

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

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[0:00] Take your Bibles, go and be to the book of 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians chapter 10 is where we will be at. 2 Corinthians chapter 10. As you're turning there, I will remind you that at the end of this month, September 27th through the 29th will be our fall family retreat.

It is at Booker T. Washington State Park this year. There's a sign-up sheet in the back there. We kind of need to know if you are planning on coming, you're desiring to come. It's free. We'll take care of it from there.

We just need to know a rough attendance number so that we can make sure we have enough food to feed everyone. While we do believe that the Lord can multiply the loaves and the fish, we also know that he calls us to preparedness and to be wise.

And so we're trying to take those steps as well. So let's be fair to those who are planning and preparing on that side. So if you think you're coming, you're desiring to come, just sign up back there in the back.

Our Wednesday night meals do start back this week, so that sign-up sheet is back there as well. I know the first couple of weeks are already taken care of. Again, we're not asking you to pay for the food for 100 people.

[1:02] If you can, and the Lord has allowed you and blessed you with the means to be able to do that, or you can do that in connection with someone else, that's great. Hallelujah. If you can't, the church has budgeted that in.

What we need is for people to volunteer to do the cooking and preparing, and can do those things and just kind of share that across the board. It is a great ministry to our families and to each one of us.

We all like to eat, right? So it's a great ministry during the week. We've seen the Lord bless that and use that because at the same time, we also have tutoring services that will begin and start going on for our school-age children, and then the Iwanis program.

So we know we have a lot of children activities on Wednesday nights, and we know weeknights can be busier and busier, and supper is one thing we don't want you to be concerned about. So we want to give you the opportunity to make a priority to worship together and to grow in the things of the Lord.

So that's one way we're trying to meet that. So if you want to be involved in that ministry, I want to encourage you. I have one more. They're all connected to food this morning. I don't know why. Okay? This one is the last one that I got called and asked if we would do it apart from our normal time.

[2:10] September 23rd. September 23rd is a Monday. Now, I know in the past, Miss Linda has kind of taken on some of this. Miss Linda, I'm not going to let you do that this year because I know you're also catering a wedding the weekend before, and you have the retreat the weekend after.

So that's a Monday. We've been asked if we would feed the Motlow students, the BCM. So if you want to be involved in the feeding of the Motlow students, then please, by all means, just let us know.

The BCM, the Baptist Collegiate Ministry there, New Duck River Baptist, which is our association, is a part owner of that. It's a ministry that takes place to the students, and they provide meals on Mondays, and the money that is raised from those meals go to the mission work and activities that BCM does.

So we want to encourage that. The BCM actually, if I'm not mistaken, paid the way for one of our own members to go to the mission field this past year. So that is a result of those meals.

So we want to be able to provide that meal. We normally do ours in November. They had a need and asked if we would do it in September this year. So that's when we're doing it. Any of those you want to talk to me about after service, I'll try to remember that you talk to me about it.

[3 : 20] Make sure I write it down. But we'll get together, and we can talk about it after those, okay? But in all things, be in prayer that the Lord uses those matters as we meet physical needs in order to have the opportunity to do spiritual work.

So pray that the Lord uses that. You have your Bibles open to 2 Corinthians chapter 10. Our text this morning is going to be verses 1 through 6, as we just continue to make our way through the book of 2 Corinthians.

If you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you would join together with me as we stand and we read the Word of God. And after reading, then we'll take a moment to pray. Paul says to the church at Corinth, there in the 10th chapter, starting in verse 1, Now I, Paul, myself, urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent.

I ask that when I am present, I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some who regard us as if we walk according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not walk according to the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.

[4 : 28] And we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. And we are ready to punish all disobedience whenever your obedience is complete. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day.

Father, we praise you that we've had the opportunity to gather together with one another to worship before your throne in song and voice and fellowship and even in our giving. So, Father, now as we come before you to worship in the reading and the hearing and the application of your word, we pray that by the power and presence of your spirit that you would speak to our hearts and minds.

Would you take the word of God? Would you penetrate every distraction? Would you remove every hindrance? Lord, would you give us clarity? Would you give us eyes to see and ears to hear? But Lord, more than that, give us lives of willingness to obey it for your glory and yours alone.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. You may be seated. As we are making our way through the book of 2 Corinthians, we know that Paul is writing to a church which he has already admonished.

