

20210808 Joshua 5:13-15 The Battle is the Lord's – Spend Time with Him to Get on His Side!



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The Book of Joshua is all about Canaan living. That means living a victorious Christian life. Throughout this series we've learned two basic principles. God doesn't leave us where He finds us, and God wants us to be victors and not victims. This morning we'll learn that the battle is His. We need to spend time with Him to learn His plan and to follow it.

God found the Children of Israel in a place of slavery and bondage, and He brought them out of that slavery to take them into the Promised Land. In a similar way, He takes each of us out of the bondage of self and sin to take us to a place of freedom in Christ. Just like Israel was promised a physical inheritance, every believer is promised a spiritual inheritance. This was the primary focus of what we studied in our deep dive into the Book of Ephesians. Israel was given the physical inheritance of the land, but they never received or stepped foot on the land until Joshua chose to believe. God also wants to take us out of sin and into victory. He has given us a spiritual inheritance. It is ours to claim it.

Principle number two is that God doesn't want us to be victims but victors. The first generation that left Egypt had a victim mentality instead of a victor mentality. You'll remember that they sent spies into the land who came back with a report of difficulties and the impossible. Faith looks for the possible. Fear is paralyzed by the seeming impossible. Remember the definition that we heard. (FEAR = false evidence appearing real.) The Bible tells us that out of their fear of the obstacles to overcome in the land, they saw themselves as "grasshoppers," and so their enemies also saw them. In fear and unbelief they hunkered down in Kadesh-Barnea, fearful of the "giants" in the land. They focused on the city walls and the obstacles which kept them from claiming their inheritance. In a similar way, too many believers are victims of fear, temptation, failure, defeat, or something else, and they never receive what God intends for them. God intends for us to live as victors, not victims.

That first generation grew old and never made it to the land, but then Joshua was called by God to the task in place of Moses. He came to the Promised Land prepared to take it. Guess what had changed in the land? Absolutely NOTHING had changed in the land. There were still city walls, giants, and problems to overcome. The only thing that had changed was their mindset. Joshua was determined to be a victor instead of a victim. He was content to believe and to act on that belief. In a similar way, we each have to make a conscious decision as to whether we're going to be victims or victors. We studied last week that as they came into the land, the manna stopped, and they began to eat the fruit of the land. Then the first thing that happened was that Joshua stood there and observed Jericho. I am sure his first thoughts were "how in the world am I going to overcome this heavily fortified city?" He would soon come to see that the battle was the Lord's. It was not his. There are Jerichos in each of our lives. Jerichos are those obstacles and hurdles that come and stand between us and where God wants us to be. This morning I want each of you to think about what is standing between you and God.

The Book of Joshua is about battles, conflicts, troubles, and all kinds of enemies, but it is also about overcoming. In this great book, we watch as the Children of Israel lay hold of the promises of God and walk from the wilderness into the Promised Land. There are so many Wilderness Christians. They're always talking about how hard life is and how impossible things are. These are the believers who have not learned to walk day by day by faith. When you approach life, and walk through it, hanging on to the promises of God, you have taken hold of your inheritance. You have reached Canaan. You are in possession of the Promised Land that God intends for you. You still have your battles, but the victorious Christian learns and knows that the battle is the Lord's. Please turn in your Bibles to Joshua chapter five verse 13.

¹³ Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, he raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, [aggressive posture] and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" [Who's side are you on!?] ¹⁴ He said, "No; rather I have come now as captain of the army of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" ¹⁵ And the captain of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. (NASB, authors parenthetical inserts).

Let us pray.

This account of Joshua overcoming Jericho gives us clues as to how we must live. You know, after you're saved the first thing you run into is "Jericho." "Jericho" is the walls,

the enemies, the problems, and the challenges that come during our journey. These challenges will come, but the victor understands that the battle belongs to the Lord. When the Lord fights our battles, the walls that stand against you and God WILL FALL DOWN. Let's now look at the first part of chapter six.

6 Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. ² And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. (Joshua 6:1-2, NJKV).

God then tells Joshua, "I've given Jericho to you. I've given you all of it! I've given you the city, it's king, and its warriors. Next week we will see God telling Joshua HOW HE would put Jericho into their hands.

As a little review, you might remember from last Sunday that after the children of Israel passed through the Jordan on dry ground, Joshua set up a camp in a place called Gilgal, with Jericho being in the close distance. Joshua could see Jericho, and it was no more than two miles away. It was there that God told Joshua to circumcise all of that generation that had not been circumcised in the wilderness. We talked last week about how we also pass through our own insurmountable "Jordans," and afterwards God brings us to a point of refreshment and renewal. Now, they had to go THROUGH Jericho before they could begin to experience the Promised Land. As I mentioned just a minute ago, all of us have a "Jericho" that stands between us and the Promised Land that God desires for us. We go through a time of consecration and refreshment, but then we need to spend time in worship, listening to and spending time with the "Captain of the Lord's Armies." We'll hear in a minute just what that means.

