

JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

JAC Online

Issue 91, June - July 2014

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Editorial Introduction

by Major Stephen Court, Editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to JAC91. This edition deals with things that we should let go and things we should embrace, places we should go and what to do on the way. We're grateful, as always, to our contributors, who come from Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, and USA and fight as soldier, cadet, envoy, lieutenant, captain, major, and commissioner.

Australian Salvationist Casey O'Brien continues her Social Justice series (started in JAC 90) with some instruction: Start Where You Are, Use What You Have, Do What You Can. Ready, set, go!

Kristoffer Paulsson, of the International Centre for Spiritual Life Development, contributes an intriguing piece called Holiness And The Johari Window. Sound Interesting? Plough in to the 'unknown'.

Captain Peter Brookshaw, in Australia, explains What Every Corps Needs To Embrace. It's true. That includes you, if you soldier somewhere...

Major Robert Evans takes a look at Liberation Theology through the lens of two Hollywood movies in Liberating The Oppressed. Maybe watch the movies as homework before drawing conclusions on his piece.

Is New Zealand and Fiji Lieutenant Sammy Millar idealistic? Read Soldiers Of Our God and decide for yourself. We buy it. But be careful. He doesn't only describe identity, he is recruiting...

Envoy Charles Roberts draws from Jesus' example the Hebraic tradition in What To Do In-Between Seasons to inspire us to apply what we learn.

Cadet Nicola Poore is Demolishing Strongholds! But she does it in a user-friendly way, telling a story that many can relate with, to reveal a spiritual truth of liberation.

Captain Scott Strissel exhorts us to Let Go Of The Baggage. Following this advice will simplify things for all of us.

Commissioner Wesley Harris is Going Out With Jesus. No, it's not a date. But the Commissioner draws on Jewish and Catholic tradition to make a very Salvationist point.

So, there you have it. Have you a better handle on what to let go and what to embrace? Where to go and what to do on the way? Spread the word. Share the issue. Read up on the 90 issues and probably a thousand articles in the archives – all free. But most importantly, apply the lessons God highlights in your life for the acceleration of the advance of the salvation war on your front and ultimately around the world. Godspeed.

Start Where You Are, Use What You Have, Do What You Can

by Soldier Casey O'Brien

Australia Eastern Territorial Social Justice Co-ordinator

Casey O'Brien shares some fundamental principles of social justice and the importance of every Salvationist being actively involved in its pursuit

Many of us attended Commissioning in December. As I witnessed 19 new Salvation Army officers being commissioned, I could not help but feel that the privilege was mine to witness these individuals publicly commit to the calling that God has placed on their lives.

I was excited to hear through many of their testimonies that not only were they committing to this calling, but that many of them had been faithful to other callings that God had placed on their lives in the past.

Daily restoring the kingdom

Across the world, our organisation is filled with people fulfilling the call that God has placed on their lives. Rarely do these callings look the same from person to person. However, one thing is consistent – the Salvationist has been called to serve society's most marginalised – to bring about social justice – in whatever role in which God has placed him or her.

God is calling us to live a life of holiness right where we are – where he has placed us today. Part of being holy is doing our part to restore the world, piece by piece, to what God intended it to be. That is, to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. In doing this, issues of social justice – those parts of life which do not belong in the Kingdom of God – become a major concern for us as believers.

In order to reach a world that is so badly broken in so many ways, we need people in all stages of life, in all vocations, in all situations. We need soldiers, future officers and officers to be holy in every moment. Whether you are called to be a lawyer, a receptionist, an exercise scientist, a courier, a Salvation Army officer or an information technology specialist – God has a plan for you to use that calling in your ministry as a Salvationist. God has called each and every one of us to be a part of the restoration of the world to what he intended it to be.

Change starts now

In our efforts to be holy we are required to be salt and light in the world around us (Matthew 5). The paintings of German artist, peace and human rights advocate, Kathe Kollwitz, clearly show her belief that "I am in the world to change the world".

We are called to be present, active and aware within the world, no matter which role or in what situation we find ourselves in.

As former world No.1 tennis player Arthur Ashe said, "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can".

Right in this moment, you have been strategically placed by God to bring about his kingdom in your area of influence. You have been placed right where you are in order to respond to injustices as Jesus would have responded.

