

Breaking Strongholds-When the Past Is Your Teacher

by Teresa Conlon

Breaking strongholds in our lives requires hearing God's voice, repenting of our history of forsaking Him, and following Him with our hearts.

Duration: 1:00:03

Scripture: Exodus 12:8, Judges 4:2, Judges 10:10-11, 1 Samuel 7:3-4

Topics: "Forgetting God", "Repentance Cycle"

Description

In this sermon, Samuel addresses the people of Israel after the reign of King Saul. He recounts the history of Israel, starting with their deliverance from Egypt by Moses and Aaron. He highlights how the people would forget God and turn to idol worship, leading to oppression by their enemies. However, God would raise up judges like Jeroboam, Baden, Jephthah, and Samuel to deliver them. The sermon emphasizes the cycle of forgetting and repentance that Israel went through and how God had a timing and purpose in bringing this cycle to an end.

Transcript

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However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Praise God, that is exciting to see them and to hear them. And thank you very much, young people.

We love you. ... into Bible study. They have a regular worship time.

When we worship here at 3 o'clock, they have their own service. And we can see with that kind of words and that kind of anointing why we can bring young people into this house. They're going to be spoken to.

They're going to see a difference. So I'm really excited. The next few days are going to be our privilege to lift them up.

It's awesome to see some of them, if you've been here any length of time, you recognize some of them when they were little, when they used to sing in the children's choir. And now here they are in the youth

choir, still singing. And that's the grace of God.

There's so much to pull them out of the house of God. There's so much that comes against them. We know very well, we know what the battle is.

But in these younger years, we thank God for them and we're going to pray for them the next few days. And if you know young people, if you have young people in your house, don't stop praying because this is God's time. This is God's hour to break in and break through.

He loves these young people and there comes a level where even, you know, there's a cry produced in them. God puts it there. God puts a cry in their heart.

But if there's no voice, if there's no testimony, there's so many seeking ones that are going to go off into the clutches of the enemy, into that bondage and darkness that wants to ruin and break their lives. But these young people are going to be a signpost. These young people are going to be Jesus' arms and voice.

And it's our privilege to pray for them the next few days, that they'll just grow stronger, bolder, more sure, and that this house will be filled with young people. Hallelujah. Well, my message today is called Breaking Strongholds When Our Past Is Our Teacher.

Breaking Strongholds When Our Past Is Our Teacher. If you would just pray with me. Father, I come to you in Jesus' name.

Lord, there is no other name in heaven and earth, O God, by which men and women are saved, but it is in the precious name of your Son. We thank you, Lord, that all power, all dominion, all authority resides with you. Lord, your Son was there at creation.

Your Son was there on Calvary. Your Son is now there at the right hand of the Father, beside your throne, O God. And Lord, we come to you today boldly, boldly, because Jesus Christ has clothed us with a righteousness.

And we can come, and God, I declare I need you today. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to come and let this word find its mark. Lord, I pray that strongholds will be broken.

I pray that the enemy, O God, and his strongholds in us, O God, you expose. And Lord, you will break through in a mighty way, in a way only you can do, in a way that we will know we are free, in a way, O God, that we will be compelled, O God, to share the testimony of what you do in every heart that is open to you. Lord, we give you the praise for this.

Lord, we depend on you now to send your Holy Spirit and teach us and bring us through to the liberation that you have for us as our inheritance. And we'll pray for it in Jesus' precious name. Amen and amen.

In the New Year's Eve service, God gave a word, and I believe it was a word to us as a church. And he said that he was going to break through our strongholds. This we as a body of believers.

That he was going to come to our strong cities, every area where there is resistance. God, if we have an open heart, I felt he was saying, I know he was saying to us, this is our year of deliverance. This is our year.

Our Joshua, our Jesus, goes before us, and he has taken us to the gates of our Jericho, and he says we're going in. And every heart that is open to him, I believe this year, by the end of this year, we're going to have a testimony of strongholds broken, of where the grace and the mercy of God is flooded into every dark place. This is our heritage.

This is the testimony we are going to have, that our God is great and he is able and he has done something else. You know, strongholds, every area that resists the working of God, strongholds are found within and strongholds are found without. The battle is within and the battle is without.

The battle without, to be able to open our mouth boldly and preach Christ, to be able to stand for him in the workplace, to be able to, when things come against our family, to be able to stand in faith and grace. When God opens doors for ministry and we refuse to look at ourselves, we say, lead on, Jesus. Lord, for your grace, I will say yes.

That's a battle without. And then the battle within, of course, you know, are those areas where the Spirit of Christ will come and as we release and open ourselves up, he will come and he will master the pride in us. He will master the jealousy, the rebellion, the fear, whatever.

