



## Lessons from Jericho

(Joshua 6:1–21)

The Bible makes clear how and why the walls of Jericho fell. Joshua Chapter 6 delivers a very simple message: the great city of Jericho was conquered by God in a most unusual way. God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts

are not our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8). The writer of Hebrews makes clear that the faith of the people was instrumental in God's destruction of the walls. We are told, <sup>30</sup> *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after the Israelites had marched around them for seven days.* <sup>31</sup> *By faith the prostitute Rahab did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. (Hebrews 11:30-31, NASB).*

This morning we will begin and end with that thought.

I wanted to finish up with some very simple observations about the actual battle of Jericho. In our message last Sunday I talked about how the battle is the Lord's. I talked about all of the symbolic Jerichos that are in our lives. You are now familiar with the symbolism. We are saved from Egypt, a life of lostness and sin. We then often wander in the desert, trying to find our way to the Promised Land. The Promised Land is that place we make it to when we fully inherit the spiritual promises that God gives to each and every believer. Some however, never lay claim to that inheritance. It is a like a person who is named as a beneficiary in a will, but never go to receive what was given to them. Instead, they live lives in Christ, but apart from the life of victory that He intends for every believer.

We looked at the stages that the Israelites went through to reach the Promised Land, which in their case, involved passing through Jericho. Last Sunday we talked about how Jericho can be symbolic of the strongholds that we come against in our own lives. Jesus told us that He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Jerichos get in our way of reaching that Promised Land. Jericho can be our own hurts, habits, or hangups that we never get over. It can be self-doubt, misery, or loneliness. Last Sunday we watched as Joshua had a divine appointment before going in to take the city.

The preparation for confronting those obstacles and strongholds is spending time with the Lord.

When Joshua had his encounter with the Captain of the Lord's Armies, he fell on his face and worshipped. He realized that he was in the presence of One much greater than himself, and, he said, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" The Captain told him to take off his shoes because he was on holy ground. This reminds us too that we are to fall before God, unable to overcome our strongholds on our own, asking Him to do a work to remove the strongholds in our lives (2 Cor. 10:4). Turn with me now to Joshua chapter six as we make a few more observations about the battle of Jericho. (I'm going to skip some of the chapter because it is very repetitive.) Open your bibles now and let's read.

*6 Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. <sup>3</sup> You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. <sup>4</sup> And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."*

*<sup>6</sup> Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." <sup>7</sup> And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."*

*.....<sup>10</sup> Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." <sup>11</sup> So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp. [verses 12, 13, and 14 tell us they did this for 6 days]*

*<sup>15</sup> But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. <sup>16</sup> And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! <sup>17</sup> Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. <sup>18</sup> And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and*

*make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. <sup>19</sup> But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.” (Joshua 6:1-7, 10-11, 15-19, NKJV).*

Verses 20-25 then tell us that the walls came down, and the army moved into the city doing the messy work of warfare. They spared Rahab and her family. They also gathered up the precious metals to put in the treasury of the Lord. After this was done, Joshua cursed the city so that it should not be rebuilt.

Let us pray.

**1 God’s instructions sometimes make no human sense, but we are to obey regardless of whether we understand them or not (vv. 1–5) .**

The Lord did not leave it to Joshua to find a way to conquer Jericho. Rather he gave very detailed and specific instructions. The text tells us that armed men were to go out in front with seven priests bearing seven trumpets (with priests bearing the ark, the people of Israel following) for seven days with the last day being done seven times. God told Joshua at the end of this procedure, the seven priests were to blow their trumpets, and all the people were to shout. God promised to bless this seemingly absurd strategy by causing the wall of Jericho to fall (v. 5).

Why did God demand this particular approach? God’s instruction of conquest would show the people they had nothing to do with the fall of the walls of Jericho. This was a free gift (like grace) to them.

The instructions were detailed, but they seemed purposeless. Seven priests were to carry seven trumpets, and were to walk around the city seven days. God told them that on the seventh day, they were to walk around the city seven times. Sandy reminded me this week that many of the things God asks us to do seem silly or purposeless. Take for example, the Ten Commandments. Remember, we don’t keep these to be saved but to live a life according to certain basic rules. We don’t lie, even though it might seem some times that a “little white lie” can help. We don’t take the tiniest thing that is not ours because it is wrong to do so. We purposefully do not covet what others have. It will make us bitter and will affect our relationship with them. We are not even asked to love our parents, but we are asked to “honor” them. I’ve watched us in our little church over these past five years. Some of you will come to me telling me that you’re very bothered that old “so and so” does this or that. I always remind you, “We’re not commanded to like each other. We are commanded to love one another.” These commands might sound silly like circling a city and blowing a trumpet, but God’s ways are not our ways.