He is writing to a church which he has already rebuked in the letter of 1 Corinthians. Many Bible scholars believe that there is a letter in between those two. We kind of see that reference a little bit here in the 2 Corinthians letter.

[5 : 37] But either way, what we know that is going on is that Paul has rebuked the church and admonished the church really for their malpractice in the faith, for the things that they were doing wrong, on a number of things. Some of you are in your daily Bible reading, actually reading through the book of 1 Corinthians right now.

So these matters are afresh and anew to you. And you understand some of the atrocities that were going on. But mainly, if we want to keep it in context, what was happening in 1 Corinthians is that the church in Corinth was looking so much more like the city of Corinth than the people who were making a difference in Corinth.

That is, the world began to be reflected inside the church body. And the church was not distinct in difference. They began on to take the practices. This is why we get to the practice of women should have their hair long and not short.

And I know we wait. We're not here to preach those sermons again. If you want to listen to them again, you can go back. And we're not being legalistic, but we understand what was going on in the community, in the society, in the city at that time.

They were beginning to take on the practices of the world. And rather than being a thermostat, which dictated what the world should look like, they were being a thermometer and were just reflecting the attributes and the character of the world.

[6 : 45] Paul rebuked them for this. He corrected them and he chastised them. And he was challenging them. Now that rebuke, which quite often, if we're in natural mankind, we know we don't take too well to rebuke.

We would rather someone tell us that we're doing okay, that everybody would tell us that everything about us is all right and you can leave us alone. Paul didn't do that. So that brought a little pushback.

And that's what he has been answering all through the letter of 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians is not a letter of rebuke or reproof or even admonishment. It is a letter of encouragement to live out an authentic faith.

We keep saying that over and over again. To live out an authentic faith in the society that God has put you in. Now, authenticity means that you will live it out truthfully.

You will be a captive of Christ, who is a fragrant aroma unto God, not unto man, but unto God of Christ. You will live out your mission. You will live out your purpose. You will live out your calling, which God has prepared beforehand, before you were born, for you alone to do.

[7 : 44] Paul reflects all of that. We will live out with generosity in our finances and our time and all those matters which Paul has addressed. But we also come to this realization here in the 10th chapter where we're leaving the giving of our finances and our time.

And it's a natural transition if you pay attention to it because the moment the preacher or the evangelist or the author here begins to start talking about our wallet, we begin to draw back just a little bit.

But the moment that this authenticity starts to impact how we live our daily lives, there's a pushback, much like when Paul rebuked the church. And the pushback comes first from within us and then outside of us, that is, other people would join with that push.

And so Paul here begins to talk about the battle lines drawn. This morning, I want you to see the battle lines drawn in 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 1 through 6.

We know the reality. And the reality is, is that the moment we come to Christ, while we come to Christ and we are promised rest, we are not promised ease and comfort.

[8 : 52] The moment we come to Christ, we take his yoke upon ourselves, right? The moment that we will not work is that we are working with one that is stronger than us and greater than us and who knows more than us.

We are yoked together with one who is carrying the load, and that is Christ. How deep the Father's love for us. Just reading through the stanzas of that song that are so simple, but yet so astounding in their truth that his wounds, the weight of our sin upon his shoulders, that is what it is like being yoked with Christ.

He is carrying the weight of our burdens. But it does not mean that we no longer cease and we no longer strive and we no longer labor, but we are called to labor and to toil with him. Over and over again, Christ teaches us throughout the Gospels that he commissions his people unto the labor, unto the fields that are ripe for the harvest.

We are also promised and told that that labor will be a labor of battle. We are not called to ease and comfort. Friend, listen to me. Peace, comfort, peace is an attribute that exists in the middle of turmoil.

So the peace that passes understanding would not be relevant to us unless the circumstances should dictate that we would not have peace. It is not beyond understanding that you have peace when everything is easy.

[10 : 09] You should have peace. The peace that passes understanding implies that the circumstances you are in the midst of should not lead to peace, but the presence of Christ permits peace. And this is the reality.