Whatever the Holy Spirit reveals in us, so that he can heal us. And the world will go the way the world will always go in 2003. That's moving away from God and godliness.

Moving away from all that's right and pure and holy. But those this year that can hear the voice of the Lord will know breaking of strongholds and we will change under the Spirit of Christ. And things around us will be changed.

And I feel in my spirit that God is saying, Jericho is coming down. That strong city that stands as a fortress into the promised land. That stands as an impossibility before us.

God says, my way, my spirit, my plan is how it will come down. And that's how strongholds are taken down. And I love it.

I would like to show you in the Word where God describes to me what a stronghold is and what a stronghold does. And if you would turn with me to 1 Samuel 7. I'd like to look at that for a few minutes. 1 Samuel 7. I want to talk about a stronghold that was found hovering over the people of God and found in the people of God in the time of Samuel.

And Samuel, as many of you know, was the last judge of Israel. When Joshua brought the people into the promised land, after the leadership of Joshua who brought them in, they were commissioned to take the land. And then there were judges that God raised up to keep the people focused and to keep a living Word before the people of what God said He will do and what He will do and would stir the people many times to believe them.

But in between the time of the judges, Israel would forget God and Israel would turn to idol worship. And they would be oppressed by their enemies. They would cry to the Lord and then God would send a judge.

And by the time of Samuel, there was a history developed. There was a predictable cycle happening in the people. It was like it happened so many years under so many judges, under so many words that there would be an ebb and a flow.

There would be a turning to God and for a season all of Israel would want it or individuals would want it and then there was a retreat. And then people would forsake God and they would slip back in and they would worship the gods of the land all the while proclaiming they were God's people but other loves would get a hold of their heart in idol worship. And this ebb and flow and then they would become oppressed and then a cry would come and God would deliver through a judge.

But beloved, when we get to the time of Samuel, if we look at the history of the judges, there was no real progress in the spiritual life of Israel. They were not handing down a heritage to their people and their children of victory. They were handing down a heritage of a cycle where they would cycle in and out of oppression, in and out of sin, in and out of deliverance.

And the power, the root of what was truly happening in the life of the spiritual life of God's people which was then forming the individuals who lived in that culture and that way of thinking was being perpetuated. And if you'd ask these people, do you love the Lord? Of course. Do you believe He can deliver you? Yes.

But yet there would be this, it would prove to be a lie because many times, depending on what time you lived, depending what cycle it was in your life, whether there was true victory or not, that God had a timing in all this and He wanted to expose this and He wanted to bring this cycle to an end. He was going to close it out with Samuel and there was going to be a new thing. You see, that's the pattern God does in our life for those that begin or wake up and say, God, I'm seeing something here about me.

And God, you have a timing and you have a purpose and open my eyes and my spirit to your timing. If this is your season that you're speaking to me by your word, through your word, and you say there's a new thing you have for me, God, by grace, let me hear it. And so there was coming an end of an era, the end of Samuel.

And beloved, let me remind you what most of you know is that Prophet Samuel, he was raised and he grew up in a time of backsliding. He grew up in a time of covetousness and idolatry among the people and among the priesthood. God's hand was upon him and he had a different mold, he had a different imprint.

And it is possible. It is possible to go another way. It is possible to stand when others don't.

It is possible. And when God wants to do a new thing, he gives us a new heart and a new spirit. He puts something in us and Samuel had that.

And Samuel had a message in 1 Samuel 7. Here is what he was speaking. Here's what characterized his ministry. In verse 3, it said, And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, and put away the strange gods and asheroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

And the scripture says they did what Samuel said. And here they are one more time, a godly man, a man separated, a man with an obvious spirit of the Lord upon him, preaching a true word, and they respond to it. And the scripture says that they, in verse 4, that they put away all this.

And yet, beloved, to show you what I'm saying, then the Philistines stood up because they heard that something was stirring in Israel. The Philistines know they must oppress Israel, they must oppress the children of God to keep dominion, just like the strongholds in you and the strongholds in me. Whenever there is a stirring and a beginning to the word of the Lord begins to stir us, know our enemy the Philistine will raise his hand.

Know that when God begins to stir us by the word, know we are going to experience opposition in an even greater way. And the Philistines stood up, and it says, and the children of Israel said to Samuel, cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, and he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And, beloved, here is the battle that the word Samuel was giving to them is if you will do all these things, if you will return with all your heart, if you will put away the strange gods, if you will prepare your heart and serve me, he will deliver you.

