

## **Tear Down that Wall**

(Joshua 6)

3/15/17; Wed PM Pine Grove

### **Introduction**

I hate to burst most people's bubbles but the hymns and even the worship songs we sing are not the best place to get your theology...

Many people sing and remember Christian songs and often put them on the same level as the Bible...

But hymns, although they can be great sources of truth, are the product of men and women and that means that they can be wrong...

The great Christmas hymn away in a manger talks about the baby Jesus and says this in the second verse..

The cattle are lowing  
The poor baby wakes  
But little Lord Jesus  
No crying he makes.

I mean that sounds good to think that baby Jesus didn't cry when he woke up or didn't cry ever, but no one knows that to be the case...

In fact, I think the fact that baby Jesus cried often...

It would make him not fully human to see him a baby that doesn't cry...

Anyway, however you feel about is up to you...

The Bible doesn't say either say...

The same can be said about another song we sing as kids...

***Joshua fought the battle of Jericho,  
Jericho, Jericho,  
Joshua fought the battle of Jericho,  
And the walls came tumbling down***

Now, look that's a fine song, and I sing it and have no problem with others singing it...

But its not the best way to view the battle of Jericho...

In fact, Joshua didn't fight very much at all, and he sure wasn't the cause of the walls falling down...

Who fought the battle of Jericho?

Well, God did...

He fought that battle for Joshua...

Joshua was there.

Joshua was obedient.

But God fought the battle of Jericho and the walls came tumbling down...

Now, we get to see how God fought this battle tonight in Joshua 6...

And though it is a familiar story, it still is one of the strangest stories in the Bible when look at it..

It is simply a miracle of God on the behalf of Israel...

WE lose sight of that because we know it so well...

And the point of the story is not to point to the greatness of Joshua but to the greatness of God...

We sometimes miss that as kids and even as adults and especially as we sing the song about Joshua...

So, let's look at Joshua 6 with an eye to the glory of God in this chapter...

We have learned who Joshua is, but let us learn more about the God of Joshua tonight...

I will give us three characteristics of God to see in Joshua 6....

The first is found in verses 1-5....

### **I. The Command of God is Clear (1-5)**

Let's look at verses 1-5 to get started tonight...

***1 Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in.***

For a couple weeks now, the story of the book of Joshua has been on the walled city of Jericho...

You can see from this map where Jericho was located...

It was on the western side of the Jordan River about 7 miles from where Israel crossed over it on dry land...

The reason this city is the focus of the opening chapters of the Joshua is that it is the first obstacle that lies in the path of Israel in their conquest of the land...

If you have ever taken part in a nerve wracking assignment, we all know that the first one is the hardest one...

If you are one the first tee box ready to play a round of gold, that first shot is the hardest..

If you standing before people giving a speech, that first sentence is the hardest...

It is always hardest to simply get started on a hard task...

The same was true for Israel, they were going to take the land, but the first opponent was the hardest to fight...

Now think about this also..

Israel is not skilled in warfare..

They haven't been a nation of warriors or conquerors...

They have been wandering in the desert wilderness for 40 years...

This is their first rodeo, so to speak...

This is their first time riding the bike...

So, the focus of the first chapters is on the elephant in the room, and that is the city of Jericho and the people who live within its walls...

Yes, their hearts are melting within them at the approaching Israelites...

Yes, they lack courage...

But Israel is probably early nervous...

It's the old phrase....

Never let hem see you sweat, but I am sure both sides are sweating...

And so we have our eyes on Jericho, and we are reminded in verse 1 that it is a well-protected city..

It was tightly shut and no one went out and no one came in...

It was a city on lock down..

Now, it was not an exceedingly large walled city..

Archaeologists estimate that the walls only encircled about 8 1/2 acres and was home to 1200 or so people...

Though that number was larger at this time due to people in outlying villages running for the safety of the walls with Israel approaching...

And the point of verse 1 is that the city was well protected and well guarded and well secure as Israel approached...