"Right in this moment, you have been strategically placed by God to bring about his kingdom in your area of influence."

By living holy lives in the situation in which God has placed us, we grow in our experience and understanding of him. At times, such growth may see us being called by God to leave our current situation and serve him in another way. Praise God for this. Praise God that he is molding us and shaping us in our current situation for even greater things ahead.

General Bramwell Booth once wrote: "We are beginning a New Year; shall we not make it a year of desperate, determined seeking for God? And whether we write, or cook, or serve, or suffer, or work underground, or fly, or sail on the seas; whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, in that very thing, seek after Him. Be resolved that we will taste and see, in our own everyday experience, that He is to be found by those who seek Him, that He is faithful that promised!"

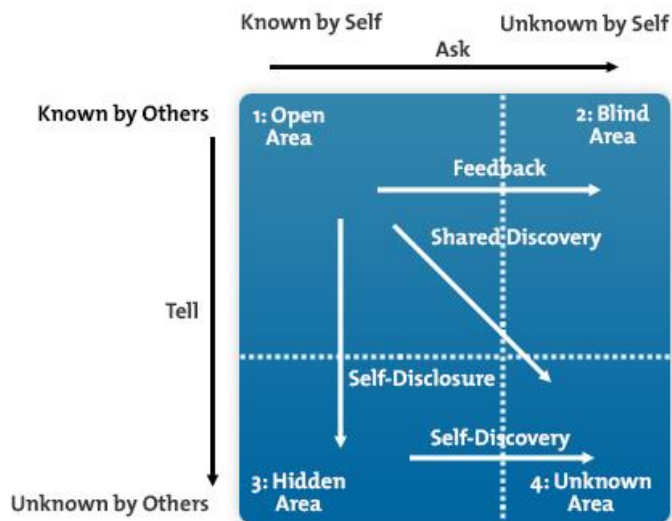
In this New Year, let us corporately pray the words from *All That I Am*:

*All that I am, all I can be,
All that I have, all that is me,
Accept and use, Lord, as you would choose, Lord,
Right now today.
Take every passion; Every skill,
Take all my dreams and bend them to your will
My all I give, Lord; For You I'll live, Lord,
Come what may.*

Holiness and the Johari Window

by Kristoffer Paulsson

Have you ever come across Joseph Luft and Harrison Ingham's psychological model – the Johari Window? It is basically a 2x2 window where the first quadrat represents what you and everyone else knows about you (called the Open Area).



The second quadrat represents what you don't know about yourself but what your friends know about you (Blind Area), the third quadrat represents what you know about yourself but what others don't know about you (Hidden Area) and the fourth quadrat represents what neither you nor your friends knows about you (Unknown Area). This method simply makes you find out who you are in the eyes of your surroundings through collecting data from them.

As you may have understood, this window has been used uncountable times to improve the teamwork in a group where the main goal is to increase the open area as much as possible and discover things about others and yourself. However, this article is going to focus on how we can discover things about our spiritual lives, through this window.

Before we get any further and take a closer look at each square, let's start with the definition of holiness as "true love that is nurtured and expressed with relationship with others" (The Salvation Army handbook of Doctrine, 2010:197), a journey and a discovery. Let us begin.

Open Area

When you are thinking about yourself and your life with people and God, how big is this area? We could look at the open area from two perspectives - we could see it as a square that we want to increase at the expense of the blind area and therefore understand more about ourselves and our spiritual lives. Or we can see it as an opportunity to show people what we have inside the hidden area and express our spiritual life. So there are only pros by making this area bigger.

As Christians who want to live a holy life, it affects every aspect of our being, including our relationship with God and other people, our self-image, our attitude to the created order and our being in society.



We not only want to talk about God but we also want to show it and when we put our lives with God into action we will, automatically, make this area bigger in our lives. And when this square is increased, the blind area and/or the hidden area are decreased. This does not necessarily mean that we have to show people everything about our personal life with God (because we are all different in our personalities) but it means that we have to show that our relationship with God is genuine and that our love for others is sincere. And I would say that sharing our lives with others is a huge part of living a holy life but it is totally up to you how to show it and how to make this open area bigger.

