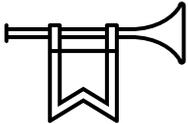




While We Wait...

Joshua #6 • February 8, 2026

Opening



[Steve walks in from the side circling the worship center, blowing on a trumpet. After completing a circuit, he exits where he entered. Then he comes to the stage from the side door]

That was Day 1 of 7.

Welcome to Joshua chapter 6. Welcome... to Jericho!

We're finally at this exciting chapter! The nation of Israel is about to have their first conquest in the Promised Land, and it is just as miraculous and dramatic as their entry across the Jordan River.

You probably know the gist of the story: Joshua and the people are starting to claim the land which God had promised them. He gives them a command: march around the city, blow horns, and the walls will come *a-crumbling* down.

Who doesn't love this story?! It has everything you want in terms of excitement: a **formidable enemy**, a **“good vs evil”** battle, a **dramatic turn** of events, and a **victory** for God! It's good stuff. 😊

When you hear the story, you and I often think of this Bible tale as mostly that story of dramatic, triumphant battle. And it is! At the end of the chapter, there is victory:

- The **first obstacle** to the Promised Land is **defeated!**



“When the people heard the sound of the rams’ horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it.” (Joshua 6:20, NLT)

- Our **sermon series hero**, Joshua, gains **status!**



“So the Lord was with Joshua, and his reputation spread throughout the land.” (Joshua 6:27, NLT)

But as we read the passage today, I want you to step away from your past ideas... and think about Jericho as real life. Do not picture the condensed, made-for-TV (or film) image you have in your mind. The cinematic version of events we imagine is exciting, but the real-world experience changes our focus...because much of what happens in the story of Jericho is a lot of *nothing*.

The experience of Jericho isn't just one of victory; it is one of **patience**.

It challenges us to ask,

What will we do while we wait?

Prayer

Pray with me before we read...

Heavenly Father, this passage in our study of Joshua is from you. It is full of wisdom we need to know, and it guides us to rest and be still before you, finding strength in our quietness. Help us to have the eyes to see and the ears to hear what you will reveal in your Word today! And then help us...as we wait. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

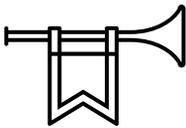
[Blow on a trumpet]

That was Day 2 of 7.

Wait for the Promise

The Passage: Joshua 6:1-5

“Now the gates of Jericho were tightly shut because the people were afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go out or in. But the Lord said to Joshua, “I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors. You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days. Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram’s horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams’ horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town.”” (Joshua 6:1–5, NLT)





The Town

Jericho, as we've mentioned, was a strategically located city, accessible to caravans and merchants traveling the easy path through the Jordan Valley. It sat near clear routes into the mountains on the west, a gateway for those who were planning to reach the hill country or cross to the coast on the Mediterranean Sea.

Jericho was perfectly situated. It was lush, an area surrounded by palm trees. It was an oasis in the hot plains.

And in the middle of that oasis loomed a fortress, the first target for the Israeli military.



Ok, “loomed” might be a stretch. Towns at this time were much smaller than present-day, so it wasn't a huge city by modern standards. The area of Jericho was probably about 10 acres (7.5 football fields, or 4 city blocks). But several thousand people lived in or near there, and they had made an impressive defensive structure for the time, the strongest fortress in the land of Canaan.

Surrounding Jericho, they had built a double wall to protect the citizens. The mound of Jericho was surrounded by a great earthen rampart, or embankment, with a stone retaining wall at its base. The retaining wall was 12–15 feet high. On top of that was a mudbrick wall six feet thick and about 20–26 feet high. At the crest of the embankment was a similar mudbrick wall whose base was roughly 46 feet above the ground level outside the retaining wall (see diagram). This is what loomed high above the Israelites.¹

At a time before air power was an option, this wall was powerful! The only way to gain possession was a brute force frontal attack while those on the wall sat back and held the high ground. It wasn't an easy place to attack!²

The Promise

Yet the promise had come from God. The people of Israel were going to **conquer** Jericho!

¹ [The Walls of Jericho | Answers in Genesis](#)

² What RTS gamers call a “turtle” approach



“And the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor.” (Joshua 6:2, ESV)

As the people went through day one...and two...and day three... they had time to wait...and time to think.... and plenty of time to ponder this truth: **God promised victory!**

No matter their thoughts about the war plan, they had been **promised** that victory was imminent. Now, they had to cling to that belief.

Church, you know what that is like!



You face cultural and spiritual forces daily that look as unassailable as Jericho. These are strongholds that Satan has built...protecting his lies about who we are and what should matter to us. He has big gates based on those lies to protect people from knowing the truth.

- Lies about what brings joy
- Lies about who matters
- Lies about what is true
- Lies about who our enemy really is

Those walls seem invincible. How could we ever overtake the culture that has lost its ties to Jesus? Watch the Super Bowl today and consider the walls of unbridled greed, sexualized entertainment, promotion of self, worship of celebrity, untamed consumerism, rampant polarization, and more. How can we fight that?

