

Stronghold: Sloth

Introduction:

Our series “Stronghold” explores the seven deadly sins and the Savior who sets us free. Gregory the Great coined the phrase “seven deadly sins” to describe seven sins that suffocate us spiritually. These include sins like pride, envy, lust, greed, gluttony, and wrath. These are all sins of commission—things we’ve done. But what about sins of omission—things we’ve left undone? That’s where the seventh deadly sin sneaks in. The sin called “sloth.”

What is “sloth?” The name of a sleepy mammal and a sneaky sin, Gregory writes, “Sloth is the neglect of good works.” The Greek word for sloth is *acedia*. It literally means, “I don’t care.” “I should exercise, but I don’t care.” “I should eat right, but I don’t care.” “I should pray more, but I don’t care.” “I should serve others, but I don’t care.” What do the Scriptures say about sloth, and why should we care? Jesus tells us why. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells us three stories about how sloth kills us and how we can kill sloth.

Read Your Bible

- Proverbs 6:6-11
- Matthew 25

Apply God’s Word to Your Life:

1. In Proverbs 6:6-7, Solomon describes the diligence of ants. In what ways should we be like ants?
2. In Proverbs 6:8-11, Solomon describes some of the dangers of sloth. What dangers does he name? Can you come up with more dangers of sloth?
3. What is the point of Jesus’ first story—Matthew 25:1-13?
4. What is the point of Jesus’ second story—Matthew 25:14-30?
5. What is the point of Jesus’ third story—Matthew 25:31-46?
6. What happens to the slothful people in Jesus’ stories? What happens to the faithful people?
7. Read James 2:14-17. If we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, why should we care about good works?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Gracious God, we often confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. Give us the strength to do the good we too often leave undone. Give us the strength to overcome sloth and live faithful lives in Christ Jesus. Amen.