But was there a question in their heart, were they willing to do all that? They had a godly man in their midst, and God heard his prayer. And there's like a safety when there's a few that will stand, and they know the word, and their prayers do something. But when the word goes out, and Israel has to receive that word, and ingest that word, and every man has to decide for himself, is that the course, is my heart to be turned in this pattern now? Or will I let the man of God, or will I let the word over me, or will I let the blessing of the nation carry me? And I go on fairly undisturbed.

And I think that this word was partially heard, because when they come to Samuel, and they say, pray for us, the Philistines have raised their head, beloved, their battle is not the Philistines, it's fear and unbelief. God says, if you do all this thing, no, the Philistines are under your feet. But because of fear and unbelief is rising up in their heart, the word that is being preached, and one more time through Samuel, they know it's the truth, but there's a hardness, there's a stronghold in them.

And the scripture says that Samuel, he does cry out, and it says in verse 10, and the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day, upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten. And one more time, God stood up, their battle was not the Philistines, God took care of the Philistines like he said he would. And the scripture says in verse 18, and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines, all the days of Samuel.

Beloved, all the days of Samuel, as long as that man was the leader, people felt this kind of strength by association, this kind of power by association, that this man, as long as Samuel was in our midst, the Philistines couldn't touch us. But beloved, God who sees right through the heart, and sees what the problem is, and why we cycle in and out of sin, and why there are no true strongholds broken, is saying because I'm speaking to you, oh Israel, my people as individuals, and not just under the covering of sin. And so God's about to bring a transition, and he wants to break this cycle.

And the scripture tells us that Samuel became old, in verse 8. And Israel asked for a king. Now that seemed like a very godly request, because Samuel's sons were not godly men. And they, the scripture says in verse 4, that the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways.

Now make us a king to judge us, like all the nations. Beloved, this seems like a very reasonable request, because it's like after you leave Samuel, we're without that covering. These men aren't like you.

And they sensed that with the removal of Samuel, they would one more time be vulnerable. And so the solution is not to say, God, your word is true, and what this man is preaching to us. That if we would return with our hearts, if we would turn, if we would forsake, if we would do everything he has been preaching to us, and put away strange gods, and prepare our hearts, and serve, if there would be a willingness for us to hear that, we wouldn't be so vulnerable.

But Israel didn't want that message. Israel didn't want to have to stand as individuals, and receive that message, and know that covering. They just knew it was easier if one other man did it for them.

Vulnerable under the sun, so they said, No, no, come let us have a king, because we want to be like others. And beloved, Samuel is disturbed. That crime, make us a king, to judge us like the other nations.

You know, that's amazing, because when you looked around in that time at other nations, the other nations had child sacrifice. Every vile practice known to man was accepted in their midst. They were ruled by pitiless tyrants, were cruelty, and total selfishness, and disregard by the ruler at the top.

Beloved, in those societies, you could taste fear. They said, We want a king. We want to be like the others.

And it looks like they're moving on to a new thing. It looks like if God would give us a king, hear us request, it's like, God, we hear that we need a new thing, so give us a king, and it's like, we're moving on, triumphant under his banner. We'll look like everybody else, but our king will be powerful.

He'll be an anointed of God, and we get to enter a new phase of how we're led by you, and it sounded like an incredibly good thing. But in verse 6 and 7, the scripture says that Samuel is troubled. See, because he knew that man desires a surface change, but that's no substitute for real change.

And the cry for the king is that they want to rule themselves, rejecting godly reign. In verse 8, it says, in verse 7, sorry, and the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Samuel, don't let this be taken to heart that it's a rejection of you.

You have been my faithful servant. You have spoken as I have said, but your word spoken in truth by the power of the spirit has hit a stronghold, and it's bouncing back. And they've not rejected you, they're rejecting me.

They're rejecting me being king and me ruling over them. The cry is, we want to rule our lives like the others in the other nations do. We want your name, but we don't want your lordship.

And so here are these people don't realizing what they're saying is, God, we don't want you reigning over us, in their cry for a king. And God is trying to get their attention. And he says, give them, Samuel, what they want.

Give them that king. Because, beloved, I believe what he's trying to say, because he's going to speak very clear words to them in this scripture when this king is anointed. And God's going to say, one more time, whoever can hear me.

He's saying, you have a history. You have a history. And that is of forsaking me.

That is of loving. You're going to accept other gods to worship. And you're not going to deal with it.

You're going to want to be like the others. But in your day of oppression, and in your day when you need me, you're going to cry unto me, and I will not be there. You're going to have me in name only, because that's the way you want it.

He says, you have a history with me. If you would just open your eyes and begin to see what has been the spiritual history of Israel since the judges. And this man, one more time, is speaking to you my truth.

Listen to me. Forsaking me invites oppression. Following me uproots your oppression.