Now if remember from last week, we left off with Joshua in the presence of the commander of the Lord's Host...

I told you it is best to see this an old testament appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ..

He had his sword drawn, and he told Joshua to take off this sandals since the ground had been made holy by his presence...

And so Joshua does, and then I think verse 2 resumes their conversation that started at the end of chapter 6...

So, let's look at verse 2...

***2 The Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors. 3 You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. 4 Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when***

*you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down [a]flat, and the people will go up every man [b]straight ahead.”*

Though most of you know this story, let's review the Lord's instructions to Joshua...

First, God assures Joshua of victory in verse 2...

Jericho was going to be given into the hands of Joshua...

Not only would the city fall to him, the king and its military would fall to Israel as well..

And then the Lord commands Joshua how to do it in a most unusual way...

The men of war, who would be the soldiers of Jericho were to march around the city one time a day for 6 days...

Leading the line of soldiers would be priests and armed men carrying the ark of the covenant...

Then on the 7th day the same group of soldiers and priests will march around the city 7 times, and the priest will blow the trumpets...

Then the people were to shout, and the wall of the city would fall down flat...

And the men of Israel would then go straight away into the city...

Now, couple notes to make here...

1) This isn't normal warfare.

Walls falling down by shouting at them isn't normal.

Yet, God isn't always interested in normal warfare...

Sometimes, God acts in a supernatural way..

Sometimes, he parts the Red Sea or the Jordan River to accomplish his will...

Sometimes, he causes walls to fall down..

And what is the purpose of God acting in a supernatural way?

To glorify Himself by displaying his power.

The people of Jericho had heard about the Lord, but now they were going to see that power displayed..

And look, the power of the Lord is a great evangelistic tool...

Though the people of the land had rejected Israel's God, they would not longer be able to deny his power...

So, this is the plan of God...

And here is what we need to see..

God laid out the commands for Israel with clarity.

Here is what you are to do, and here is how you are to do it...

And please note, Joshua didn't even blink when God laid out what to do...

Take the ark and let the priests carry it around the city?

Ok, check.

Take the rest of the soldiers and let them fall in behind the priests and the ark and them walk once a day for six days?

Ok, check.

Then blow our trumpets followed by a shout?

Ok, check.

I love clear instructions and God loves unquestioned obedience to his clear commands.

But the second characteristic we see about God in Joshua 6 is found in verses 6-21...

## **II. The Patience of the Lord is Convicting (6-21)**

Let's read verse 6...

***6 So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord." 7 Then [c]he said to the people, "Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the Lord." 8 And it was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them.***

Don't you love this...

God tells Joshua what to do and the Joshua tells the priests and the people what to do...

And then notice the first few words of verse 8...

***8 And it was so...***

God commands it. I obey.

Verse 9...

***9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets.***

***10 But Joshua commanded the people, saying, “You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout!”***

***11 So he had the ark of the Lord [d]taken around the city, circling it once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp. 12 Now***

***Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. 13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them and the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord, while they continued to blow the trumpets.***

***14 Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days.***

So, the people do exactly as Joshua and the Lord command.

For 6 days, they march around the city once a day and notice that Joshua command them to march in silence..

They aren’t to shout until Joshua commands them to shout...

And the point of silence is to demonstrate the the victory is not due to human strength but by the power of the Lord...

So the 6 days Israel marched around the city in silence...

Now the distance around the walls was probably only a half mile march...

So, they marched assembled and marched for 6 days, and please don't lose the faith required to do that...

I am sure there was humbling by day 2 and even beyond, yet they obeyed the Lord even when they couldn't understand his plan...

But I want to make another point here that can't be lost...

We see these OT battles and we sometimes are bothered by the Lord's destruction of these people..

Whole families killed, but think about this...

God had given them warning that he was coming..

The stories about the Lord's doing had already made it to Jericho...

Remember, Rahab was saved because she heard of the God of Israel...

And all the people in the walls of Jericho had that same info and they like Rahab could have turned to the Lord...