We may think that everything will be solved by making the open area bigger but I think it's important to say that actions in themselves will never save our non-Christian friends but they can point to the only one who can save them – Jesus!

Blind Area

As I said in the introduction – Holiness is true love that is nurtured and expressed in relationship with others. This is the part of the window that is “owned” by others and by saying that “holiness is love nurtured [...] in relationship with others” makes us dependent on others or the holiness will slowly die because it won't get nurtured. By saying that, we can also state that saying that you are holy or living a holy life is useless in itself. In the end we should endeavour to decrease this area because the only people who can tell if you are showing a loving, holy life (except God) are our “neighbours”. Feedback from the people in our surrounding is therefore one of the strongest and most effective tools to help us grow both personally and spiritually. That feedback can confirm our love and show us what to work with.



We need great humility and a lot of bravery to ask for that kind of feedback and work with our weaknesses. To do that is a huge holiness challenge!

Hidden Area

I find this area the most difficult area to work with. How much do we have to give away? We do need to have our own privacy with God (Matthew 6:6) and grow as a Christians BUT we can't make our relationship with God into something private. A wise person once said: “Christianity is a personal religion but it can never become a private religion”. What she meant was that no one can take away your personal experience of God but we can't keep quiet about Jesus. A private religion is a selfish religion and I would say that selfishness is the biggest enemy to holiness.

As we are striving to be more like Jesus, we have to get rid of our self-interest and realise that we can't win anything by doing so.



Personally I think that we have to make our hidden area more open and share it, so that you can go through struggle, pain, doubt or other hard stuff together with others. A good friend of mine once said: "It's not about showing people your whole being but to choose what you're showing people so that all four squares work in harmony and that people can look at one of the squares and get a relatively full picture of your relationship with God".

When you looked at this square for the first time you probably thought that this was the smallest area of your life. But I would say that this is the biggest and most exciting area because this is what only God knows about you. This square is infinite.

To explore this area is to realise who we are and what we do in the eyes of the Lord. But how do we decrease this square and explore this area of our life? We could discover it on our own by searching God through reading the Bible, praying and asking for his guidance - but that kind of information would just go from the unknown area into the hidden area. We could make sure that people pray for us but if they would discover something about my unknown area, it would end up in a bigger blind area. The picture above says that a shared discovery is the most effective way to find out what is behind the unknown area and at the same time discover more about ourselves. To think that your neighbourhood, your friends, your church, you and the Holy Spirit can discover the unknown area of holiness together is a fascinating and challenging thought. Your window is unique and our journeys are different but we can always discover things together.



Yes, I said that this area is infinite and therefore it's impossible to find out all the things God knows about us. But that's the challenge of holiness.

The top picture is downloaded from:
<http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/JohariWindow.htm>

What Every Corps Needs to Embrace

by Lieutenant Peter Brookshaw

God can do immeasurably more than anything we ask or imagine. Yes, that is true. Most of us know these words inside and out, quoted regularly from the letter to the Ephesians. We nod in agreement, and give a wry smile. We've heard it all before.

I wonder though, whether we actually take heed of such words?

Let me suggest for a moment, that if we truly believed God was omnipotent, then prayer meetings would be overflowing, altars would be jammed-packed and corps gatherings would be bustling. But we don't and they aren't.

God can do immeasurably more than anything we ask or imagine.

The issue isn't that we don't believe God is all powerful per se but rather that we don't actually believe God cares enough for us to answer our prayers within his omnipotence. We embrace some sort of deistic approach to God, and unknowingly commit to an ideology that suggests God is inactive in the world we live in.

Convince me I'm not telling the truth.

If what I am saying is false, then tell me why Salvation Army corps struggle in their pursuit of well attended, passionate, vibrant prayer meetings? Surely one of the reasons is, whether we articulate it this way or not, is that we simply do not believe God is willing to hear our prayers.

You could suggest other reasons why fundamental expressions of Christian worship and discipleship are lacking in (primarily) western world contexts. You could say that people are 'time-poor' or apathetic. Though, the reason for their apathy is surely because they have not caught a revelation of the love of the father, and have failed to embrace the all encompassing greatness of the father, exhibited through the work of the father.

