

Bended Knee Boldness—Breaking Strongholds Through Prayer

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

October 12, 2025 | Pastor Lonnie Harris

Key Questions:

1) How do we make sense of hardships, persecutions, & strongholds of darkness in light of God's Word?

2) What can we (Forcey) do about the hardships, persecutions & darkness that our brothers & sisters face?

Outline:

1. How do we make sense of hardships, persecutions, & strongholds of darkness in light of God's Word?

a. Be informed...

b. Understand how God uses hardships & persecutions to draw His people near and make us like Jesus

2. What can we (Forcey) do about the hardships, persecutions & darkness that our brothers & sisters face?

Pray! (2 Cor 1:11, Eph 6:17-18) - God uses the prayers of the saints to pierce the darkness & tear down strongholds.

a. Open doors (Col 4:2-4)

b. Demolished Strongholds (2 Cor 10:4)

c. Deliverance & Living w/ The Tension of Loss (Acts 12 - Peter & James)

d. Sufficient Grace in times of hardship (2 Cor 12:9-10)

e. Comfort (2 Cor 1:1-7)

Conclusion & Takeaway: God uses our prayers in the midst of persecutions & hardships to draw us near and build His Church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail - Therefore Pray For Our Global Partners in these spiritually dark places. This is how we will pierce the darkness - on bended knee.

I. Understanding Strongholds and Persecution

1. How does the concept of a "stronghold" change the way we view the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)—is it just about reaching people, or also about engaging in a spiritual battle? Consider - have we taught our disciples to pray for the mission?

2. Paul said, "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds" (2 Cor 10:4). **What are some "fleshly" or worldly ways we might be tempted to fight** against persecution or darkness (e.g., anger, political force, giving up), and why is it essential to rely on "divine power" instead?

3. Can you reflect upon and share a time when a personal struggle or "darkness" in your life ended up drawing you closer to God or shaping your character? What are some other Scriptures that demonstrate how God works in this way?

II. Our Role and Response

1. In terms of praying for "open doors" (Col 4:2-4), and demolishing "strongholds" (2 Cor 10:4) - **What specifically does a demolished stronghold or an "open door" look like in a restrictive country** or a closed region?

2. Paul mentions that God comforts us so that we may comfort others (2 Cor 1:4). **How can our prayers for our Global Partners and the persecuted move beyond pity to true comfort and solidarity?** What practical steps can we take to *feel* their suffering and *partner* with them?

Peter and James (Acts 12) had different outcomes: one delivered, one killed. **How do we pray for the persecuted with faith for deliverance while still accepting God's sovereign will**, even if the answer seems to be "no" by human standards? How do you navigate this tension?

NEXT STEPS

1. Commit to a "Stronghold" Strategy In Your Regular Prayer Focus

- **Action:** Choose one of our Global Partners (or a specific persecuted people group) and commit to praying for them by name or region for the next **30 days**.
- **Focus:** Specifically pray for the **demolition of the spiritual strongholds** (false ideologies, fear, oppressive governments...) in their area and for God to **open a specific, tangible door** for the Gospel this month.
- **Accountability:** Pair up with one other person and share with them who/what you are praying for, committing to check in weekly.

2. Practice the Ministry of Comfort In Crisis

- **Action:** Reflect on a specific area of suffering or difficulty in the lives of the persecuted church (e.g., displacement, separation from family, lack of Scripture, loss, physical brutality and oppression...).
- **Focus:** Write a brief, encouraging note or create a small care package through an established Christian ministry (e.g., Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors - or work with Forcey's Global Partner Team) to remind a persecuted believer that **they are not forgotten** and that we are participating in their suffering by offering comfort.

3. Live with Personalized, "Bended Knee" Boldness

- **Action:** Apply the spiritual battle metaphor to a **personal** stronghold (a specific thought pattern, area of unbelief, or habitual sin) that is exalting itself against the knowledge of God in your own life and hindering your gospel witness.

Focus: Confess that stronghold and, using the "divine weapons" of Scripture and prayer, commit to **breaking its power the weeks to come**. Recognize that fighting darkness in your life is part of preparing you to stand with those fighting greater darkness abroad.

