own life. "No wonder this happened because I did this." If that is in the logic of God, then that is no problem. But if that is your own conclusion you could

be misled. Or when you are looking at another person's life and you are one of those persons who like to play judge. And you are looking at people and something happened to them. From your outward perspective, you don't have all the facts, but you assume it. "I know why this happens to this guy. It is because he is a murderer." Or, "Because that person did that, see now this happen to him/her." It is illogical although it looks logical from the insufficient data one has.

Sometimes something happened and a normally good person landed in the hospital. And some people say, "I know why. He must have sinned against God." There could be other reasons. That is the kind of reasoning that II Cor. 10:5 says to destroy because you don't have sufficient data.

Think about Job. When Job was sick, sores were all over his body. And he had three friends visiting him. They loved him and they sympathized with him. In fact they felt so sorrowful for him that they didn't speak for a while. They were just staring at him. You know why. They were studying the situation. They were in deep thought trying to think what is the reason for all these things to happen. They knew Job well. He was benevolent, he was generous and he was rich. So for a long time they sat quietly. Finally one of them spoke up. "Job, I think I know what's wrong." Job didn't ask them. But let's see some of the conclusions they reached. The first guy implied, "Job, you may have sinned. Don't think you can hide your sin from God." The second told Job, "Most probably you have." The third said, "You sinned terribly." The way they reason looks logical. But as I said, their logic was based on insufficient data.

And here are the people who were watching Paul. They say he must be a murderer. If it was not Paul and he died that would confirm their conclusion that he was a murderer. If it were not Paul who escaped a shipwreck and another person who didn't, perhaps they would have considered it as an accident. The snake was just there and bit him and he died. But it was Paul, who survived a shipwreck, so some of them would say, "That confirms it. He died, therefore he must have been a murderer."

When some thing happens whether in an accident or something there are three causes. There may be spiritual, there may be natural, there may be soul causes. So we cannot always jump to the conclusion and say it's a spiritual cause. If you go out driving and you are driving too fast or you are driving carelessly and you get into accident, you cannot look up to God and ask, "God, where is my sin?" If there is any sin you broke the traffic laws. So lets not jump to conclusion.

As we see here as we look at Paul conclusion No.1 is terrible. Then in verse 6 see how fast the world changes its mind here within a few seconds. Some time the world changes its mind over 5 years or over 10 years. Any one who has been to school you will realize that some of the things you learned you have to unlearn because they got new discoveries and the conclusions are now different. In verse 6 they were all waiting for him to die. Like people who had jumped to conclusion they waited for their conclusion to be proven true. And if it were proven true, they cry, "Amen!" They want to be right. And they were waiting and watching expecting him to swell up and suddenly fall over and die. They kept looking at him. When he didn't die they changed their mind. Conclusion No. 2, they said he was a god. How fast the world changes its mind. So that's the kind of reasoning that Paul says must be destroyed. A wrong illogical way of thinking that seemingly and outwardly is logical but is what I call an insufficient-data-inspired logical conclusion.

II Cor. 10:5 When he says *kathaireo* or casting down arguments or *logismos*, now we know what the *logismos* he is talking about. Every day of our life we have to confront reasoning. When you read the newspapers and magazines, there is reasoning involved. After you read a book you must think about whether the author said was right or wrong. You don't just accept it. A lot of people as they read they just assume what is said is correct. But we all know what it is outside in the world. It is very easy. You just have to highlight only certain information and people will have the wrong conclusion. Because people function in that area of *logismos*, Paul says to destroy the *logismos*, that worldly *logismos* to conclude in some areas. And it's a skill to learn to withhold judgment until its time.

Verse 5 and every high thing that exalt itself against the knowledge of God. The second thing that Paul is saying here is that conclusion would puff up self. The kind of reasoning that will show that man is great and powerful and God doesn't exist.

That kind of reasoning that made people like Nebuchadnezzar say, "I am the mighty one." The kind of reasoning that will say, "How clever I am, how smart I am. How rich I am. How dignified I am." That kind of conclusion will produce what I call the pride of life. Pride starts in the thoughts. Before people behave proudly their thoughts are proud. The kind of thinking that will make people look down on others. All these are the wrong reasoning that the bible talks about.