See, God is willing to hear our prayers and answer them according to his will in Christ Jesus. He absolutely cares for us and absolutely seeks the best for our lives and society.

The question is: do we really believe that? My observation, at least in my limited perspective, is no. We like to say we believe it. We love to recall the Ephesians 3:20 passage and other great bible verses that affirm God's greatness, but when all is said and done, Christians prefer to nibble biscuits while watching Master Chef, than attending a prayer meeting to seek salvation for the world.

You are welcome to disagree with me. That's fine. I just hope you are one who is speaking from a perspective that has a credible voice to disagree with the assertions I have made.

It is time that we grasp a revelation of the power of God, of the loving nature of God and of the intent that the Lord has to work through us to bring redemption to the world.

We don't need another ecclesiastical corps cumbering the earth.

We need Salvation Army soldiers who will have an increasing understanding of the power of God, and recognize God's desire to enact change to their communities through his people.

We must stop embracing a watered-down pathetic representation of God, who lives in some ivory tower, seemingly uninterested in the affairs of humanity.

God is surely looking for some passionate, committed, sold-out followers of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, who believe God is going to work through them to see a holy transformation of their world.

When these kind of faith-filled believers are on the scene, ministry is exciting. At times people get healed; and I mean, literally, physically, healed. You witness moments when someone speaks a 'word of knowledge' into someone's life and the brokenness that has characterised their life for the last two years is demolished. You see unbelievers choosing to follow Christ, because all of a sudden their God-conscience is pricked. Social justice goes from being a trendy option, to a Spirit-led imperative.

Oh that we would hear the call to radical, passionate, faith-filled prayer and discipleship. Every corps needs to embrace this. Every leader needs to promote this. Every soldier needs to live this.

Anything less is robbing God of what he intends to do through The Salvation Army.

God can do immeasurably more than anything we ask or imagine.

Captain Pete Brookshaw
www.petebrookshaw.com

Liberating the Oppressed

by Major Robert Evans

Over the past fortnight I watched two very powerful movies depicting unthinkable violence and oppression from opposite sides of the globe, evoking two opposing responses from leaders in the church to end the conflict.

The first film, *Machine Gun Preacher* (2011), tells the story of Sam Childers, a transformed ex-biker gang member and former drug dealer who responded to a calling to rescue kidnapped and orphaned children in war-torn Sudan. Outraged by the horrors of Sudan where children are forced to become child soldiers, Sam Childers took up arms to join the fight against the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) militia group and opened an orphanage to care for the children he helped to liberate.

The second film, *Romero* (1989), tells the story of Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of El Salvador who could no longer look upon the suffering of the Salvadoran people who were being oppressed by the aristocracy and murdered by the government. He spoke out against the violence and started a revolution without guns to fight for peace and justice in his country. He called for love not violence, freedom not repression, pleading with both church and state to end the blood shed and free his people.

Two confronting stories about two men who fought in the name of Jesus Christ to liberate vulnerable people from tyranny. One man resorting to violence, the other raising his voice. Both refusing to turn their backs on people who could not defend themselves.

These films, based on true stories, raise challenging questions about the ethics and application of liberation theology which has been described as "an interpretation of Christian faith through the poor's suffering, their struggle and hope, and a critique of society...and Christianity through the eyes of the poor." Is it right to fight for justice through any means? Does the ends justify the means?

While these questions are complex and challenging, I default to the example set by the One whose name is often used to justify the struggle - Jesus Christ!

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Jesus mission was clear, but His methods defied the expectations of those wanting to overthrow an oppressive government. He preached to the crowd, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44); He taught the religious, "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:17); He rebuked His followers and accusers, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?" (Mark 14:48); He referred to a higher authority when questioned by the officials, "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of

Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64); He sought forgiveness for those who executed Him, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34).

Jesus chose to serve not to be served - "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

Jesus did not find power in position - "...Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:5-11)

Jesus brought salvation through sacrifice - "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." (Galatians 1:3-4)

In a world where the struggle for justice and liberation continues, only by submitting to the message, mission and methods of Jesus Christ can real salvation be found from and for those who would oppress God's children.