The reason is, is because the moment we come to Christ, we are employed and engaged in a battle. We are called, as the word of God tells us, to wrestle, not just with ourselves, though Paul says that we ought to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Now, pay attention, that does not mean work for your salvation. That means to work out your salvation, that what Christ has put inside of you by redeeming you, now it is your job description to work that out with fear and trembling.

So, sometimes the battle is internally. But then we're also told that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the powers and principalities of the air and the spiritual forces of darkness. We are told over and over again that we are battling.

Now, I've got good news for you, and I kind of can get carried away a little bit on this sermon. I'll try not to. I have great news. The watch battery and my watch died this morning. On my way up here, I looked down, and I said, wow, I'm way too early.

[11 : 15] Miss Lynn was already playing. I went, wait a minute, my watch isn't working. So I took it back to the office. That's great news. I don't have a watch. I asked them, you know, a long time ago to take down all the clocks in here.

So I have no way of knowing what time it is. Please, nobody hold up a sign and tell me what time it is. I don't need to know. I don't have my glasses on right now, so I can see it if it's in the back, but I can't see it if it's right in front of me.

Either way, it's okay. But I'll try to keep it contained. As we know that we're battling this battle that we're called into, that we're waging war, we read the rest of the story and we get to the book of Revelations, we are told that the angels are ministers of us.

Now this is going somewhere. Stay with me, right? John falls down at the feet of an angel and an angel tells him, says, don't fall down and worship me. Worship God alone for I am your fellow messenger. I am your fellow servant.

So the Bible tells us that the angels are there to minister to the saints. What is so telling in the book of Revelations, right after that, the very next chapter, that angel is seen carrying the keys of the abyss that unlocks the abyss that allows Satan and his demons to come out so that the battle can be raged.

[12 : 21] So it appealed to me when I was reading Scripture that the ones that the Father sends to minister to me are the ones that also have the authority to lock Satan. They are spiritually equipped to do some amazing things.

So when we're called to the battle line, we're not called ill-prepared. We are called to the battle line with a host of heavenly armies around us, much like we've just seen in reading through the Old Testament on Wednesday and Sunday nights how Elisha prayed that the servant's eyes would be opened, that he would see the chariots and the fires all around him, that greater is those that are with us than those that are with them.

We are called to those battle lines to fight. And Paul here begins to flesh out what it looks like to be at the battle line, what it looks like to wage war. And he's writing to the church.

He's not writing to the world. He's writing to the church, to the corporate gathering of what he refers to as the saints which are at Corinth. And so this has application both to us personally and to us also corporately.

The first thing we notice is the conflict we are engaged in. We notice the conflict we are engaged in, but we have to skip down to the third verse. Don't fret too much.

[13 : 33] We'll come back to the first two in just a moment. Look at what he says. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. The first thing that we need to notice is that the conflict we are engaged in is not a conflict of flesh.

Now, in context, Paul had left Corinth. He had rebuked them. He had spent so long there in that city. He had established that church. He had raised up elders and leaders in that church.

And then he had left that church. But yet he still carried the burden of that church. After leaving, much like everywhere else Paul went, people came behind him and tried to build upon what Paul had already built upon. And the easiest way to build upon what Paul had already established would be to tear down some of what Paul was and try to build their own things.

So you had Judaizers or Jewish individuals who would come in behind Paul and they would do verbal accusation against Paul and cause seeds of doubt to be implanted in him. And they would speak ill of him and try to gain a following.

Paul refers to this in his first letter. He refers to it much more here in the second letter. And they were attacking who he was physically. They even began to speak of his appearances. And we're not really here to say what he looked like because, as a matter of fact, none of us know the farthest we can go back in history to see a description of what Paul looked like is probably about 100 years after Paul died.

[14 : 53] And so, you know, it would be hard-pressed to find anyone who really remembered that would give a clear picture of what Paul looked like. But yet they would discredit him and they would mock him and talk about his eyes and his posture and all these matters.

They were attacking him physically. While Paul was being attacked physically, he declares that the battle he's fighting is not a physical battle. Right? It is not one of the flesh. So, friend, listen to me. When we're engaged in the battle on the spiritual warfare, we understand that the attacks that come against us will often come to us in the flesh. But we are not called to battle in the flesh.

