

## Joshua 5-6

Good evening and welcome to Calvary Chapel. Would you please turn in your bibles to Joshua chapter 5?

A couple of weeks ago we ended our study in verse 12 of chapter 5, so we're going to pick up in verse 13 and study through all of chapter 6.

The nation has miraculously crossed over the Jordan River. They are now physically in the promised land.

Yet before their conquests begin, God told them to setup 12 memorial stones in Gilgal, which will be their HQ. And after setting up the memorial stones, instead of thrusting forward into battle, God commands this 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to be circumcised. The men had to wait and heal, afterward.

And all the while, through the waiting, the daunting walls of Jericho beckon from the horizon.

Tonight, we see the most unlikely of battle plans, as God calls the nation to continue to walk by faith and do the impossible.

The title of tonight's message is FAITH FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE  
LET'S PRAY

We don't know how long they waited after the circumcision, but what occurs during the waiting is the kernel, the seed of their faith being planted and growing before they even enter battle.

**13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho,** pause here. Joshua is alone in this setting, surely wondering what's the next step. Joshua himself was circumcised-he was part of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation-everyone else though was on the sidelines.

The fortified city of Jericho is looming nearby. Remember, Joshua is a military man, he's looking at their swords compared to this

city-it's like having a rubber band shooter compared to a tank. It was one thing to cross a river unopposed. It was quite another to storm a walled, fortress city full of armed warriors.

...13 that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

I love Joshua's courage-he boldly approaches this mysterious Man with a drawn sword.

Joshua was now the shepherd over God's people, so he has a responsibility to see if this man is a friend or an enemy.

14 So He said, "No, Pause here.

Joshua asks-are you for us our against us, and the mysterious stranger doesn't answer Joshua's question!

but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Who is this mystery man that Joshua is talking to? This is a Christophany, a physical appearance of Jesus before His birth in Bethlehem

Now how do we know that this is Christ, and not just a mighty angel? After all, Michael the archangel is a commander of angels in **Revelation 12:7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,**

So how can we say for certain that this is Jesus and not Michael the archangel? We can see by the stranger's response to Joshua's worship...

15 Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is

holy.” And Joshua did so. This stranger didn’t refuse Joshua’s worship. Throughout the Bible, whenever someone has tried to worship an angel, the angel refuses that worship because only God is to be worshipped. Revelation 22:8 Now I, John, saw and heard<sup>[fn]</sup> these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

9 Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For<sup>[fn]</sup> I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.

Here this stranger accepts Joshua’s worship, and now begins to instruct Joshua.

This is in fact Jesus, appearing to Joshua. Remember Joshua was a great military leader, but now Joshua meets his Commander in Chief. Let’s read verse 15 again

15 Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.

This conversation at the end of Joshua 5 is the secret to the battle of Jericho that’s won in Joshua 6. Here we see that Joshua is prepared for the battle in the quiet place of God’s presence.

How often do we rush into battle without taking time to get alone with God in His presence for Him to instruct us?

Now verse 15 likely sounds familiar, this is the same thing the Lord said to Moses when Moses stood before the burning bush.

Exodus 3:4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!”

And he said, “Here I am.”

5 Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”

The particular area of the ground wasn't something extra special, rather it was holy because both Moses and Joshua stood in the presence of God.

I'd like to ask you a thought-provoking question-Could it be that tonight, you and I are on holy ground?

Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. It's not the church building, or the carpet, or the pulpit that makes church holy, it's the gathering of His people in the presence of God!

Here Jesus appears to Joshua on the eve of their first major battle – up against the seemingly impenetrable walls of Jericho.

What a comfort this must've been to Joshua that the Commander of the Lord's army comes to take responsibility for the military campaign.

Jesus has come to instruct Joshua in the plan to capture Jericho. And Joshua will carry out a plan in the following chapter that is so improbable it could only have been initiated at the direct command of God.

When we're facing battles in our lives, God teaches us how victory is achieved. Zechariah 4:6 So he answered and said to me:

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel:

‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’

Says the LORD of hosts.