- See more at:

<http://ephesiansfour12.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/liberating-oppressed.html#sthash.Wmwz7KwZ.dpuf>

Soldiers of Our God by Lieutenant Sammy Millar

Soldiers of our God, arise! The day is drawing nearer; shake the slumber from your eyes, the light is growing clearer. Sit no longer idly by, while the heedless millions die. Lift the blood-stained banner high and take the field for Jesus.

These words from The Salvation Army song book inspire and ignite within me a passion for this Army of salvation. They speak of our purpose, our mandate and declare the very essence of who we are. *Soldiers: fighting to win the world for Jesus.* Yet there are whispers within the ranks that say, 'The Salvation Army has abandoned its post and failed in fulfilling its mission', 'It's stuck in the past', or 'the movement is stagnant and without vision'. These whispers distract us from the fight, and they need to stop. We will not quit out of frustration but will fight harder, with greater endurance and stronger determination, because while our tactics may change, our mission remains.

The Salvation Army was founded in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth during a dark time where poverty, injustice, corruption and disease infiltrated the streets of the east end of London. The Salvation Army was established to challenge and fight against social injustices and see people rescued into the kingdom of Jesus. This zealous Army spread rapidly, and our history is marked with stories of courage, innovation and salvations won. *We must learn from our past, engage in the present and step into the future.*

Not that much has changed. Ours is still a dark world in need of light: the light, life and love of Jesus! People are still drowning in an ocean of sin, broken and hurting, desperate for something more.

The chief coroner announced last August that in the previous year, 541 lives were lost to suicide. Connection through social media seems to trump true community, but the reality is that people are lonelier than ever. Depression is rampant. People are marginalised on account of their age, gender, disability, ethnicity or socio-economic status. Thousands of children live in poverty. Addictions to alcohol, pornography, gambling and even work oppress. Corruption is rife and injustice extensive.

Today, The Salvation Army is made up of soldiers who are dedicated, disciplined and determined disciples of Jesus. They are cleansed because of Christ's sacrificial blood and equipped, empowered and filled with the Holy Spirit's fire. They aren't afraid to stand up in defence of the marginalised; they love their neighbours and seek to imitate the example of Christ.

They are courageous, bold and innovative; willing to put reputations on the line to challenge injustice and corruption. They rise above the standards set by society and set their sights on a higher purpose. These soldiers fight with endurance to bring hope and purpose to a deteriorating world. Not as individuals, but as units who thrive within and strive for community. Much of their fighting is done on their knees in persevering prayer,

and the sword they possess is the Word of God, which they know well and are deeply committed to. They are zealous, undaunted, fearless, unswerving and unstoppable as they storm the forts of darkness.

In this Army we find belonging, we find purpose, we take up arms and fight to see people freed from oppression, injustice conquered, and souls saved into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Hallelujah!*

In this Salvation Army there is a place for you, irrespective of your age, your gender, your ethnicity, your past, your fears or your failings. This is an Army fuelled with passion, filled with purpose and fighting to prevail over darkness.

So ... Soldiers of our God arise! Forward march with Blood and Fire and win the world for Jesus!

What To Do In-between Seasons

by Envoy Charles Roberts

In the course of my travels these days, I have met many people, many Jesus-followers, and others on the way. No matter where they might place themselves on the faith spectrum, almost to a one, they are awaiting their "big break," in which God will really "use" them. I have often thought this way about ministry, that there is a tipping point; after a period of training, God will release you into "your" ministry.

I think this idea has some flaws to it (note - I'm not judging because I have thought this way for many years), and here's what I think they are.

Full disclosure: someone on the interwebs said I was very opinionated... I have a few thoughts about that... :-)

1- The great bulk of Jesus' ministry occurred while he was "on the way" somewhere else. Try searching the New Testament for the keywords "on the way", "As" "While" or others like it, see what comes up. You will be amazed at how much ministry Jesus did on the move, not established in one place.

So, for this, we will need to adopt an "as we go" mindset. The way we think about transitions will change, for God will equip us as we go for whatever ministry we encounter on the road to the "big" thing. This, I am finding out.