That is not our realm, if you will. We are not called to fight the battles. Remember, we do not fight against flesh and blood. You say, oh, but there's a lot of flesh that has a lot to say about me.

Well, that's fine. You can't say it. There's a lot of flesh that has a lot to do towards me. Well, that's fine. You can let them do it. We'll finish the rest of this here in just a minute. I can assure you that

the moment you go public with your profession and you begin to live very publicly the reality of who you are in Christ that there will be a lot of pushback physically against you.

[16:03] People will mock you. They'll ridicule you. They'll talk about you. They'll spread all kinds of false reports about you. They'll do all of these things. It's astounding to me. I didn't find any of that until I came to Christ. I didn't say until I began preaching.

I found a lot more of it after I began preaching and began pastoring, but I found a lot of it once I accepted Christ. People would say things about me that just simply were not true. Things would come out and it just simply had no realm for these things.

Things that, you know, I never would have dreamed of were coming around. Why? Because it is this attack on the flesh. You have an enemy who knows your weaknesses so well and you tend to fill it more in the flesh than you do anywhere else.

But Paul says, for though we walk in the flesh, we don't war in the flesh. And that is, we don't have to fight flesh with flesh. Paul was feeling these pains.

He was feeling the reality of them, but he said, this is not where I'm fighting them. This is not my conflict. And he says in verse 4, for the weapons of our warfare. If you want to see what those weapons are, go to Ephesians chapter 6.

[17:02] It is, you know, the armor of God. You can see the Ephesians 6, that's where he begins to speak of his weapons of warfare. But what are they there for? They are there, not for the flesh, they are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

So we see the reality here that the conflict we are engaged in is not a conflict of this realm, of this world, of what we can handle and touch and see, but rather we are engaged in a spiritual battle.

And we need to understand that. And the reason we need to understand that is because Satan is limited in the way he can attack you. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

You understand that. But he's in you. But you personally right now are living in the realm of Satan currently. Because the keys to this world were handed over to Satan when man chose to disobey all the way back in Genesis.

We handed the keys over. As a matter of fact, we see the confirmation of that during the temptation of Christ. Temptation of Christ. Satan says, bow down to me and worship me and I will give you all of these things.

[18:13] Jesus doesn't deny the reality that Satan has control of all of these things. That is the kingdoms of this world. But he simply says that you should worship the Lord your God alone. He does not deny the reality that man handed the keys over that.

Now, right now, currently, Christ has the keys to hell. He has the keys to heaven. He's entrusted the keys to heaven and to the church. We see that in Matthew chapter 16. There will be a day when the abyss is unlocked.

Satan's allowed to walk back around on his planet and then that battle is fought and then the world and everything else will be handed over to the Savior and he'll put his feet upon it because it'll be his footstool. But until then, we are living physically in the realm of the enemy.

So the attacks that we should expect should pertain to what we are physically. This is why when we preach funerals or I go to a funeral, I acknowledge the reality that there is something internally inside every believer that acknowledges the reality that death is not right.

That God has set eternity in the heart of every man. But in this world where death reigns, we are looking unto a better world, another world. But we do not fight.

[19:22] Our conflicts that we are engaged in are not of this realm but they are of the spiritual realm. Number two, we see the character we reflect. When we go to the battle lines, there is a certain character which we should reflect.

Now, you need to keep all these in mind until we get to the last two. Okay, so don't check out on one or two of them. You have to stay with me. We're going somewhere. We have something we're aiming at.

Now, I'm just trying to let you know that. So you see the character we reflect. Look at what he says. Now, I, Paul. I, Paul. Myself. Now, Paul is an astounding individual. It's always amazed me how too often we paint, I'm going to say this with the most tact that I can, that we paint Christian men in scripture as a bunch of pansies.

I know that's not, that's about as tactfully as I can paint it and say it, okay? When they're really not. We try to imply that these men lost their masculinity the moment they came to Christ.

And we try to, we try to say that these men are a little bit soft. I love the classic example would be the apostle John. Sure, he leaned upon the Savior's bosom and we paint him with this angelic face which is okay but we also realize that the Savior called him a son of thunder.