And I feel like God was saying to them, what do you want to reign over you now? Why will you not deal with your history? And we see that when Samuel goes to anoint King Saul, he begins to rehearse in their ears the history of Israel, so that they have no doubt in their heart what he is talking about. And he shows them that time and time again, God is saying that the key to you being a protected people and receiving my blessing and my incredible love that would set you to be a jewel on the face of the earth. That what happened to you in your midst when Joshua led you, that a fear and a trembling came upon all the nations, because I was in the midst of you and you were mine.

Where men's heart would melt like wax because I, the Holy One of Israel, was in your midst and you were a sanctified people. And there was a longing for me in your hearts and I could fight your battles. And you would know deliverance.

And he begins to explain in 1 Samuel 8, he says, hearken unto their voice in verse 9, and it says verse 10, and Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of the king. And he says in verse 11, he's going to take your sons, he's going to take your chariots, he's going to take your horsemen, he's going to appoint him captains that will set them to ear his ground, reap his harvest, make his instruments of war, his own chariots. He will take your daughters to be cooks and bakers, he will take your fields, he will take your vineyards, he will take your olive fields, he will take the best of you and give them to his servants.

He will take a tenth of your seed, he will take your vineyards and give it to his officers and his servants. He will take your men's servants and your maid's servants and the goodliest of among you, your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep and you shall be his servants.

And you shall cry out in that day, because of your king which you shall have chosen. And the Lord will not hear you in that day and verse 19 says nevertheless The people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said nay, but we will have a king over us They could hear nothing, but their own imaginings in their own voice And this is what they thought verse 20 that we also may be like all the nations that our king may judge us Go out before us and fight our battles You see we had men of God before us, and they were a spiritual company now. We're in another mood We've done the spiritual thing we want to go out and do war with those around we want conquest We want to be known once again as a great nation We want to be known as a spiritually great people now We want a king to ride before us on a high horse with a banner, but when it all said and done We want him to fight our battles How blind can you get? The scripture says that the battle belongs to the Lord and they want to take it out of God's hands and let the king of our choosing fight our battles and The people were creating this king because they did not want God to rule over them in the manner If God had determined he would And they were setting up a king beloved for a huge fall The people were creating this king because they did not want a God to rule over them And God's saying I'm unveiling a stronghold to you.

I'm going to preach my word I'm going to tell you exactly what this is all about you think you're getting a leader. I tell you you're getting oppressed You're crying out to me, and you're saying well We want to reject you your rulership because Lord you know you're always putting your your finger on an area of my heart I want to keep for myself. I want to cherish.

I don't want to forsake it all the other nations they get to live their lives as they choose and God you're forever moving in and Causing me conviction and troubling me I'm a lover They're absolutely blind blind

blind to who it is that is calling them to bend their need It's one who loved them who gave themselves who goes before in them who created them who chose them Who said I would be a fire in the midst of you and the glory of you my people Israel But they're saying now No This cycling in and out of sin and planting something so deep in them. They didn't know it there was a stronghold Beloved it happened It happens to people who love God These were his people These were his people at his ordinances his laws. He knew this way ways They knew how to sacrifice to please him there is a stronghold.

How can they be that blind to say those words? That says no, I'm unveiling a stronghold Beloved can God unveil our strongholds and we listen to him. They were so sure they understood the situation So they made Saul King And Saul is a product of this deep rebellion to God And the hour that we live in in the spiritual hour we live in shapes us, too If the religious temperature all around us is a very lukewarm bordering on cold and very self-serving Beloved it is in us. It is around us Because the heart of man is always open to deceit the scripture tells us that very clearly That we will be deceived except for this word except for the conviction of the Holy Spirit Except for the love of God that passes knowledge beloved Our heart will tell us we are in a way totally pleasing and acceptable to God We're going exactly the opposite direction completely deceived and no word from heaven can turn us When we've determined to set our face that way but beloved God rules not men And I love when the scripture says that he gave Saul this king that the people had chosen and that the people anointed But the scripture says God's gonna have the last word He gave this man chosen one of their own kind of molded form by the spiritual Understanding of the day that presented him here.

Take him. We want him to lead us and fight our battles God put a spirit and a new heart in that man's soul And God was saying he gave Saul a new heart and a new spirit And He's saying so you are going to need it That these people think that they are making you and they are forming you but one more time I'm going to break through and I'm going to intervene and I'm going to show my people I'll bring them to me and reason them to me because I love them and I want to show them how the enemy is blinding them And so I'm going to give this king the capability the ability to know my voice To know my leadership to know my anointing that I may stand before rebellious and a fearful and a hard-hearted people and Speak to them But beloved I want you to know something before they would ever hear if they didn't hear Samuel Why would they hear Saul if the same anointing that was on Samuel? Was on Saul. Why should they listen to them him? Because I'll tell you beloved I believe that Saul The man who most greatly squandered the anointing of God in the whole Bible a man that squandered and lived in such a stronghold that When he did not give in to the Spirit of God and went his own Way, even though God gave him the capability a new mind in a new heart To cry out for his own strongholds.