2- The seventy who went out before Jesus in Luke 10 had very minimal formal training. Like the other disciples, they were selected to be with him, and much of what they learned was through watching Jesus work. Their instructions were minimal, yet powerful:

NOW AFTER this the Lord chose and appointed seventy others and sent them out ahead of Him, two by two, into every town and place where He Himself was about to come (visit). And He said to them, The harvest indeed is abundant [there is much ripe grain], but the farmhands are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no provisions bag, no [change of] sandals; refrain from [retarding your journey by] saluting and wishing anyone well along the way. Whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this household! [Freedom from all the distresses that result from sin be with this family]. And if anyone [worthy] of peace and blessedness is there, the peace and blessedness you wish shall come upon him; but if not, it shall come back to you. And stay on in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. [Deut. 24:15.] Whenever you go into a town and they receive and accept and welcome you, eat what is set before you; And heal the sick in it and say to them, The kingdom of God has come close to you. But whenever you go into a town and they do not receive and accept and welcome you, go out into its streets and say, Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we are wiping off against you; yet know and

understand this: the kingdom of God has come near you. I tell you, it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that town. [Gen. 19:24-28.] (Luke 10:1-12 AMP)

So we need to develop a Hebraic mindset of practicing what we know. This is the only way to be sure that we have actually learned. Like the good rabbi that He is, Jesus teaches us the next lesson only after we've learned the last one.

3- When the seventy returned, they returned with great joy over the mission's effectiveness.

On-the-job training in ministry has its perks, to be sure. This passage does not negate the value of education in a purely academic setting, but it does highlight the benefits of practical ministry done live in the neighborhood! Jesus told them (paraphrased): "Don't trip! Yeah, it's cool the demons bowed down to you, but that's because I've got you! Get excited about that!"

So, wherever we are on the ministry pathway, there is a service component of some kind. Even if that service is to be silent and listen, it is crucial "do whatever he tells you," because all our work, whatever we do, is for the glory of God. Keeping God in view, whatever we do, casting all of our cares upon Him. Even in our simple responses, in our immaturity, there are lessons to be learned.

4- Even if our transition period seems like a dry place, an arid and desert-like place, we don't have to fear. Psalm 84 reminds us that God can turn the desert into a place of springs, that the blessed one is the one who stays on the journey with Him. The desert is "the place of speaking." So do not fear even the dry places, because even there God is with you.

Happy transition walking!

Demolishing Strongholds!

by Nicola Poore

2 Corinthians 10: 1-5

The Facebook newsfeed is a fascinating social experiment. To some extent you get a glimpse into the life and character of people – but really you only see what they want you to see. Those who are shy in person may seem incredibly forthright in their Facebook posts. Those who are never short of a word in public, may say relatively little online.

The believers in Corinth accused Paul of something similar. That is, being “timid” when face-to-face, yet “bold” when far away through his letters. There were some agitators, thought to be Jewish-Christian preachers, who had infiltrated the ranks of the Corinthian church and who were circulating this harsh propaganda about Paul.

They basically criticized Paul on the basis of four things:

1. Paul had refused financial support.
2. He didn't carry any letters of recommendation, so this diminished his credibility.
3. They labeled Paul as being 'unsuccessful' in reaching his own people. (Why else would he be preaching to the Gentiles?)
4. Being an unimpressive speaker

I would condense these critiques in three words: Money, Power and Success. Sound like familiar opponents?

Yet rather than defend himself on the basis of these concerns, rather than defend his apostolic authority or rhetorical prowess, Paul appeals to his brothers and sisters by the humility and gentleness of Christ. This is the paradox of power in the kingdom of God.

Paul writes that, *“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. [Money, Power, Success] On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”* (2 Cor 10:3-4)

The Greek word for stronghold, *ochyrowma*, is a military term which means ‘a fortified place.’ You see in the ancient world, a wealthy city would not only build a wall around its perimeter, but a fortified tower within that wall. So impenetrable was such a tower, that it only required a few defending soldiers if the city walls had been breached by the enemy. BUT...if the stronghold was taken, the battle was over.

But what particular strongholds is Paul addressing? *“Every argument and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ.”* (2 Cor 10:5)

This is a battle of the mind.

The power that we draw upon is not from our own inner resources. Our power is God's divine power. The weapons that we fight with are not those typically revered in the world – not found in money or status or success. Our greatest weapon is a life fully surrendered to Jesus Christ.