[20 : 34] And you don't get called a son of thunder by being an easy guy, right? He had some masculinity about him. He had some roughness and toughness about him and God called these people. Paul is not just a passive individual. Understand that he was going from city to city and town to town and leading people away.

Now, God humbled him through meeting him on the Damascus road. God, sure, kind of corralled that a little bit but we understand how he made him. That does not mean we have to have this over masculinity.

That just means that we understand the person that Paul was. But we also see the transformation that happened in Paul's life because he says, now I, Paul, myself urge you, here's his character, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

So he says, I'm fighting this battle not as I would have fought it in the past. Paul was a stringent believer in legalism in the past.

He was raised in the best legalistic school you could ever attend. He was a Roman citizen by birth. He was a Jewish by nationality. He attended the best education that you could.

[21 : 39] He was a man of strength. When Stephen was stoned the coats were thrown at his feet. He went and was leading men and women and children bound back to throw them into jail. He was a man with all the physical well-being in which he could have but when Christ met him on Damascus road and engaged him in the spiritual conflict, Paul says, I come to you now in the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

That is, the character he was reflecting was the character of the Savior not the character of himself. And he is seeking to come to them with some great truth and sure he is battling.

He understands that because one accusation they brought against Paul and we see it in this is, oh, in his letters he makes great threats but in his person he's really not that strong. They were trying to say that Paul was just full of hot air but look at what he said.

I am meek when face to face with you but bold towards you when absent. I ask that when I am present in case you doubted, Paul says, I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous and some.

What was Paul saying? Paul said, if I have to be bold I can be bold but my desire is not to be. I want to live in meekness and gentleness and humility he is not downplaying the fact that he is engaged in a spiritual battle but he is seeking to reflect the character of the Savior who redeemed him.

[23 : 10] Think about that just for a moment. When the Savior met Paul on Damascus Road he shone a bright light around him and began to illuminate all of the deficiencies in Paul's faith.

I mean, this is he who created everything by the word of his mouth. But yet when he came to the one who was opposing him so adamantly and Christ was seeking to draw him to himself he simply said why do you kick against the goats?

And he began to lovingly draw him. Think about your own life. You can just leave Paul there on Damascus Road until Ananias comes and lays his eyes. Think about your own life. Think about the fact even as we sing in that psalm when we look at the reality of who we are physically it is our voice among the crowds who is crying out crucify him crucify him.

It is us who is claiming that he is deserving of death on our own well-being who we are in the flesh. He said I never said that but you did in your rebellion against a holy God in your rebellion and living for yourself and your own self-pleasure and your own self-gain we are living as if the death of the Savior means little and we are crying out that he is deserving of that and he is deserving of that it is our sins which bore him and yet when he came to you much like when he came to me he came in meekness and in gentleness and displayed to me first and foremost the very love of the Savior for such a sinner as I.

When he came to you and fought that spiritual battle in your own heart and in your own life he did not come to you and strike you but yet he came to you to heal you. I love what it declares in the Old Testament that God indeed strikes but it follows it striking yet healing the wounds are there for a purpose the wounds are there to break us so that the Savior can come and heal us he comes with gentleness he comes with meekness and he draws us to himself he who has legions upon legions of angels around his throne to do his beckoning call at any moment he who does not cease to be worshipped in the heavenly realm he whose crowns do not have to be thrown at his feet for him to

know who he is he who Ezekiel saw things that are indescribable as we look at the portrait that Ezekiel saw he whom Elijah was caught up into the heavens with he whom Isaiah fell down before when the train of his garment filled the throne room up there he who John fell before he who is in such splendor and such glory he who the Bible says if he calls his breath back to himself all man would die he who can declare judgment in an instant yet when he came to you he came with gentleness and meekness and he called you by his love and by his compassion he wooed you by his concern he wooed you by his love and desire for you while we were yet sinners

