

Session 6: Demolishing Strongholds

2 Corinthians 10:5: We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

Objective: To understand what 'strongholds' are and where they come from so that we can dismantle them by renewing our minds.

Focus Truth: All of us have mental strongholds, ways of thinking that are not in line with God's truth.

Review last session:

2. How did you get on learning the Gethsemane story? Who did you tell it to? What did they think? Is there anything of more significance to you than it has been before? If this story is true, how does it affect your ongoing relationship with Jesus?

New Material:

1. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5, the objective and focus truth together.
2. As we read this story, consider the depths Jesus went to so we can have complete freedom in Him.

Jesus' Death

Based on NLT

Introduction

Jesus had an unjust trial, and he had been sentenced to death. He was led away to be crucified at a place called Golgotha.

Matthew 27:35-44; Luke 23:34, 39-43

After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. Then they sat around and kept guard as he hung there. A sign was fastened above Jesus' head ... "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Two *men* were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Jesus said "Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing." The people passing by shouted abuse ... *and religious leaders* also mocked Jesus. "He saved others ... but he can't save himself ... Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him!..."

One of the criminals hanging beside Jesus scoffed ... the other criminal protested "Don't you fear God ... we deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done

anything wrong.” Then he said “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” And Jesus replied, “... today you will be with me in paradise.”

Matthew 27:45-61 & John 19:30

At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock... *when* Jesus called out with a loud voice... “It is finished My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”...then ... he released his spirit. At that moment the curtain in the ... Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened... The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, “This man truly was the Son of God!”

And many women who had come ... with Jesus to care for him were watching from a distance... As evening approached, Joseph ... a follower of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body... Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left. Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb and watching...Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they had finished the Sabbath had begun, so they *were unable to return to the tomb, they would have to wait until the Sunday morning.*

Matthew 27:62-66

The next day, on the Sabbath... *some religious leaders* went to see Pilate ... Pilate *ordered them*, “Take guards and secure *the tomb* the best you can.” So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

Now retell this story in your own words...*Use one of the ideas for ‘internalising the passage’*

Questions for Discussion: (Just ask the questions that didn’t get covered when you ‘retold’ the story. Feel free to omit any questions that don’t seem relevant to your situation or that feel redundant.)

1. *What did you like about this story?*
 - a. *What is the significance of the curtain being torn?*
2. *What bothered you about this story?*
3. *What does this story show you about God?*
 - a. *When Jesus cried out ‘it is finished’, what was finished?*

- b. *What is the significance of Jesus saying 'Father forgive them.'?*
 - c. *What does Galatians 5:1, 'it is for freedom that Christ has set up free', tell us about how God wants us to live and think.*
- 4. *What does this story show you about people?*
 - a. *What is the nastiest thing anyone has ever said to you or about you? Were you able to shrug it off, or did it stick with you?*
 - b. *Read 2 Corinthians 10:5 Given we are told to take every thought captive and obedient to Christ, how should we react to temptation?*
- 5. *How do the truths in this story apply to your life?*
 - a. *Read Romans 6:17. We have 'died to sin' and need 'no longer to be slaves to sin'. How do you respond when you find yourself in a pattern of behavior which isn't as you want it to be, but it is seemingly impossible to 'just' change / stop?*
 - b. *How easy do you find it to choose to believe that what God says is true, even when it doesn't feel true? (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

To Take Away

1. Meditate on the following passages; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Romans 8:35-39, Philippians 4:12-13.
2. Learn the Jesus' Death story and practice it with at least one other person. Tell this story to yourself or read it every day and meditate on its truths. Consider if there are any ways you tend to think that are not in line with God's truth...Jesus overcame everything for you!