

The Book of Joshua

Lesson 5: The Fall of Jericho -- Joshua 6:1-27

Stand for a moment outside the walls of Jericho on the morning the marching begins. The city is shut up tight, 'none went out, and none came in' (Joshua 6:1). The gates are barred, the watchmen are posted, and behind those famous walls a whole population is holding its breath. Then, out of the camp of Israel, comes the strangest army you have ever seen. No siege towers. No battering rams. No ladders against the walls. Just a long, silent procession of soldiers, seven priests carrying ram's horn trumpets, and the ark of the covenant moving slowly around the city. Once around, and then home. To the watchers on the wall it must have looked almost laughable. To God it was the opening move in keeping a promise made to Abraham hundreds of years before.

Now put yourself among the Israelites in that procession. You have crossed the Jordan on dry ground, you have seen God roll back the river the way He rolled back the sea, and you are ready. You want to fight. And the word comes down the line that the plan is to walk. Just walk. Around the city, once a day, for six days, saying nothing, and on the seventh day to walk around it seven times and then shout. No sword will breach this wall. The victory, if it comes, will plainly not be yours. Could you have kept marching on day three, when nothing had happened, when the men on the wall were jeering, when every instinct in you said this is not how cities fall?

That is the heart of Jericho. God hands His people a battle plan that makes no military sense at all, precisely so that when the walls come down no one can mistake whose victory it is. 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days' (Hebrews 11:30). The walls did not fall because Israel was strong or clever. They fell because God said they would, and Israel believed Him enough to keep marching. Jericho is a sermon in stone about a truth we are slow to learn: the Lord saves, and He saves in His own way, on His own terms, so that the glory is unmistakably His.

And we cannot walk around these walls without facing the harder thing the chapter holds. Jericho was not merely conquered; it was devoted to destruction. This is a sobering text, and we will not rush past it. But notice where the story plants its first flag of mercy: 'only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house' (Joshua 6:17). Even in an act of judgment, God has a believing outsider tucked safely inside a scarlet-corded house. As we walk through Joshua 6, we will hold together two things the chapter refuses to let us separate: the perfect justice of a holy God against entrenched evil, and the patient, reaching grace that spares everyone who will trust Him. Do not watch from a safe distance. March, and let God teach you what kind of God He is.

Group Discussion: God gave Israel a battle plan, marching, trumpets, and a shout, that guaranteed they could take no credit for the victory. Why do you think the Lord so often works in ways that make it impossible for us to claim the win as our own?

Personal Reflection: Where in your life right now is God asking you to keep obeying a command that does not seem to be 'working' yet? What would it look like to keep marching in faith this week?

Read Joshua 6:1-27

Study Questions

1. The Lord tells Joshua, 'See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof' (Joshua 6:2), before a single wall has fallen. Look carefully at how the victory is described all through this chapter. Who is doing the real fighting, and what does it teach us about where true deliverance comes from (compare Psalm 44:3 and Zechariah 4:6)?
2. Israel was commanded to march around a fortified city in silence for six days while nothing visibly changed, trusting that God would act in His own time. Where in your own walk are you tempted to give up on obedience because it does not yet seem to be accomplishing anything?
3. The instructions God gives are deliberately strange: march, carry trumpets, circle the city, wait for the seventh day, and shout (Joshua 6:3-5). Why would God attach His promise of victory to commands that look so foolish by human reckoning, and what does this reveal about the nature of obedient faith (compare 1 Corinthians 1:27-29)?
4. Hebrews 11:30 says, 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.' Think of a 'wall' in your life that has not yielded to your own effort or strength. What would it mean to face it the way Israel faced Jericho, trusting God's way rather than your own might?

5. When the people finally shouted, 'the wall fell down flat' (Joshua 6:20), and the credit could go to no one but the Lord. Why is it so important, both for Israel and for us, that the glory for this victory belongs entirely to God and not to human power or cleverness (compare Deuteronomy 8:17-18)?
6. Israel had to obey before they saw any result, marching six full days with no visible change, then circling seven times on the seventh day before the shout. When has God asked you to obey fully before He showed you the outcome, and what did you learn about Him in the waiting?
7. In the middle of a city marked for destruction, God preserves Rahab and her whole household because she believed and acted on that faith (Joshua 6:17, 22-25). What does this single thread of mercy, woven right through an act of judgment, reveal about the heart of God toward anyone who will turn and trust Him?
8. Rahab, once an outsider in every way, ends the chapter dwelling 'in Israel even unto this day' (Joshua 6:25), brought in by faith. Is there a place in your life where you have felt like an outsider, too far gone or too unworthy to belong? How does Rahab's rescue speak to that?
9. The conquest of Jericho is presented as God's direct, unrepeatable act of covenant judgment on the entrenched wickedness of the Canaanite nations, carried out at a specific moment in redemptive history (Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24-25; Deuteronomy 9:4-5). How do we hold together God's perfect justice against deep-seated evil and His patient grace, and why is this account never a license for human violence or 'holy war' today, given that the Christian's true warfare is spiritual and fought with the gospel (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18)?

10. Look back across the whole of Joshua 6, from the first silent march to the walls lying flat and Rahab safe inside the camp. Name one specific way the Lord is using this chapter to form Christ in you. What is He asking you to believe about who He is, and what is He asking you to do in response, this week?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Hebrews 11:30, the walls of Jericho fell by faith after the people compassed them seven days; Genesis 15:16, God told Abraham the conquest would wait until the iniquity of the Amorites was full, showing His patience before judgment; Leviticus 18:24–25, the land itself is said to vomit out its inhabitants because of the gross defilement of the Canaanite nations; Deuteronomy 9:4–5, Israel is warned that they receive the land not for their own righteousness but because of the wickedness of these nations and God's promise to the fathers; 2 Corinthians 10:3–5, the Christian's warfare is not carnal but spiritual, pulling down strongholds with the weapons of God.

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