But, we **can and will** break those gates down with the promise of the Gospel! That promise is what Jesus told Peter to wait for in Matthew 16. As Peter confesses who Jesus is (“the Messiah”), Jesus responds:



*“...And I tell you that you are Peter, and on **this rock** [Jesus’ identity] I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it...” (Matthew 16:15-19, NIV)*

There is no stronghold of Satan that can stand against Jesus’ assault! There is no message of a fallen culture that will withstand the Messiah! God may allow evil people to gain ground here or there... God might let liars and cheaters prosper for His own purposes... but in the end, *we are promised victory...because HE wins.*



“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31, NIV)

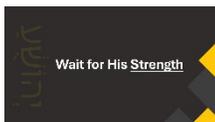
Maybe you’re sitting around waiting for that day, and it is taking a long time! You want victory now. Well, you may have to wait, but while you wait, spend time focusing on His promises!

- **Read them!** Spend time in your Bible so you know what promises are coming!
- **Repeat them!** Talk about them with your brothers and sisters in Christ, reminding each other of the hope we cling to.
- **Rejoice in them!** Sing and celebrate and daydream about life after Satan’s strongholds crumble!

As Christians, we have confidence in God’s victory over an overwhelmingly evil world. We have His promise, and we have hope. We will overcome!

What should we do while we wait? We should wait for our promised victory!

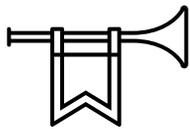
But just like Joshua, our victory will only come with His strength.



Wait for His Strength

[Blow on a trumpet]

That was Day 3 of 7.



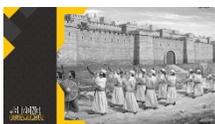
The Plan

As the days clicked by, the people were aware that Joshua had been given a very specific game plan. You and I know the details of this plan because they are explained and elaborated throughout chapter six, with different parts of the plan being revealed as we read.

Here’s the full breakdown of the plan for the first six days.

Days 1-6

- Gather **all the fighting men** (6:3)
- Organize them with warriors in **front** and in **back** (6:13)
- In the middle, have **seven priests** who will have **seven trumpets**, aka ram’s horns (6:4)



- Behind the priests, have the **Ark of the Covenant** carried by more priests (6:4,8)
- **Walk** over to Jericho (6:7)
- Do a **single lap** around the city (6:3)
 - o **Priests, blow the trumpets** (6:8)
 - o **Men, stay silent** (6:10)
- **Go back to camp**

We don't need to be military strategists to know that this is a weird strategy! Marching and trumpets do not win wars!

And as fighting men, this plan would feel...wrong.

Based on the footprint of the city, the march would only take a normal person about 15 minutes to complete. You can extrapolate more time to allow for the thousands of warriors marching, but this was still a short routine for the day.



They get up at dawn. They dress for battle. They hike without talking. And they are home by 7:15 or 7:30.

- No camping by the gates
- No attacks on the barricades
- No launching projectiles
- No intimidation tactics.

Just a walk and then a bowl of cereal while the wife asks, “Sooo... *how was the battle today?*”

Standing Down

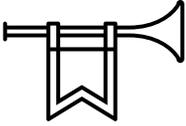
The plan for victory in Jericho required the people to do...almost nothing. Silent marching, followed by breakfast and chores around the tent and maybe a game of catch with the kids while you wait for tomorrow's hike.

Why?

It's classic God!

When we wait, we discover that it is not by our own strength or power that we gain victory. We just put the spotlight on Him, and we let Him work...until it's His time.

This truth is counterintuitive, so we must tell ourselves over and over and over again. God doesn't need us to fight in order for God to win. He only needs His own strength!



[Blow on a trumpet]

That was Day 4 of 7.

God's strength instead of ours. That's always His plan. Remember what Jesus tells us to do with enemies?

“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:27–31, NIV)

Is this out of weakness? No! God is showing His strength...just in other ways.



A few weeks ago, there was a real-life opportunity for a church to practice this. In Minnesota, a group of protesters entered a church, chanting and disrupting services on behalf of people they claimed were targeted by immigration officers.

It was shocking! And I don't expect that to happen here at TCC...but what if it did? What kind of reaction should we have? The elders and I discussed this the other night.

We are conditioned by this world to respond in a certain way. To shout them down. To fight back. To insult. To cause a scene. To kick them out forcefully.

But God's strength is shown in other ways. We want them to see the love of Christ!

*If we are disrupted **violently**, there are a few things to do immediately.*

- *I want us to quickly escape for safety. If they come with **violence toward people**, leave and take those who are vulnerable with you. Men, if able, stand between danger and those who need protected.*

Don't attack but defend and protect. We will call for police aid immediately and hopefully prevent any serious incidents.