But then get this...

God didn't just show up and wipe out Jericho in the same day...

His reputation came first...

Then his people arrived and they didn't whip out their swords right away...

Instead, God sent them around the city for 6 days as a warning of coming destruction, so when day 7 arrives, this isn't a mean God who is out to kill and steal and destroy...

He is a God who has given more than enough time to turn in repentance and trust in Him..

Destruction will come, but it will only after a period of grace and mercy where people had the opportunity to trust in the Lord..

This remind you of anything?

Has a lot of similarities to the tribulation period...

God is coming to judge the world, but before his judgment comes, there is 7 years of warning and opportunity to repent and trust in Him...

We sometimes are ashamed of the God of the OT thinking he was unjust and unkind and seeking to destroy, but that is not the case...

The gracious God of the NT is the same gracious God of the OT...

He is just, but his mercy comes before his judgment...

And we should marvel at the patience of the Lord..

Not only marvel at it but try to imitate the Lord's patience...

We are so quick to judge, but so slow to show patience...

Thankfully, we serve a God who shows incredible patience and is slow to judge...

Make Him make us more like Him..

So, Jericho is warned as they watch Israel march in silence for 6 days around the city...

But day 7 arrives and God can no longer remain silent..

Verse 15.

*15 Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times. 16 At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city. 17 The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the Lord; only Rahab the harlot [e]and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not [f]covet them and take some of the things under the ban, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it. 19 But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord." 20 So the people shouted, and [g]priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down [h]flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight [i]ahead, and they took the city. 21 They [j]utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and*

***ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.***

When day 7 arrives, Israel does just as the Lord commanded and they march 7 times around the city of Jericho...

They then blow their trumpets and shout and the walls fall down..

This miracle allows entry into the city, but there was a ban on taking anything from the city and bringing it back to the camp of Israel.

The entire city and its inhabitants and its possessions were to be destroyed except the silver, gold, bronze, and iron...

Such a ban prevented the people of Israel from bringing idols back to Israel...

It prevented them from being filled with greed and wanting to conquer towns to increase their wealth...

The ban was a way to keep Israel focused on the task at hand and prevent them from seeing the conquest of the land as a reason to be prideful in their own abilities and accomplishments..

Unfortunately, not everyone obeyed the ban.

We will find out about that next week, but it wasn't because they didn't know about it.

Joshua clearly told them about it before they entered the city..

So, in verses 20-21, the trumpets blow, the people shout and the walls fall...

And Israel enters the city and destroys everyone and everything in it...

But please don't forget.

It wasn't that God didn't warn the people beforehand...

It wasn't that God wasn't patient with them...

It wasn't that God had not shown them mercy...

He had done all of these things, but for many, God's patience ends and his judgment begins...

And that is exactly what we see here..

Yet, in God's justice, we also find mercy...

Just like in the tribulation period, we find salvation...

In the destruction of Jericho, we find the rescue of God's people...

Verses 22-27 show us the 3rd characteristic of God in chapter 6...

### **III. The Salvation of the Lord is Certain (22-27)**

Let's read beginning in verse 22..

*22 Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the harlot's house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her." 23 So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all she had; they also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel. 24 They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the [k]house of the Lord. 25 However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua [l]spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

The harlot turned believer in the Lord named Rahab comes back up in the book of Joshua...

In chapter 2, she hid the Jewish spies who came to scope out the land...

As a reward for her help, the spies told her that she and everyone in her house would be saved as long as she put a scarlet cord out of her window when Israel invaded the city...

Well, we know that her house was attached to the wall of the city according to Joshua 2:15..

So for centuries, the question was how did her house not fall and everyone in it die when Israel...

It was question that I also had and couldn't answer when someone asked me that question a few weeks ago...

Well, get this...

In 1907, Ernest Sellin and Carl Watzinger began archaeological work near the ruins of the city of Jericho...

And guess what they discovered?

That a section of the walls on the northern side of the city did not fall...