When you talk about II Cor. 10:5 and when I fellowship with Christians I find those things are still present among Christians. That shows the lack of perfection in us. We need to grow out of that. We need to mature. Those are little children. It is alright for little children to jump to conclusion. We must mature out of conceiving hastily premature conclusions. We are not saying that none of us go through that stage. It is usually a growth that we go through. As our bodies mature and grow we began to look like man or woman instead of kids. We realize our minds must grow. The sad thing is a lot of people's minds do not grow. Their bodies grow but their minds although educated and can speak with bombastic words but in their attitude and in true bible maturity of the mind, they are still not matured. That's what Jesus Christ is for to help us grow that we will see what the bible says about mental growth in the bible. We have to grow in our spirit. We have to grow in our soul. We have to grow in our body. That's what the bible wants us to.

Everything that exalts itself against Christ, against the knowledge of God that is those things that the bible said must be destroyed. It's a continual battle every day because self wants to pop out. And because everything that is against Jesus, and the world, and the current that we live in is against Christ and ungodliness is outside in the world. We must not be conformed to the world. The word conform means to allow the world to fashion you, to allow the world to mould your thinking. No, we must be free to think. And let's be balance here. We want to produce a group of Christians who are strong. Who know how to hear the voice of God for themselves. Who know how to have a mature mind to think for themselves. We don't want to produce a group of zombies who followed that cult leader Jim Jones and drank poison and died. No, that's the opposite. And some times if you have such a thing clothed in spiritual religiosity it is not necessarily of God. Even God Himself gives free will to the people. So God wants sheep that are matured. Even though we have prophecy, we have gifts operating, we know and we can hear God's voice, we never use that for manipulation. And some times when you hear some thing from

God for a person's life, God will say let that person discover for himself. Just be there at hand to confirm when they ask you to. Otherwise we all will be treated like zombies. Those who claim to be able to hear will be directing and manipulating and dominating the lives of those who are growing. That should never happen, or otherwise for the rest of our lives we will never grow. Why? You may end up that whenever you need to hear from God you have to go to brother so and so. You don't do any homework yourself. God wants us to be matured so that all of us like sheep of Jesus can hear the voice of Jesus. We thank God for fellowship. We grow through fellowship but we must also grow in our relationship with the Lord.

Then the third area in verse 5 *bringing every thought* (and the word *thought* is the word *noema* talking about the conscious mind) *into captivity to the obedience of Christ*. Bringing consciously every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ. Now interestingly enough those three battles are talking about the battle in the spirit, the battle in the soul and the battle in the body that affect the mind. See our mind is in a position where we have certain contact deep in the recesses of our spirit. The soul and the spirit have a connection. Then the body and the soul have a certain connection where anything experienced in the body is transmitted into our soul. Then the soul itself has its own self-consciousness. So when we are talking about the mind we are talking about influences of the spirit realm upon the mind, influences of the soul realm upon the mind, and influences of the physical body realm upon the mind. All the battle is in the mind.

Here in the third area it says *bringing into captivity every thought*. The word *captivity* is used in the same word when Jesus set the captives free. It's the normal Greek word for *captivity* but I like you to see it refers to the body realm. In the book of Rom. 7:23 *But I see in my members* (the context of the word *members* refers to the physical body) *another law at war*. And Paul was also talking about war in II Cor. 10:4 *for the weapons of our warfare*. He is talking about war but the war is inside us. Unless you conquer the war inside you cannot conquer the war outside. Unless you conquer all those raging waters in your being and harness it into a mighty dam to produce electricity of God's power you will never conquer the outside. Unless the battles inside our own minds are conquered, we don't talk about success in this life or overcoming the world. In fact the ability to overcome the world and the things of this world thrown against you is directly proportional to your ability that you have in overcoming all these forces that are at work against your inner self and your

inner mind.