Because in fully surrendering to Jesus, in yielding our lives to him, we allow the power of God to be released in us. God's power alone can breakdown strongholds.

As a young adult, two friends of mine had been in a relationship for what seemed like an eternity. They weren't yet married, but their lives were tightly connected. There was a great deal of shared history, grandiose plans for their shared future and a strong sense of shared identity.

So it came as quite a shock when they broke up. He had broken it off quite unexpectedly and she was devastated. Completely lost. Angry. Confused. Alone. And yet, as she would talk about their relationship in hindsight, it became clear that this had been an unhealthy, dysfunctional, manipulative relationship. Counseling helped her to recognise that for herself.

I committed to pray for them, and particularly for her because she wasn't yet free. The relationship was definitely over but she still felt powerless, somehow not in control, in bondage. My friend would speak of a gravitational pull that this guy still had over her. After some months had passed, God gave me a picture of her while I was praying. She was crouched in a ball, hands covering her head, as though she had been bound by ropes or chains that kept her in that position. Only, there *were no chains* anymore. There *were no ropes* anymore.

A stronghold doesn't just establish itself instantaneously. It takes time for something to take really take root, gain momentum and flourish. Strongholds gain strength through reinforcement, layer upon layer, time after time. The good news is that God's power, God's power alone, can break down strongholds.

So when Paul writes that, "*the weapons we fight with have divine power to demolish strongholds,*" this is a call to arms. A call to believers – to soldiers – and for us today, to lay down our lives, and to take up arms; to confess our weakness, and claim God's divine power; to go into battle and to take offensive action against the strongholds.

What are they? What are your strongholds? What are the enemies of your soul? What patterns of thinking keep you feeling under and defeated? What lies have taken root in your heart and mind that you have come to believe are true, but actually stand in direct opposition to God's truth?

Self-loathing? Crippling fear? Anxiety? Pride? Materialism? Shame? Whatever it is – call it out and take authority, your God-given authority, to demolish it in the name of Jesus. God's power alone can breakdown strongholds, but responsibility also falls to us

to submit our minds to the lordship of Christ. I urge you, I beg you, lay down your life and take up arms.

There are no chains anymore.

Let Go Of The Baggage

by Captain Scott Strissel

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **let us throw off everything that hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

When we as a family prepare to go on a vacation there are usually two types of people in our family:

Type One – the under-packer who just wants to be out the door and in the van in fifteen minutes or less and worry about what we didn’t bring with us later.

Type Two - The over-packer who wants to bring everything from our home along with us on the trip and takes twice as long to get ready to leave. Also this type two person (who will not be named but I’m married to her) has to clean the house as if we were receiving an inspection from a military grade house inspector with white gloves and all.

If you haven’t guessed yet, I’m the type one person who at times sits impatiently in the van honking the horn as the type-two person (again unnamed but I’m married to her) finishes cleaning the house until it shines and is sparkling clean.

Truth be told, I am glad that my wife takes great care in our preparations and in the long run, as much as I hate to admit it, She is right.

There’s another kind of baggage in life though

Sin can weigh us down.

Make no mistake about it, the old life (before Christ) leads to death. When we come to Jesus and we accept His gift of salvation we are made into new creations by His blood. The old has gone and the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17)...but at times we still feel as if we have to keep lugging that baggage around with us. It weighs us down, causes us difficulty and trouble and yet we still habitually burden ourselves with this unnecessary baggage.

What is this baggage?

1) It is the remnants of the old creation -

When Christ saved us, He did so completely yet we find it very difficult to let go of old habits and old sinful ways of living. The Holy Spirit prompts us to unclinch our white knuckled fists which are tightly holding onto these things that we needn’t any more to grasp. In times of trial and stress, these old remnants also rear their ugly heads to cause us strife and further temptation as well. When we lose our focus on the forward prize of Holiness, which is the image of Christ alive in us, we face the old self again. When this happens a flood of the old tendencies pours in and once again we find

ourselves taking two or three steps backwards in our progress of Holiness. This baggage has been there all along festering and molding in a cold dark corner of our hearts and we've been reluctant, even rebellious in our lack of spiritual attempts to deal with it, so, instead we ignore it. The Holy Spirit knows that this baggage does not belong in our new creation. He is spurring us, even painfully at times, to let go of it. Why do we still clutch it ever so tightly? What good can ever come from its hold on us? This baggage stands blatantly in our path of real, tangible Spiritual growth and yet we allow it to stunt us.