[25 : 59] Christ loved us that's how he fought the battle in our lives and that's how he asked us to fight the battle in the place of others we ought to reflect the character of the Savior friend we go too often trying to fight the spiritual battles by the arm of the flesh we cannot as he told Nicodemus the spirit blows where we know not we don't do things the way of the world we see the character we reflect number three we notice the commitment we make he says in verse four again for the weapons of our warfare that is we have been well equipped are not of the flesh but divinely powerful oh do you know that the moment that you are called to the Savior you are given weapons to fight this battle and they are divinely powerful much like the angels who hold the keys to the abyss those who are with us that are greater than those who are with them they are divinely powerful we've been given powerful tools but look at what it says for the destruction of fortresses it is for the destruction of fortresses that is the enemy has built up strongholds and we have been given these instruments of warfare to destroy those strongholds in our own lives and in the lives of others go back to the first mentioning of the church

Matthew chapter 16 very first of the church you know your Bible study principles right the law first mentioned that the first time something is mentioned that is the purpose for it for the remainder of scripture and the remainder of history and if you ever really want to doubt that you can go find the first time marriage is ever mentioned and that's the intended purpose throughout history for this reason the man shall leave his father and mother be joined together to his wife and the two shall become one that is the purpose throughout history and we see the first mentioning of the church there in Matthew 16 and the church is given authoritative power and the church is given authoritative power it says so that the gates of hell will not prevail against it that is the church can push through the gates gates don't do the pushing the church is doing the pushing gates are supposed to do the stopping right the gates are stagnant the church is on the offensive it is moving and now we find out here that the weapons we are given for our warfare are for the destruction of fortresses that is the strongholds that the enemy has established ought to be the very things that the individual believer and the corporate believers are seeking to destroy and he goes on we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God you say well what commitment are we making we are committed as a church and as individuals to love such an authentic faith with meekness and gentleness for the purpose of destroying those things that are raised up that are causing others to be hindered and coming to the knowledge of God and Paul says many of these things are worldly they are lofty they are they are things of higher standards we'll stop right here and say this is gonna get and say well

I don't need apologetics I would just rather read it and believe it and that's enough and I understand that that's fine but that's you're apologetic because the word of God says so that should be enough so I understand that we also ought to have a reason to defend our faith you ought to be able to give a defense for what you believe we say it this way you need to know what you believe and you need to believe what you know you need to understand what it is settle those realities why because in this realm in which we live in there are a lot of speculations and lofty things that are raised up against the knowledge of God and we ought to be able to speak against them when your children or your grandchildren or your family members enter into higher education institutions they are going to be faced with speculations and lofty things that are raised up against the knowledge of God and unless we as parents and we as individuals and we as a church have done our due diligence to disciple the ones who are coming up after us they will not know how to destroy those strongholds the reason we see so many young adults leaving their faith the moment they enter into college is because they enter into a realm of strongholds and they don't know how to destroy them they don't know how to not only defend their own faith they don't know how to destroy what the enemy has raised up in their presence and friend

I want to tell you that's the church's fault that's the church's fault because this is our realm we have been given the authority and the ability and the weaponry to destroy the speculation and the lofty

things and the higher things and all those things which hinder and abate the knowledge of God and we say ah well I just want to stay to myself and keep to myself then we're doing so much harm to those who come after us you have a personal savior but your faith is not personal because the moment you accept the savior you are united to a body stone as unto stone Peter says and built into a spiritual household united carrying the load and bearing the burden so that others may be able to be there as well see Paul was not seeking to destroy the strongholds only in his own life but also those strongholds had on the lives of others with meekness and gentleness!

we ought to do this intentionality look at what he says we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ that is both corporate and personal Paul says I take my thoughts captive friend I want to tell you something if you have a sin you say well I can't get over this sin I don't know how to do it you're not going to overcome it by will you're not going to overcome it by strength you're not going to overcome it by might Paul says in Romans chapter 12 verse 1 that we ought to be renewed in our mind he says here you ought to take every thought captive we ought to be transformed in our mind the reality is as the Bible tells us sin begins in the mind it is when we think about it we consider it and then all of a sudden we take that consideration and then we begin to implant it and then we take that implant it and then we begin to do it and all of a sudden we are carried away of our own lust and desires that is why it says take those thoughts captive you'll see why in just a moment don't allow the enemy to build a stronghold in your mind either so that we can help destroy the strongholds that are keeping others from coming here is the commitment we make you know too often we say well I don't have to destroy it