You see that's the only way he was gonna leave this people That a man shaped and formed from that age God give me ability to cry out to repent to seek him He gave him anointing a strong desire to know him and the scripture tells us in the early days of Saul He did he went forth and he conquered Israel's enemies and all of Israel could begin to see. Oh We have chosen rightly But God wanted to take that man and bend that man and let him and admit that he had a stronghold And that Israel's eyes could begin to open when the king of their choosing began to bend his knee and begin to admit who he Was but I'm not talking about struggling Christians I'm talking about when God begins to reveal to us that our stubbornness in our rebellion witchcraft and idolatry like he did I'm talking when we say God, I love you, but there are things that we cling to and it's a fight and We are stubborn and we cannot be shown and we cannot be led in the house of God God's intention was to take this man and By his obedience and by the grace upon him Lead Israel into a new dimension And God in his humility it tells us in Samuel for Samuel 12 Verse 7 it says

therefore stand still that I may reason with you You see Samuel is addressing Israel after Saul is a successful king And he's telling these people I want to reason with you and he begins to recount how Jacob came out of Egypt in verse 8 and the father's cried and God sent Moses and Aaron brought them forth out of Egypt First night and when they forgot the Lord their God he sold them in the hand of Sisera And then it tells us verse 10 they cried unto the Lord and they said we have sinned because we've forsaken the Lord and the scripture says in verse 11 and the Lord sent Jerubabbel and Badan and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side and he dwelled safe and Then he's trying to tell them I'm reasoning with you. This is your history, but there's now an anointed King before you but he gives them a word He says if you will fear the Lord Verse 14 and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord Then shall both he and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God but if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you as It was against your father's Verse 24 only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart For consider how great things he has done for you But if he shall still do wickedly you shall be consumed Both ye and your king it doesn't get any more simple or clearer than that God says in asking for a king.

Here's what you have done and remember how many times I have delivered you But he says I want you to I'm calling you to reason with you He's saying I know the kind of people you are and I know the kind of King in the weakness that is inherent in him In you that I will be faithful to you He says I want you my people and he says remember and consider the great things I have done for you nothing Even your strongholds are too great for me You're unbeliever. You're forsaking me everything I have if I hear a cry from you He says I will come and be all that I promised to do but if you will continue in this way he says I'm going to move against you and Beloved then we see That is that the story of Saul starts and though he comes up with a Victory The strongholds in him now have to be confronted now. God asked him to do things that he doesn't do it And the more I thought about that I realized they seemed like small things one thing when I thought about the story of Saul The first time when the scripture says that God tells him That I have taken the kingdom from you.

It is not established. It always seemed to me such a light thing. I Knew it wasn't a light thing, but it seemed that you know in the offenses of what some other people did It seemed like a light thing when Paul had that that kingdom taken from him But I realized that God was going after his stronghold He would think so if you obey me and what seems a little thing to you.

I'm going after the heart of the matter I'm going after exactly a strategic stronghold in you. You can't see it. You don't understand it You don't understand all the forces are shaping you most of Israel is dumb to my voice But he says if you will obey me in this if what I point out to you What seems a small thing to you I can establish your kingdom beloved.

It's such an incredible principle Sometimes we sit in our stronghold. Sometimes we sit in our despair. Sometimes we sit When we hear a word like this and the enemy wants to come and say there's nothing but defeat and despair for you But God is saying no You are going to be sidetracked and you and I in the natural are going to look to battles that don't really count We're gonna thank God if I can do this for you if I can do that for you God is saying no listen to me.

I repeatedly tell you to do something. I repeatedly highlight something Don't give up even though you've known repeated failure in this area If there is a cry in you, I will keep returning you to the same place. It's strategic The enemy is gonna try to tell you there's this or that but when my spirit comes upon you There's

gonna be something that you and I can't get away from it's a strategic stronghold It may look small in our own sight God says you don't know what the roots on this thing You don't know if you would obey me in this the earthquake and the earth that would crack and move and be removed if you will obey me in this and So the scripture tells us that Saul goes to a place and it's called Gilgal in first Samuel 13 and He can't wait For a sacrifice to me baby because the Philistines are gathering against him and the people are beginning to depart from him And he's fearing now that people are deserting in his army is deserting him and he's going to have to stand alone beloved We have to learn stand alone And when we go to confront our strongholds the enemy is oppressing us It looks bad in the natural.