Prayer – Dear Lord, allow me to see this baggage in my life today. Show me that which still blocks my steps to full surrender. Reveal to me the places that I have yet to let go of. I do not want these burdens of the old creation to hinder my forward progress of reflecting You. -Amen.

2) The Baggage can also be our guilt, shame and self-worth.

The old life also has a way of convincing us that we are not good enough to be like Christ. It will try and convince us that we will never be good enough or smart enough to receive such a reward from God. This has nothing to do with pride, in fact just the opposite. When Christ redeems us, the wretched sinner, He does so completely. When we commit our hearts to Him, He washes us clean. This doesn't mean that we won't face temptation again or that we can not fall, but it does mean that His blood sacrifice can and will cover up our sinful old creations and wash them away. Our part, within this free will, however, is that we must confront our old harmful choices that we have made. This is the consequences of sin, we have to face it. Sometimes in facing it we find ourselves so wrecked by it that we begin to doubt if Christ could truly love us because we have done so much wrong. This remnant of the old baggage clings to us and tries to convince us of the lie that we are not worth His time and that, perhaps, we were never salvageable through His gift of salvation. Don't buy the lie. This isn't about pride, but it's about truth. You matter to God! He loves YOU! He wants to remind you that you are His precious child and that you are a son or daughter of the Most High! Don't cling to this old baggage, which is a lie. Let go of it, and embrace this truth of His saving grace – You are His and He would do it all over again if you had been the only human alive! When you let go of this old baggage and recognize how much it has weighed you down you will begin to see how free you will feel.

Let go, and find this burden lifted from you!

Prayer – Dear Lord, remind me again of how much you love me. Remind me when I struggle with my identity in You that I am worthy because of Your love. Help to me see myself as You see me, and as I do help me to let go of my grip on this baggage of self-worth. Thank you for your love and for your hand upon my life, lift me up out of this pit of self-degradation and give me a passion to serve and love you with every fiber of my being. -Amen.

Get On With It!

Letting go of the baggage that hinder us is only the first step, now we have to press on. Jesus is our living example, and this world still needs His example lived out in Holy Christ-following people. Shine so that others might see Him. Live as the Holy Spirit leads you to live. Get up and get on with this new creation...oh and leave your baggage behind!

*Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
God specializes in things thought impossible
And He can do what no other power can do.*

Going out With Jesus by Commissioner Wesley Harris

Prominent features in the early history of the Army were occasions for eating together, singing together and “going out”. It was the same for Jesus and his disciples. In Mark's account of the last supper we read, “When they had sung a hymn, they went out...” Jesus might often have expressed his faith in singing and joined his disciples in his 'male voice disciple choir.' which may have had a distinctive northern accent. How we would treasure a recording of their singing if one existed!

What did they sing at the last supper? It may well have been from the *Hallel* or “praise psalms” (113-118) Then they 'went out'. They may well have preferred to have stayed in rather than go out through the dark and narrow streets of old Jerusalem where `hired assassins could lurk. The disciples failed Jesus later in the Garden of Gethsemane but at least they showed willing and went out with him despite there being a price on his head and danger for his life -and theirs.. (I once joined in a silent pilgrimage through those dark Jerusalem streets and think that I may have entered into some of the feelings of the disciples on that occasion!)

Early day Salvationists also had the courage to go out with Jesus. They were not soldiers confined to barracks but, as Pope John Paul was reported to have described us, “soldiers of the pavement” - not merely part of “the Church invisible” but ready to go out into the workaday world with its challenges..

The upper room – possibly in the home of the mother of John Mark – might have seemed like a comfort zone for the disciples, relatively cosy and secure. The precincts of church or corps buildings may seem like that for Christians today but the challenge is to be out and about with Jesus in the world of industry or commerce or politics, where Jesus needs the support of wide awake disciples.

The chorus of an Army song of an earlier period of our movement is a challenge for today:

*Out there, out there
Where the darkness reigns out there;
Torchbearers are needed... out there.*