



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 7, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Hey, how's the water today? Is the water hot? Is it boiling yet?

Well, I'm thinking about that old fable about how you boil a frog... If you put a frog into boiling water, he's out of there, but if you put the frog into tepid lukewarm water well it feels good, and then you just start turning up, not too fast, but slowly, slowly... And the first thing you know you're having frog for dinner.

Well, you probably know what I'm getting at, and that is that you and I can slowly get used to getting used to. Well we can get used to what's going on around us, I think you probably know what happens... I get used to watching TV shows, I'm sad to say, that I don't think I would have watched 10 years ago. I get used to waking up and reading ugly news each morning and they say, Well, we're supposed to get used to the new normal. But how do we Jesus followers, how do you and I go about marching to the beat of a different drum, how do we keep the world from squeezing us into its mold, how do we keep from getting boiled alive?

Today, I'm looking at Paul second letter to the Corinthian Christians chapter 10. and as I look at this, I am just reminded that following Jesus in the first century seaport city of Corinth, it was not easy. I, I think that today would be like a Sunday school picnic compared to what it was like for them to follow Jesus. Did you know that Corinth was so famous, or should I say infamous, so infamous for its immorality, that the Roman Empire actually came up with a new word for gross immorality. They called it Corinthianized. That is to act like a Corinthian.

And so that's the world that Paul has in mind in 2 Corinthians 10, as he's thinking about doing spiritual battle with the culture, he's thinking about how to keep from being boiled like a frog. I pick up at verse 3 where Paul writes, For though we walk in the not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exhausts itself. Against the knowledge of God, and bringing in to captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Paul here is thinking of battle, but not the way the world thinks of it. Paul is thinking of spiritual battle, and he uses the imagery here of soldiers who are attacking a fortified stronghold, there are high walls to scale, all the while boiling oil was being poured down arrows lying, and Paul says



water from rock

that as followers of Jesus, we're doing battle, we're doing spiritual battle, in which we are pulling down strongholds were breaking down defenses, We are destroying walls, we're taking prisoners to present captive every thought to Jesus.

Follow Paul's train of thought here, the battle we're fighting today at 21st century, America is a battle of ideas. And Paul says that in this battle, we are casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalt itself against the knowledge of God, and we bring every thought captive to Commander Jesus, to bring every thought into service to Jesus, the today we see battles in the street, but but you and I are in a battle of ideas, that is... To take every thought captive to Jesus. Enter the gospel, good news.

I was in college, came home one Christmas and I was talking to my mom about stuff and she listened for a while, and then she said, Tim, you sound just like a sponge, it's like you're just soaking up every idea that you hear... Well, I think that in so many words, my mom was saying that I needed to be a filter and not a sponge, I needed to learn what it meant to filter every thought to take a captive in obedience to Jesus. We might get used to waking up and seeing news of battle in the street, but the real battle, it is a battle of ideas, Paul case, ideas exalted against the knowledge of God, that is an ultimate battle, that is the decisive battle that you and I are in, notice in this that Paul gives us a little... Gives us a little pep talk, a preparation for battle as he encourages us by saying... For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Our weapons are not intimidation, falsehood, trickery, rumor, personal attack, because our weapons are mighty spiritual weapons for taking every thought into obedience to Jesus Christ. Now, what would that means for me is as I go through the day, I wanna take every jealous thought and take it to Jesus, I wanna take every condemning thought from my past and take it to Jesus, to take every lustful thought, every painful, every insecurity to round them up and to take them to Jesus. Whose yoke is easy and his burden. Light, when you're filter or thought, when you catch it, and you bring it to Jesus, Jesus breaks the power of that thought in your life, in Jesus set you free.

And so we take the thoughts of the culture around us and we take them to Jesus, we take them to the good news, that is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. So I too don't be discouraged. The Prophet Zechariah says, Not by might or by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. David in Psalm 19, He prays a prayer that I want to make my prayer in this spiritual battle, and it's a prayer that I pray in the plural for you and for me today.

Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Until next time.