- *If they come with **violence to property**, nothing they break is priceless. It can be replaced by insurance or restitution. Stay attentive to make sure it doesn't spread to people, but let it go until police arrive.*

*But if we are disrupted **non-violently** (chanting, yelling, even cussing):*

- ***I want our first reaction to be silence.** Don't get drawn into a conflict. Don't get baited to respond. Turn the other cheek, take any insult, and follow the example of your Savior.*
- ***I want our next reaction to be prayer.** Pray for those who are causing a scene. They aren't the enemy; they are one we want to save.*
- ***I want us to be patient.** Leadership will have contact with authorities, because the disruptions aren't a protected protest. There are steps that will happen in the background. But you and I can wait while it gets sorted out. Maybe we'll sing. Maybe we'll read Scripture. But we can be patient... and then continue our worship until the protest is over.*

We don't need to win. We don't need to shout them down. We can just put Jesus' words into practice.

If turning the other cheek sounds wrong and you hear yourself say, "*I don't agree with Jesus...*," then we have a problem, my friend.

I get it. I don't want to be weak or look like a coward. But **that's not** being weak. We **aren't being** cowardly. We're simply stepping back to let God work.

What does He want? Listen to these words from Romans 12.



“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:17–21, NIV)

It's not weak allowing God to show His own strength! In fact, I think it shows more spine and character to believe and trust His actions!

devoted back to Him as a reminder of who is in charge. By keeping the city as His claim, He helped Israel avoid putting themselves first. Destroying it all would show that they needed to trust God's provision.

- **Why rescue Rahab and her family? Well, there's an answer for that.** If you remember the sermon from a couple weeks ago, Rahab and her family kept the oath made to the spies, so now it was time to return the favor. Saving her would show God's faithfulness, grace, and mercy.
- **Why destroy the people?** Anyone left in the city was to be destroyed. That's tough! But **there's an answer for that, too.** God has mercy, but his mercy has boundaries. After enough rejections, God finally offers judgment instead of mercy. He has every right to do that, as a holy and just God! But also remember that God gave second and third and fourth chances. Every inhabitant of the land was afraid (see 5:1). Just like Rahab, they had the chance to repent. And now the city had been given an additional week in which to surrender...to walk out...to run away...to turn it over to God. "The sounding of those trumpets was both a summons to surrender and a warning of coming judgment if they refused."³ They didn't have to die, but they stubbornly stayed and trusted their walls instead of the Sovereign Lord.

Waiting would give them time to remember that this mattered to someone Else.

What should we do while we wait? We remember God's priorities supersede our own.



Your life is filled with time to wait. Moments at the doctor's office. Moments in traffic. Moments in line at the DMV. Moments at the airport. Moments in the living room on a Thursday.

Maybe your moment is sitting in a meeting while someone tries to get the internet to work. You've been annoyed at your coworkers and tired of the job. You could waste the time scrolling on your phone.

³ H.A. Ironside p. 70. *Joshua: An Ironside Expository Commentary* (Kregel, 2008)

Or you could use the time to remember God's priorities supersede your own.

- *What does he think about the secretary? Does He want you to pray for her, or maybe ask how you can pray for her?*
- *Does He want you to have lunch with the guy down the hall? To build a relationship and share Jesus with him?*
- *Does He want you to do your job well enough to bless others in the room with prosperity?*

When we wait, we have time to re-think what is happening around us. We have time to consider what we are teaching our kids. We have time to evaluate the kind of life we are modeling to our grandchildren. We have time to ask what God wants us to do in the community. We have time to think about the way we are investing our resources.



“Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.”
(Colossians 3:2, NLT)

While we wait, we can remember God's priorities supersede our own.

Conclusion



Waiting can be a gift. It can prepare us for what God is trying to do.

- We can think about His **promises**.
- We can think about His **strength**.
- We can think about His **priorities**.

And then we can be ready to celebrate when He pulls through.

Day 7 arrived! And this time, they marched not once...not twice... but three...four...five...six...**seven** times around the city. Two hours of circling with trumpets blaring.

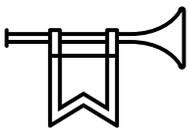
[Blow on a trumpet]

But then...

[LONG BLAST on a trumpet]

AND then...the people shouted

[CHURCH YELLS]



Sermon Notes

Wait for the Promise

The Town

The Promise (Joshua 6:2)

(Matthew 16:15-19; Romans 8:31)

Wait for His Strength

The Plan

Standing Down

(Luke 6:27-31; Romans 12:17-21)

Wait for His Priorities

(Joshua 6:17-19; Colossians 3:2)

Sermon Discussion Questions

- How do you imagine Joshua felt explaining to the Israelites the battle plans for their war against Jericho?
- When you think of the story of Jericho, what part usually stands out to you most - and why do you think we often overlook the “waiting” part?
- God tells Joshua, “*I have given you Jericho*” before anything visibly changes (Joshua 6:2). Why is that order important?
- What “walls” in your life or in our culture feel as unassailable as Jericho?
- Why is it easier to doubt God’s promises when nothing seems to be happening?
- How do Scripture, Christian community, and worship help us cling to God’s promises while we wait?
- Why does God often ask His people to *stand down* before He acts?
- Can you think of a time when stepping back and letting God act showed more strength than fighting back?
- What is one specific situation where God may be asking you to “wait well” instead of forcing an outcome?