So every time you have a success inside your own being where your thoughts rise up to a higher level of conquest and victory you will find your physical life, your working life, your occupation, everything that you do increasing in a direct way proportionally. And if you have fully conquered your inward battles, your outward conquest and success will be fantastic. Every time you talk to a person who experiences failure or is struggling in life you realize that they have not conquered the biggest struggle that is still inside them. They haven't conquered quote unquote the demons in their lives. So how can they conquer the demons in the world? Its still raging free just like a free for all situation in their mind. And literally you could trace a person's failure or success and the condition they are in by looking at whether they have conquered the battle within them.

So in Rom. 7 talks about the war that is going on. *But I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind.* There is a battle between the body and the mind. What is the battle? The body wants the mind to follow it. But the mind says body you follow me. Since the mind receives instruction from the law of the Spirit God, you know what you ought to do. Your mind was told to instruct your body what to do. And the body says no way. And it produces other kinds of desire. And your mind is being held captive and pulled by the gravitational forces in your body. Paul says the sin nature bringing me into captivity to the sin of the imperfection in my body.

So having crossed reference there we understand now clearer in II Cor. 10 that when Paul talks about the battle that we all face in order to possess the mind of Christ. We need to first, overcome or bring to utter destruction strongholds, those wrong thoughts, doctrines or demons and wrong influences from the spiritual atmosphere that comes to lock themselves against us. These are influences from the spirit realm. Influences are far more powerful in the spirit realm than just thoughts because spiritual influences generate thoughts. They are the very source of right and wrong thoughts. All it can happen is that when a demon just familiarizes itself with a person and attach itself to a person or oppress a person you can see that person can have one thousand thoughts all from one demon. All the one thousand thoughts came from the same source the personality of the demon. And the kind of

demon will produce after the kind of thoughts it will be similar. It could be one demon and it could produce all kinds of manner, imagination because it's a demon of lust. There was a spiritual evil influence of lust and it can produce a thousand thoughts of lust in different manner, form and shape. All these are from one spiritual force.

What I want to illustrate is spiritual force is much more powerful. If you are in the presence of God the opposite is true. I am sure you all recalled times when you are just in the presence of God. You have entered into the Holy of holies. You know what filled your mind, lovely thoughts. I tell you there is nothing like being in God's presence where His thoughts overwhelm you. Thoughts of awesomeness, thoughts of meekness, thoughts of goodness towards others, love bubbling out through you, love flowing in through your mind all because you are in the presence of God. So spiritual forces are far greater than soul forces. That's No. 1 the spiritual influences that produces thoughts in our life.

No. 2 we are talking about the soul area that produces right and wrong reasoning. The soul can produce high and mighty reasoning against the humble mind of Christ. See the opposite of high is humble. The soul must learn to consider others better than yourself. That kind of humbleness of mind must come in. That is in the soul. Human being plays a role in producing the kind of thoughts that arise from the soul because human beings produce a lot of soul activity and soul reasoning. So that is the second realm that you battle in.

The third realm is very important the physical body realm. Because if you allow your body to influence your mind, your body will tell your mind to do things where in a normal situation you would never do. And your body will be in such a situation that it could literally captivate your mind until you live to eat and you eat to live. Just like a drug addict, an alcoholic or whatever that have given themselves to the things of this world. What do they do? They live from moment to moment. Between kicks they wait for the next kick until they become so kicked up that finally they kick the bucket. Life becomes meaningless for them. In between those times what they are thinking is about the next kick. And why are they so motivated by that? Their bodies have taken control of their minds. They are at the third level.

Now all these three levels some times operate together. Recognize that there are three realms that you are battling in but all these three intermingle together against proper thinking and the proper mind that Jesus will want us to have.

So how do we confront these things? How do we destroy and remove all these things? There is only one key root. In facing No. 1 that destroying and bring to utter destruction the strongholds. There is only one antidote the Word of God. Now the Word is applicable to all three areas. But primarily it cuts at your very spiritual realm. From the spirit its affect your soul and your body.

