

Head & Heart Week 7: The Battle For Istanbul Today

So, one thing that I will share with you guys is that I am a complete and utter geography nerd. It is bad. I remember when I was really young, I could name all 50 states, their capitals, and pick them out on a map. That later translated into me being able to name nearly every country in the world by the age of like 16. To say the least, I am extremely fascinated by geography and the way that it shapes cultures, languages, jobs, etc.

To any geography nerd and to any history person, there is typically one city that everyone can conclude is ‘the center of the world’ – Istanbul (although it was referred to as Constantinople in ancient times). The reason for this is that Istanbul sits on the Bosphorus Strait. This strait connects Europe to Asia. It is essentially where the east meets the west, hence why it is the center of the world in most regards. While Istanbul is under the control of the Turkish government currently, it didn’t always used to be this way. It used to be a warzone, and it was constantly under siege. Rulers in Asia and Europe alike wanted to control trade and goods that flowed through the two continents, so Istanbul was always at the forefront of their eyes.

The Persians at one point had control.

The Vikings at one point had control.

The Byzantine Empire at one point had control.

The Ottoman Empire at one point had control.

One could say that Istanbul was important.

But here is the connection...

Our souls are in the exact same way. I want you to think about this: **Your Soul is so precious that angels and demons are fighting for control of it every day.** Just like Istanbul, it sits at the crossroads of two paths: light and darkness – Jesus and the world.

The question used to be “Who Holds the Walls of Istanbul?” – **Now it is “Who holds the choices of your life?”**. Every day, the forces of Satan are trying to slip through the cracks. Doubt tries to seek its way in. Envy tries to seep through the doors. Lust tries to bust through the gates.

At the same time, peace, love, and joy from the Holy Spirit are trying to hold onto the walls.

Just like the empires of ancient times fought for control of the ancient city, what you allow in your heart will determine who reigns there. This battle is so incredibly real. Every single day, this battle rages on. But I am here to tell you this: **God never loses battles when he is put at the forefront of battle.** No matter how many times the enemy comes knocking, your walls will hold. Because while Istanbul may have fallen many times, a heart fortified by faith never truly does. This can also translate into our mental health, not just our spiritual health, in isolation.

Taking care of your mental health is not a sign of spiritual failure — it’s an act of **spiritual defense.**

Just like Constantinople built massive walls to protect its people, we’re called to build healthy boundaries that protect our minds. That can look like **rest, therapy, journaling, meditation**, or simply permitting yourself to not have it all together. These things don’t make you fragile; they keep your walls standing when the world around you feels like it’s collapsing.

It's easy to think of faith as only something spiritual — prayer, scripture, worship — but faith is also incredibly **mental and emotional**. Sometimes faith looks like telling yourself, *"I will make it through today."* It's letting your mind rest in the promise that even when your emotions are unstable, **God's presence is not**.

So, next time you're looking at a map and you happen to see Istanbul, maybe this message will ring a bell and let you know that **YOU ARE IN A SPIRITUAL WAR**. However, with Christ Jesus, you will win that war. 10/10 times. Forever.

GOD BLESS AND SEE YOU NEXT WEEK – TY