It looks like we're going down And the Philistines are coming against him and beloved the scripture says there was no weapon found in all the land And we feel defenseless and we feel like we have nothing in our hands to fight when God begins to bring us to an appointed Place in Saul Samuel Saul's place. It was called Gilgal. God's gonna take us to our Gilgal the appointed place a strategic stronghold a place where he knows something a Place where if we will hear him on this if we will cry out for the grave in this place It's very strategic.

And so the enemy is oppressing. We feel defenseless. Everybody is deserting us And Saul can't wait and He himself takes the sacrifice Beloved that's such a picture when we take into our own hands trying to our up a salvation and figure it all out When we're trying to work and figure things out how this goes how I'm gonna fight my way out of it How do I get out of this place? How do I run from this? And finally he sacrifices.

It's his plan. It's his way to appease God It's his way to say God now look it, you know the circumstance and everybody deserted me. I had to do this God saying no you had to wait on me.

You had to listen to me I'm sending my man at my right appointed time. You gotta learn to wait on me. You've got to learn to listen to me You've got to learn to say I know exactly where you are what you're facing.

I know where every Philistine is I know where every weapon is. I know what's coming against you But you will never win this battle because you are a product of the fear they cause When we want to travel before enemies when we have fallen before this stronghold time and time again It's an appointed place our Gilgal That's all couldn't wait He sacrifices he makes excuses. He explains himself and Samuel tells him I would have established your kingdom I would have made it firm.

I would have settled in you. I want to go to the root I want to go to the root of what your problem is. It looks small to you, but I know He says God says in 2003.

I know I know the heart of the matter. I know what troubles you I know what causes you to cycle in and out of sin I know it's a stronghold of the rebellion and stubbornness is about even when it's cloaked in religion You Know God is gracious And Saul is called back to Gilgal and In Gilgal He one more time I believe is given a Opportunity To do it God's way Many times the scripture tells us where it repented God where he changed his mind where a man began to wake up Where a man began to consider his actions in its history Where a man began to say, you know what the whole story of judges is about we can't Where the whole story when Samuel come and say return your heart prepare your heart release yourself from your idols and there becomes a cry Oh God, we've tried it our own way all through the judges and we've come to the understanding we That's the message of judges, but Saul is still a product of that thinking And he comes one more time to Gilgal God gives him a word and he says I want you to go and I want you to destroy this

enemy that I have put Before you and he said I want you to smite and kill everything that comes in your path I want you to kill the king. I want you to kill the army I want you to kill the men women and children.

I want you to kill the cattle the sheep and the donkey I want it all to go Beloved that is a spiritual principle You see when we begin to cry out God Go after my strongholds Has to be a realization It's got all of it It has to be whatever it takes Is the cry behind it? Has to be God every stronghold you see I present to you no halfway measures Everything and sometimes it's going to be in a way. I don't understand Who can understand? the smiting and the destruction of everything But God says you see that's my heart you don't understand what all that means But the destruction of everything is a picture of what I will do to your strongholds if you obey me And so, you know the story he's back at Gilgal He's back at that place where he has to face the stronghold that record is in him and in the nation. It is critical He has to break off and break through what surrounds him He has to break away from the forces and the thinking and the powers that grip him all around him on the outside but beloved the stronghold on the And So he returns to Gilgal that it plays and God gives him a word and he goes against God's chosen enemy the Amalekites God's going against our chosen strongholds and he does all that God asked him to do except the king and Accept the sheep to sacrifice.

Oh, but he's got a reason God I didn't obey you on this because the sheep I wanted to sacrifice and tell you thank you He didn't give a reason to the king, but it's not unlike a king to spare a king Beloved we as kings and priests to God if we will spare another king in here, he will conquer us There are kings to be defeated in here there are kings here that rule It is not to choose what lives or what dies If God says it all goes beloved for a stronghold we have to agree and we have to obey and this stronghold here and he spares a king and God says that's it. And when he was so determined in his own heart to go his own way You know that in the end this man resisting the Spirit of God Resisting the Spirit of God goes and he becomes he loses his mind He ends up seeking counsel to which is it is an incredible thing The Lord says when I've called the people only I can satisfy them When I call the people only I can satisfy them and when I am forsaken the Underneathness the the energy to eat the unsettledness the void the emptiness will rise up in us Because God created us for himself And when he called us when he puts his hand on us I'll tell you some of them. It's one way or the other when he puts his hand on us.