[33 : 01] I'll just kind of tear it down brick by brick Paul says we destroy it we destroy it some things need to be destroyed destroyed we're not to permit those things to remain but we ought to destroy them finally we see our connection to others we understand the conflict we are engaged in the character we should reflect while we're engaged in that conflict the commitment we're making but we also notice our connection to others verse 6 says that we are ready to punish all disobedience Paul says I for myself and those that are with me we're ready we're ready to punish all disobedience now he's talking to the church Paul says in his writings I'm not talking about judging the world I'm talking about judging those that are inside the church he wants to ensure that Satan is not establishing a stronghold in the realm of the church body that would cause a hindrance to other people coming to the knowledge of God he said and I'm ready on my part to destroy all disobedience

I'm ready and he's coming to them again but look at what he finishes there whenever your obedience is complete Paul says I'm ready I'm at the battle line and I'm ready to fight but I'm not going to punish the disobedience that's among you until you're ready when your obedience is complete what is he saying when God calls us to the battle line he calls us to the battle line alongside others and the first battle we face is a battle of internal warfare that is I look internally inside of myself am I walking in all obedience not am I perfect but have I taken care of the things and the matters which the Lord has revealed unto me is there anything that is unaddressed or unrepented of or unremoved are there any fortresses that I've allowed to remain in my own life first I need to fight the battle by the power of

Christ in my own life I need to ensure that I'm walking in obedience and then I can stand to the line and I can walk on the line beside others that are ready to walk in obedience and I'm ready to fight because I want to fight with those who are already walking faithfully because it's a spiritual battle and I want to ensure that those who are with me are well prepared for the battle they're engaged in there's an individual who is full time ministry now his name is Chad Williams very common name I told your pastor's wife right before I walked out here how would you like for this guy to be your pastor a former Navy SEAL his whole life all he wanted to be was a Navy SEAL he was such an agnostic atheist individual all he wanted to be was a Navy SEAL he had an individual a SEAL member training and he finally worked and worked and worked and he finally made it into there he went through SEAL Academy but something amazing happened to Chad he ended up coming to Christ about the time he entered into the SEALs he paid dearly for that reality because that's not a realm in which a committed believer always works he finally had attained his goal and his ambition and his desires in life and he was a member of a

SEAL team and yet members of his own SEAL team were discrediting him and discounting him and they said well this newfound faith of yours when the bullets start flying will you be prepared or will

this faith keep you he understood that God had called him and equipped him and prepared him he knew the Savior's love for him but he also knew the preparation he had had and in the end of the day when it multiple tours that he did with his SEAL team never once let any of them down because he was committed to those guys beside him and eventually got out of the SEALs and ended up entering into full time ministry because those who are fighting in a physical real battle and some of you know that you need to know that everyone on the line is committed as you are all too often when we enter into the spiritual realm of warfare we go to the line with just anyone friend destruction of fortresses and strongholds don't just happen by passive obedience when we stand up and make a commitment that we want to tear down those things that are hindering people from coming to the knowledge of a holy

God we need to ensure that everyone on the line has already fought the battle internally on their own because it's going to and it's going to be difficult but when the fortresses are torn down and people come to the knowledge of the father it's worth it because I can assure you my friend just as I talked to one brother this morning and some of you have already read as the Lord warned Ezekiel if you have the trumpet in your hand but you don't blow it when the army comes then you're to blame we know who the savior is we have the weaponry to destroy the fortresses that the enemy has established in the land and if we don't do it so that other people can come to the knowledge of the savior then we are to blame this is the battle line drawn the only question is are you at it let's pray father we thank you so much for this day thank you for your faithfulness your goodness and your love and mercy towards us so lord we pray that as we come to this time of invitation you would draw our hearts and minds you would look at us as individuals we would look to you as our savior lord help us to know where we stand if there's any here today who do not know you as lord and savior i pray that you would touch their hearts and their minds and you would draw them through your meekness and your gentleness and your love lord if there's those of us here who need to engage in the battle in their own life if we need others to walk beside us lord move us to others that would walk that line with us for your glory and your glory alone we ask all in christ amen so so