I want to make a brief comment about these four repetitions of seven in our Jericho account. Seven is God’s number of perfection. There were seven days in the creation

account. The Bible mentions the number seven more than any other number. I did a google and found seven or sevenfold is used 860 times in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> The seventh day was holy. The seventh month was sacred. Seven signifies perfection and four signifies completion. In the account of the fall of Jericho, there are four things going on seven times. Four is God's number of completion.<sup>2</sup> So what is happening at Jericho is a "perfect completion" of God's plan for His people.

## **2 The people went along in obedience with the plan in spite of it seeming like utter nonsense (vv. 6–19).**

This really piggy backs onto what was just said in the paragraph above, but it is important to remember that it is one thing to "know the will of God," but it is another thing "to obey it." Although the whole plan made zero sense in human terms, nothing in the text hints that the people questioned it or complained about it. This generation had learned from watching the grumbling, unbelieving generation that had preceded them.

The obedience of the people was due to their faith in the word of God. Faith is believing that which God tells us even when it might seem ludicrous to do so. For example, you know that forgiveness never seems like a good or logical idea when you're thinking about giving it. But when you do, it can set you free from bondage. Faith isn't just wildly stepping off into the unknown, rather it is believing that God is sovereign and He'll do what He says He'll do.

## **3 Even when God does His part, there is usually a great deal that is left up to us. The walls fell, but the Israelites had to do their part and invade the city (vv. 20–21).**

God may open the doors for you to have a new job, but YOU HAVE TO DO THE JOB to keep the job. Everything happened just as God promised. On day seven, the Israelites marched around the city seven times. When the marching was completed, Joshua cried, 'Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!' (v. 16). The people shouted 'with a great shout,' and 'the wall fell down flat' (v. 20). God's seemingly odd strategy had worked to perfection! God brought the wall down, but note that the people still had to invade the city with drawn sword and they still had to do combat. God often opens a door, but we have to do the hand-to-hand combat to make the victory complete. The combat can be practical emotional or physical hard work. It also can involve intense spiritual warfare to remove or push through the "Jerichos" in your life.

## **4 It seems that God often uses seemingly ineffective or even odd means to achieve something.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/7.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.betemunah.org/four.html>

I suppose God must delight in using strange methods to achieve great things. He enabled Samson to win a huge victory over the Philistines by swinging and fighting with the jawbone of a donkey. He enabled a small shepherd boy named David to slay a giant named Goliath with a sling shot and a pocket full of small stones. God loves to show up and spoil the expectation with an unexpected provision that leads to an unexpected outcome. Don't try to out think God.

Think of things you've worried about in your own life. You worried and worried over them and figured in your mind the way God would or could deliver you from the disaster. He came into the situation, took over, and things were resolved in a way that you never ever hoped for or expected. Keep in mind, this doesn't mean that it worked out nicely in human terms.

Many of us have heard of people that "lost it all," perhaps in a fire or a bankruptcy, only to discover that they were set free by the loss. I had a good friend in college who got cancer of the thyroid and she said that it changed every other day of her life. Now in her mid-sixties she relishes and delights in each and every day. She has probably truly experienced more "living" in her 65 years of life than others would in 4-5 lifetimes.

Centuries after Jericho fell, God selected an ordinary Jewish girl to bring his Son into this world. This was God Himself born in the flesh. He selected tiny unimportant Bethlehem as the place for him to be born. Later, He entered Jerusalem on the back of a lowly donkey. How strange and unfitting for the King of the Universe. God is the God of the unexpected. His ways are not our ways; God doesn't do the expected. God does what we need when we need it.

In this story, we see demonstrated that faith without works is dead (James 2:26). Victorious living requires more than just the statement, "I believe God." If we truly believe God, and our desire is to obey God, then we must step out in faith. The verse we started with tells us that it was by faith that the walls of Jericho fell. (Hebrews 11:30-31) Joshua and the Israelites carried out the commands of God and conquered Jericho. God gave them victory over an enemy that was trying to keep them out of the Promised Land. The same is true for us. If we have true faith, we are moved to obey God, and He will give us the victory over the enemies that we face throughout life. If you are still back in the desert, it is time to leave it behind and walk into the Promised Land. Why?  
<sup>30</sup> *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after the Israelites had marched around them for seven days.* <sup>31</sup> *By faith the prostitute Rahab did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. (Hebrews 11:30-31, NASB).* –  
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](mailto: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.