Only he will satisfy us And we refuse him and we refuse his way. No, we are inviting oppression No that strongholds remain in us and beloved this be this emptiness of wanting our way and Fighting what God wants us to do it creates a driving force in itself and I'll tell you something an Unsatisfied soul is a stronghold waiting to happen When we do not satisfy ourselves in God, it is a stronghold waiting to happen When his hand is upon us and he says it is in me that you will be sent you will be satisfied in and we fight against them But God was doing a new thing in Israel and he rose up a king David He said I'm not finished with you yet. Oh Israel the history the lesson from judges as you can't But I'm going to put a David on the throne and he's a man after my own heart And he's going to be considered little and insignificant in your sight, but he is going to open his heart out wide to me he's going to open every door and he's going to he's going to love me and he's going to be a Worshipper of me and the clothes if you would just turn with me to psalm 63 God says for Israel for it the Israel that wants me that have learned the lessons of Saul That have considered the history is considered their past thank God you have something so much better God I want again.

I Want the testimony in the glory of Israel in my soul? I Want it real to me. I don't just want to reel in Joshua's day. I want something real in me and God raised up a king He could speak to God and raised up a king that no matter what his battle no matter what his strongholds He would open up his heart wide and

God would come in And God would destroy those strongholds and we now read the writings of a man Who knew what it was the liberation of the Spirit of God in him that loosed him from every power of darkness his own desires His own flesh God would come in every time.

You don't put up his heart And God would be incredible in his life And Dave wrote in Psalm 63 when he says Oh God thou art my God early Will I seek thee my soul thirsts for thee my flesh longs for thee in a dry and thirsty land Where no water is? Beloved when it says my soul thirsts for me thirst for thee that's salvation My soul thirst that's salvation for thee But salvation is not enough because if he if God gave us the first it must be satisfied I'm a lot of we satisfy it through or the Creating our strongholds are inviting our strongholds to satisfy it. Do you see what happens? Because we have been created now for it with a thirst But David was wise enough to know God you created it in me you will satisfy it So we've given the first So I'll have that same thirst planted in him But the strongholds in him overpowered not that God could not have overpowered them, but beloved he made a choice And David's making a choice and he says my soul thirsts for me, but God you alone will satisfy me and we are Unsatisfied till it is Jesus in our hearts and souls refreshing us He says I dwell in a land of no water He says God. I've got my eyes open I'm never going to be satisfied in this land because the land with no living water I will not search in this land for living water because you told me there's no water.

That's good enough for me How simple does it get? Things get so clear with an open heart David says there's no water in this land, but you put a thirst in me. So you're gonna satisfy it Jesus says I'm living water He says in verse 3 thy loving kindness is better than life But we've got a testimony now the men whose strongholds are getting broken whose strongholds are broken And it says I loving kindness is better than life and it says to know your love and favor Whatever it brings is better than life without you When you're in my life, no matter what it brings It's a thousand times better than a pampered life without you Because you are life to me I've experienced true life I've experienced the life I have no I can't explain I've experienced a life that is true life that opens my mind in my heart. I can do things I never thought I could do God.

I know you love me Love it. That's a revelation that changes us. But how many sit in the house of God and they don't know that How many sit outside of that deep revelation and knowing that God is for you he loves you That he has chosen and favored you Because when the old stronghold stands up in the oppression all that realization leaves but not with David I loving kindness is better than life He says my soul is satisfied with marrow and fatness in verse 5 He says you giving me the richest food spiritual food I could ever imagine God every time I turn to you you came and you ministered to me You gave me spiritual food and drink You gave me life.

You quickens me. You put me back on my feet. You put a sword in my hand You showed me the right enemy and by your grace and the strength of your arm.

I flew everything that came against me Because you've dealt with the stronghold within my I see the strongholds without this man is making progress This man is effective. This man is a threat to the kingdom of darkness First take this my soul follows hard after thee Early, well, I seek thee. I'm gonna remember you on my bed.

I'm gonna meditate on you in my night watches David says my strength is I remember I'm not going to be like Israel that forgot the lessons that can't look at their history and learn But I remember and Lord, I'm gonna let my mind be centered on you when I have a free moment I'm gonna train my thoughts to go back

to you when I'm at rest I'm going to train my thoughts to go back to you when I wake up in the first thing in the morning I'm going to say my Jesus. I love you My mind is gonna go to you I'm gonna meditate on your greatness I'm gonna meditate on your word and in the night watches God you're gonna be able to stir me and I will know I'm never alone He's a man who can lift up his hands and say God this morning as I rise, I'm an empty cup fill me God fill me every morning and he knows it that God does fill him. God is faithful And beloved death can be our Christ.