## Chapter 6

**1 Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.** Jericho was on full alert because of God's power in delivering the Israelites.

**2 And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have** (already done-past tense) **given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.** Jesus declares that not only the mighty city of Jericho would fall, but so would the king and all the mighty men of valor. It will be a total success. But it would take unusual tactics to achieve victory.

As we look at chapter 6 and its implications on our lives, we need to keep eternity in mind, don't we? Because the ultimate victory each and every person needs is the victory of sin, and to obtain eternal life.

Just as Jesus tells Joshua Jericho is a done deal, we must never forget that Jesus has given eternal life to us! It's a done deal.

He's told us about the inheritance He's already given us. **1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

This is reserved for us. It's already ours! We are victorious!

Our reservation in heaven is secure! He's taken us from our past life and sealed us with His HS. **John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

No matter what obstacles we face, victory has been won, one day we'll be in heaven with our Savior!

Our Lord now lays out the precise plan for Joshua and the people. These aren't normal battle plans, rather simple instructions that demanded Israel's full obedience.

1 Samuel 15:22 So Samuel said:

"Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.

3-5 describe the battle strategy

3 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. 4 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. 5 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." For six days the men of war are to march around the walls of Jericho. On the 7th day they're to march 7 times around the city. At the end of the 7th revolution the priests are to blow 7 trumpets, and all the people are to "shout with a great shout".

This is not your typical West Point plan - or your Pentagon strategy. Can you imagine Joshua meeting with his leaders and telling them the plan!

Obviously, this was something that God could have done without Israel's help at all, but God wanted them to be a part of His work – just as He wants us to be a part of His work today.

6 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.”

Notice, Commander Jesus tells Joshua to break several Levitical laws in this battle plan.

According to the Law of Moses, neither the Ark, nor the priests, went into the battle. At Jericho both led the way.

On the seventh day they were supposed to march seven times around the wall. That far exceeded the limits the Sabbath rules placed on Sabbath Day travel. The nation also fought on the Sabbath Day.

Why the discrepancies? Remember, Jesus is leading the charge! And I believe the point is being made that Jesus is Lord of the sabbath **Luke 6:15 And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”**

7 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.”

Joshua doesn't hesitate to do what the LORD has told him to do. Often, our delays to obey God show that we really don't believe Him.

8-14

8 So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard

came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. 10 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.”

11 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.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. 14 And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. Now the city of Jericho wasn’t incredibly large, but it was incredibly fortified. Based upon archaeological finds, some theologians estimate that it would’ve taken about an hour to circle the city.

Now as the people marched around the walls of Jericho, God was preparing them.

By marching along the wall, silently, God gave the nation a realization of the impossibility of their situation.

**SHOW PIC 1** Imagine what it must’ve been like the first time the Israelites circled the city, the walls must have looked huge.

Jericho consisted of seven acres surrounded by a double wall. Historians tell us Jericho had an outer wall 6 feet thick. Its inner wall was wider, 12 feet. The first wall was 11 feet high. The second wall was 35 feet high, and the wall was tilted at a 35 degree angle. The tilt prohibited anyone from scaling it with ladders.



The walls were such a formidable, imposing structure! **CLOSE**  
**PIC 1**

Imagine your there-the shadow of the city casts long over the people as they march around, and the gates are sealed tight against all invaders. No one goes out, and no one gets in.

Israel faces an impossible situation. **Luke 18:27 But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."**

As each day passed after circling the walls of Jericho, God was also teaching them the importance of patience. **Hebrews 6:11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

God doesn't only desire that we have faith, but He desires each of us to have patience, too.

This is why God doesn't just knock down the walls we face. His purpose is to develop patience in us **James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

As they return home each day after their silent march, they are greeted by a silent remembrance. Remember, the 12 memorial stones of Gilgal are there, shouting out the faithfulness of God.

**15 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.** After 13 passes I'm sure the people had

concluded they could never take this city on their own. How many times has God had to bring us to the same conclusion before He's delivered us?