In Heb. 4:12 *For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* Jn. 15:3 Jesus said my Word or my logos has made you clean. The weapons of our warfare are the Word of the living God. In his description of the armor of God in Eph. 6 Paul exhorts us to take up the sword of the Spirit. What did Jesus use when He faced the devil? The Word of God. He said, "It is written." Again, "It is written." There is no other foundation except the Word of the living God. We need a foundation to start with. And the foundation is the Word of the living God. Only this Word can remove the strongholds in our life. Some times the Word spoken in due season is like *a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.* Some times you could read the Word over and over again. But one tiny insignificant little word could be like an atomic explosion in your heart and set your mind free. It's the Word that could set us free. Destroy utterly and completely strongholds.

In the second area of the soul what can set us free? Here the Word is still working but here I find what I call an important aspect that mixed with the Word. That whenever those soul areas confront you, one of the most important things to note of is this to guard against haste. Remember we were talking about *logismos*. What was wrong with the conclusion of these people? They were too fast and too hasty in jumping to conclusions. Ever since the fall of man, man was always in a hurry. So in order to develop the mind of Christ this is no short cut it takes time. It takes time to meditate on the Word.

Then No.2 learn patience. Because our mind is not fully functioning like the original mind God gave Adam, it takes longer time for us to reach into the depths of our spirit and draw the right *logismos* from God. We dare not draw our own conclusion. We dare not lean on our own understanding. In fact we choose not to. But we draw into the depth of the Spirit within us and draw out His *logismos*. The bible says in I Cor. 2 the spiritual man discern all things. The word *discern* itself implies that you have spiritual help. That is not a conclusion you reach with your own mind minus God. But he is talking about a conclusion that is reached by submitting the mind to God and drawing the understanding from the rivers of God to help you. That's in the soul area. So the key word there is patience.

Any time any one of you face a very difficult decision you want to tap on the mind of Christ you have to No. 1 to remove all those strongholds first. With those strongholds you cannot even think clearly. Your mind is at peace your heart is at rest your mind is thinking the Word. Any thought that is not in line with the Word is forbidden from your mind. Then at that second level you learn the art of patience. It takes a while for us to pick it up from the mind of the Spirit because our mind is finite. But if you give your new born created mind in God enough time your mind will be able to reach the conclusion God wants you to have or the discernment God wants you to have.

So every time you have a difficult decision to make in your working life, in your ministry, in any area. The first key is to have a cleansed mind. The second is to ask for time. I know some times we don't have the time. But you could ask for at least some time. That's No. 1 ask for time. Get enough time for your soul to be still to draw upon God. Those things will take time. If you are in a hurry it is most probable to make a mistake. All of us have times when you need to make difficult decision. The more difficult the decision, the more time you must give it. And you could even put a sub-law to it. In direct proportional to the difficulty and the graveness of the decision, the greater time you need to give it. I know that sometimes you say there is no time left but God is in control of time. And He will grant you. He will hold everything because He says my child is seeking Me. The world will press you to make a decision. Wait, give time.

When Daniel had one of the most difficult things to do, he asked for time. He and all the rest were sentenced to death because king Nebuchadnezzar ordered it. It was a difficult task. They were supposed to do two things. Give the king his dream and then tell him the interpretation of his dream. Nobody has done that before. Daniel asked for one day. He asked for time. Give me time to seek my God he says. And he was given a time. Enough time you can get in contact with God. In other words we must regard that our life is no more our life. If you want me to make a decision I have to tell my boss. Who is my boss? Jesus Christ. We are no more bosses of our own life. If you are your own boss go ahead and make your own decision and die on the way. But we said He is Lord. But when it comes to making decision we are lord. Is Jesus just our Savior or is He also our Lord? We are not talking about Lord when on Sundays we sing to Him. We are talking about making Him Lord in our daily life. Every day when you wake up say, "Lord, Master what do you want me to do? Your servant is available." The more difficult it is the more you need to seek the Lord, the less difficult it becomes. He would have probably taught you how to do it. You don't have to get up in the morning kneel down before God and say, "God shall I have my breakfast now?" Or, "God is it your will for me to go to the supermarket to buy for my family those things that are necessary?" We need to be aware of it that there is some thing that God has led you and then it is left in your system of doing things.