Fill me my Jesus Fill me you may not have a lot of time for prayer near session But surely we have is David we can rise early in the morning His name can be the first one that comes his name can be the first name on our lips We can lift our hands and say fill me Lord. Jesus fill me I'm an empty cup and then all through the day we can pour out the poison. We can pour out our hurts We can part our anxiety and fear our questions.

We can pour our heart out to him And as we confess our sin, then we remember beloved that he will fill us Because he put the thirst there he's gonna fill us with living water He's faithful and David knew that he knew that he had his Israel's history was they could not do things that pleased him But David had found a key. Oh My god, I will worship you and I want to learn to love you with all my heart soul mind and strength Because beloved that's the key. That is the key to obedience The scripture says if we Love him, we will keep his commandments, but it really reads if you love me, then you have the power to keep my command It is the love that gives us the power and the most important prayer.

We will ever pray If God I would love you with all my heart all my soul all my mind and all my strength And if we can live in the power of his love no stronghold will triumph over us When we remember that his love to us is unconditional when we remember When Jesus his life, you know what his life says to you and I Jesus life says that loving you was better to me than my own life Loving you was better than hanging on to my my own life Jesus values loving us above his own life That's why he laid down his life And that's where we get our life this kind of love that is offered us and that Oh beloved We need a breakthrough like David did and I know that there are so many ways, you know We cast out the devil and we bind this and we buy that and there are some things that are so true But I want to close with this thought that I felt the Holy Spirit so strong said when we're dealing With our strongholds when we're dealing with a strong enemy that wants to oppress us in fear beloved We need to throw up our hands and say Jesus remind me remind me how much you love me Remind me how your eye has never taken off. We remind me how you gave yourself for me that my life That my life was more precious to you than your own life And I receive it And I thank you God that perfect love cast out fear and every time I the enemy wants to oppress me with fear Lord I open myself up and I say Lord Remind me of the incredible love that you have for me that you have not deserted me Your hand is upon me that you're going to quicken me and give me living water at this moment There are times that we need to change down the road by and by but beloved There are times we need it right this minute right at this moment and God will be faithful to do that for us Hallelujah, I Just want to close Saul when he clung to his fear and rebellion God stopped talking to him and Saul never Chose to find out why? He went repeatedly to the same spot carried on his king Look like the leader of Israel many would say God's anointed But he never chose to find out why God has stopped talking to him And many in Israel that followed him were never hearing the voice of God because otherwise they'd know God anointed another king in their midst Beloved this is serious about this coming year God does not want us forever doomed to repeat and people the cycle strongholds in us and I know that this coming year God is going after those things in us Don't fear it Don't be turned back Don't say this is too hard Don't say this can't be God in Revelation 22:16 you don't need to turn there, but Jesus said I am the root and the offspring of

David I am the root and the offspring Everything David was and everything he prayed. I was the root of it and All the fruit of a life that stays open to me the offspring that life that flows From people who will hear me It is incredible God says I want to be your root and your fruit.

I want to displace the root of the stronghold and replace it with myself and the Spirit of Christ is this when Jesus said I Hear and I do what I hear That's the Spirit of Christ And God is saying today hear me You don't understand the depth of the battle. You don't understand the strategy. You don't know the enemy You don't know the issues except by my spirit And if you will hear me and if you will cry out God I can't obey you But I'll be like David and I'll say when I open my heart.

Why do you God you will never fail me but you will feel me and You will come in marching and you will break through my stronghold and you will give me grace and you will give me the power And you will be my Savior You will be my God and I will be not like Saul and the rest of them the thought they had to fight their own Battles and when they knew nothing but defeat didn't want to deal with it anymore Didn't want to look and Stayed in their strongholds 2003 is going to be a different year beloved 2003 is going to be year of incredible battle and incredible victory so that when we go out there we have a real testimony I mean we say you want to see scars. I got some spiritual scars Because there's a real lion out there, but there's a lion in here And We know who won the lion fight Hallelujah, hallelujah, let's pray for the grace to hear him. Will you stand with me? We thank you that it's not endless battles It's a few appointed chosen battles that you win the victory in the day and we thank you Lord Our battle is not with the Philistines But it's with the fear and we stand against you and we say we will be made perfect in love That we will cast it out when we remember how you are for us You are with us and nothing can stand before you my God.

We thank you God We give you control that we give you control of our minds. We give you control of the situation We give you control of our fears. We give you control of our failure.

We give you control of our rebellion We give you control of our stuff We give you control of all of God that seeks to come Great against us and oppress us and God everything must bend its knees We believe you we move forward and we thank you hallelujah in Jesus name we love you Jesus we love you Lord hallelujah we thank you in Jesus name hallelujah hallelujah This is the conclusion of the message

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