All of our Jericho's in our lives are taken the same way. By faith. **Hebrews 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.**

Every day they walked around the city and the enemy with their own armed soldiers, with their own swords, and God said wait.

The bible doesn't tell us not to be practical. The bible gives us infinite practicality, how to take care of our spouses, how to be a parent, how to be an employee, how to be a leader.

The Bible is filled with detailed instruction about our character and how we're to live.

But there are other things in our lives where God asks us to trust Him and walk by faith.

Walking by faith is often times God weaning us from trusting ourselves and our strength. He loves us so much He will allow us to encounter strongholds, so that we will trust in Him.

Sadly, we live in church times today where lots of churches emphasize psychobabble, techno lights, smoke machines and the like.

But that's not how the church is built, or Christians strengthened. It's built by faith.

And how is faith built?

**Rom 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

When we are facing our Jericho's, we must never forget that God works in ways that confound the mind, so that He gets the glory.

1 Corinthians 1 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31 that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”[fn]

As you walk by faith around your Jericho, remember every day the faithfulness of God at your Gilgal.

16-20

16 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! 17 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. 18 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. 19 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.”

20 So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. How did the walls of Jericho

physically fall when people shouted? I don't know, but they did when the people had enough faith to obey God's instructions. The key to victory was their faith.

And guys, sometimes God's instructions to us are just as crazy sounding to our ears as His battle plan was to Joshua.

Think about the instructions Jesus gives us for our spiritual victories in this life He's given us.

Jesus said we gain when we lose - we get when we give - we live when we die - we become great when we serve - we end up first when we're willing to be last – we are most honorable when we're mocked - we speak loudest when we remain silent - we become strongest when we admit our weakness. These defy logic and every instinct of our flesh!

Here's the challenge to following Jesus...is our faith in ourselves, or is our faith in Christ?

Jericho's walls falling flat show us how victories are won in the Christian life! Faith and unwavering obedience to the commands of Jesus...

How does joy come from sacrifice? I can't fully explain, but it does!

How does abundant life flow from total surrender? I can't fully explain, but it does!

I'm sure following God's battle plan made Israel look foolish. And following Jesus will seem foolish to people around us. But we're not called to impress people around us. We're called to be faithful to our commander, king Jesus.

21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, “Go into the harlot’s house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.” 23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. Rahab saved the lives of the two men Joshua had sent in to spy out the land. Now the Hebrews honor their promise to spare the life of Rahab and her family.

24 But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. The Bible tells us that Rahab ended up marrying a Hebrew named “Salmon”. They had a son named Boaz - who married Ruth – who had a son named Obed – who had a son named Jesse – who had a son named David – who fathered a dynasty that eventually gave rise to the birth of Jesus. Rahab also makes it into the Hall of Faith, **Hebrews 11 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.**

Put yourselves in Rahab’s shoes for a moment. What did she think the first time the Hebrews circled the city?

No doubt during those 7 days of marching, Rahab had looked down on the marching mob below and wondered how she would be rescued.

I wonder if her hands held that scarlet rope, trying to reassure her fluttering heart that her help would come from the Lord in whom she trusted.

Just like the Israelites, Rahab had no idea how she would be rescued, but the Lord delivered her and her family.

26 Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, “Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.” Whoever rebuilt the city of Jericho would pay a steep price. His oldest and youngest son would die. In 1 Kings 16, we read of a man named Hiel who did this. He rebuilt Jericho—but his oldest and youngest son died in the process. **1 Kings 16:34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.**<sup>[fn]</sup>

Modern archeological digs at Jericho have unearthed a large house that had encased in the foundation of its walls and in its gates, jars containing the remains of infant children – apparently sacrificed to Baal. This could’ve actually been the house of Hiel... which would make for an amazing confirmation of the Bible.

Now there is a lot of evidence for the fall of Jericho, I encourage you to go to AIG and read up. Great apologetic tool.

27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

I can’t help but think of that trumpet sounding, and the victory taking place.

And that’s the ultimate deliverance from all of our Jericho’s isn’t it? **1 Thessalonians 4: 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in**

the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.