Your Jerichos are the strongholds that get between you and God's best for your life. We have Canaan Land to claim, but we must get through Jericho. We will only have victory when we overcome the strongholds in our lives. So, how do we overcome these strongholds? The Apostle Paul says, *"⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."* (2 Corinthians 10:4-6, NKJV).

God says that you and I will win this battle with specific spiritual weapons He has provided to us (see Ephesians 6). This is the key to taking down Jericho in our lives. Strongholds arise when your flesh doesn't want you to live in victory. Strongholds are present when the world desires to steal your joy and loyalty to the Lord Jesus. Strongholds are present when Satan tempts you to give up on God and say you're done, and that you no longer believe. God says you're not going to win this battle with bows

and arrows, but rather the spiritual weapons you are equipped with as believers. Let's go back now and look at how Joshua prepared himself to have victory over Jericho. Take a minute and go back and read the text beginning at verse 13.

Who is this mystery person? The text tells us that Joshua saw him with sword drawn in his hand. He was aggressive. I am sure Joshua went over to him with his own sword drawn and he said, "WHO'S SIDE ARE YOU ON?"

It is important to realize who this "Captain of the Lord's Army" is. This is an appearance of Jesus to Joshua. We call this a Christophany. Joshua saw him standing out there with a sword and approached Him to understand more. There's something here that gives away His identity. At first we might think it is an angel or some other kind of being. But notice that Joshua fell on his face and worshipped, and the being received the worship. This wasn't an angel. In scripture, angels always rebuke worship (see Colossians 2:18 and Revelation 22:8-9). So, if this were an angel it would have told Joshua to stop. This is what theologians call a Christophany. That means it is an appearance of Jesus to man. This is the Lord God Himself appearing in human form.

Then Joshua asked him, "Who are you fighting for?" Are you for us or for our enemies? The Captain answers in a really odd way. He just says "No." He's obviously not on either side, but He is there as "Captain of the Lord's Armies." God wasn't there to take sides. God doesn't take sides. He was there to TAKE OVER! What a great day in your life it will be when you realize that you're not in charge, and you allow Jesus to take over. So let me ask you this morning, "Whose side are you on this morning?" Are you just praying and then asking God to get on board with you; asking Him to get on your side? Or, are you instead spending time in prayer to understand what He wants and then following Him?

Joshua had to take God's side at that moment not only against his enemies, but against himself. Take God's side against your own unbelief, your anger, or whatever else is in the way. Look at Joshua's words that are pure sweet surrender. Why do we keep resisting God? If we know that He knows what's best for our lives then why do we want to keep fighting Him instead of falling before Him. Joshua just gave up! Verse 14 of the text tells us, "*And Joshua fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down, and said to him, 'What has my lord to say to his servant?'*" People, we need to give up our plans, our dreams, and our wants to Him. GIVE UP! We need to fall on our faces and say, "Lord, what do you have to say to me?" Sometimes I just fall by my bed and give up. The best thing I can do is get out of the way and let God lead. Let's stop resisting him.

It was in that moment that Joshua literally had a “come to Jesus meeting.” We each need to have a “come to Jesus meeting” when we realize that He is the Captain of the Armies of the Lord. Realize that He is the captain of your faith. Before one foot moved, Joshua had a divine appointment with God. If you want to be everything you’re supposed to be, you’re going to have to have some divine appointments in your life. The people couldn’t get it alone. Joshua couldn’t get it alone, and YOU AND I can’t get it alone. We’ve got to have some divine appointments in our lives.

This Captain of the Lord’s Armies is still fighting forces of evil in the universe. We’re unaware of these battles but they go on and on. You might say, Faber, this all sounds a little too much like some sort of super-hero fantasy. Listen to what scripture tells us.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12, NASB).

We see the results of these battles in the world. This is what is behind everything in the world that is twisted and perverted. We think people are the problem, but they are not. This is what is behind human trafficking and sexual perversion. It is at the root of broken marriages and squabbles among ourselves. It is what is behind forces that are pushing the world to chaos. Spritual forces are what is behind disunity in the church. It is what is behind all of the disinformation. There are two things causing all of this: (1) evil forces we cannot see, and (2) our own flesh which is fallen and desirous to do evil. Let me clarify what I mean by the flesh. I am not just talking about this body that I am in. It is neutral. I am talking about my own soul which is fallen and inclined toward self and the things that are contrary to God.

Praise God that HE is on the throne. Praise God that He is able and that He does battle and fights for you and me. In Ephesians chapter one verse 22 we read, *“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,” (NKJV).* All things are under Jesus’ feet. That doesn’t say God *will* do this. It says that He already DID it. Jericho has ALREADY been given to us. Let us take it.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.