And furthermore, there were remains of houses that were built against that wall...

And not only that, the north walls were the closest to the hills were Rahab told the spies to go hide for 3 days while the king's men searched for them...

So, it is not only possible that Rahab's house didn't fall, archeology has revealed that the wall next to her house didn't fall either...

Which allowed the soldiers to go into her home, rescue her family and relatives and bring them safely into the camp of Israel before the city was set on fire...

Rahab and her family were rescued before destruction came to the city...

Her faith in God led to her rescue and saved her before destruction came...

And she lived with Israel and not only lived there but became part of the royal family tree of Christ...

That is the power of God to save.

He can cause an entire wall to fall except for one small section that contained Rahab's house so that he could rescue Rahab and her family...

Let me tell you something...

Who God saved, he goes to great lengths to protect...

The world around you can fall apart, but your world he can hold together by the power of his might due to the love he has for His people in His heart.

The Lord's salvation is certain in a world of uncertainty...

Two final verses to read...

Verse 26...

***26 Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates." 27 So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.***

It seems that God did want the city rebuilt after its destruction...

Probably to serve as a memorial like the rocks in the Jordan river and the rocks on the west bank of the Jordan river...

The city of Jericho would be a memorial to the power of God to destroy a city that does not honor Him and obey him with their lives..

It would be a reminder to Israel that they could conquer nothing on their own apart from the help of the Lord...

And Joshua made the men of Israel take an oath to not rebuild the city unless they were willing to give us their firstborn and their youngest son as payment...

Unfortunately, people don't always take God at their word and 1 Kings 16:34 is proof.

***34 In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.***

So, Jericho was rebuilt at a high cost and we see it mentioned in other parts of the Scripture even after its destruction here...

So, Joshua and his men have made it through step 1 in taking the land for Israel...

However, not every battle is going to be as easy as we will see next week..

For now, let me make a few summary comments on Joshua 6...

## **Conclusion**

### ***#1 - We obey when we dont understand.***

I can't help but see the faces of Israel's men when Joshua said, "We are going to walk around the city for 6 days. And then on day 7, we are going to blow our trumpets and horns and shout, and the walls will fall down before us."

There had to have been some laughter and unbelief and even anger...

There are times when God's commands are hard to trust...

You lose a child to cancer and you read that "God works everything out for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose."

Your face would probably have the same look of unbelief as the soldiers around Jericho..

You lose a job and your read, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight."

Your face would probably twist in all the same directions that Israel warriors did when they heard to

march and then shout and then watch the walls  
fall...

Look, we aren't called to understand it all, but are  
called to obey it all...

Obedience is what takes us through when we don't  
know what road we are on...

When God says shout and the walls will fall, we  
shout...

When God says believe and I will make a way for  
you, we believe and God makes a way..

Obey, even when you don't understand...

## ***#2 - We cant trust in the best walls of protection.***

We make a mistake wen we see ourselves in the text  
as only the people of Israel...

There is much to be learned from the people of Jeri-  
cho here as we see them retreat into their city and  
hide behind the wall they built...

Just when your think you are safe in this world, you  
realize your aren't...

If there is one thing people should understand in  
2017, it is this...

There are no safe places in the world today...

So many people think they are safe in their lives...

So many people take so many precautions to guard their lives...

And I not saying we should live recklessly, but I am saying this...

There is no security in this world...

The best of walls can fall..

This world is more dangerous today than ever...

Evil comes to school buildings in 2017...

It comes to workpalces...

It comes to shopping malls...

It comes everywhere...

And just when you feel safe from the world, you get sick...

This world is not secure and neither are you...

That's why we run to Christ...

And though he doesn't always save us from the evils of the world..

He saves us from the evil one and an eternity of evil people....

The people of Jericho watched their walls fall down and their mouths and hearts probably sank...

Only Rahab and her home was secure because Rahab hadn't placed her trust in a wall but in the Lord...

May we all be just as wise.

Let us pray.