

A Word from Mack

Strongholds fall in the face of love

In the ancient world, no city on the Mediterranean compared with Corinth on the eastern coast of Greece! The famous saying floated around that “Roman Lake,” was “Sailor Do not miss Corinth!” The city was a textbook case of degradation wrapped in the cloak of “civilization.” It had a population of 750,000 and was one of the largest and wealthiest of the Roman cities in Greece. But at the core its foundations were rotting.

Sometime in about 50 AD, a smallish fellow walked unnoticed in to Corinth. He was trained as a Jewish scholar by the best rabbinical schools and teachers in Jerusalem. And he came to Corinth with a fresh way of following an old hope of his people. To Paul, which he now was called, the Rule of God could change even Corinth. He brought a simple but singular message: “Love is the rule of our Heavenly Ruler.” And people were drawn together by that common regal thread. They were rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female.

After a spell, Paul left Corinth to go to other cities with the same magnetic draw of vibrant living. More lives were dedicated in each. And in each city committed folks from every walk drew together gathered for power. These groups were nourished on the milk of Paul’s letters after he moved on to sow life in the new fields within the cities of the empire. In his letters to Corinth, we see the most astonishing declaration of faith one could possibly find anywhere.

So Paul writes these instructions: For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

Paul recognizes that we are in a real war in this life. It is good against evil. It is symmetry standing over dissolution. And at its heart, it is love as the fulfillment of self against self over others. But Paul insists that we must use the right weapons to win this very real war.

So are the strongholds of crime, drugs, poverty, greed, blight, fear, self-centeredness, and every other brass fortress of dysfunction in our modern Corinths and in our own cramped souls being demolished? If they are, then we are using the right weapons. If the strongholds continue generation after generation, city life after city life (it’s a long trail back to Corinth but it appears unbroken in its infection,) then we are using the wrong weapons. So what weapon has divine power to demolish strongholds?

Love. You will remember in elementary logic, we learned that two things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. Here is where faith steps in to embody truth: God is Power. God is Love. Therefore, Love is Power! The power of Love to demolish strongholds is no abstraction. It is not a namby-pamby will-o-the-wist dew drop. Love lives in the life of one who

trusts that it is the only way to win and who surrenders to live lovingly in the midst of all that looks dark. Love conquers the zoo in our own souls and transforms our inner Corinth little by little as we trust its way! And because it demolishes the interior castle of our self-centeredness it can spring from us as we walk its way into the heart of all of our cities! Love demolishes strongholds! Love wins. This is our faith because we invite Love in to live until Love is no longer a guest, but has become our host.

Everything we are about in renewing our cities is rooted and grounded in Love. We are not perfect, but we are seeing strongholds shaken in ourselves and in our world! It's just a step away from demolition! Come and join us if you have not. And if you have, then bring other. Fire sets things on fire around it.

One final word. Read Paul's description of Love every day. You will find it in First Corinthians the Thirteenth Chapter. Make Love your aim. God bless you all in this mighty army of Love.