

Sunday, September 7, 2025 - Watching Walls Fall Down – Pastor John Henry Raskin

In this sermon, we explore the power of submission to the Holy Spirit and obedience to His leadership. Drawing from the Book of Joshua, we learn how to harness the power we possess in Christ Jesus to bring down the walls that hinder our spiritual progress and our lives in general.

The story of the Israelites and the walls of Jericho serves as a powerful metaphor for the obstacles we face in our own lives. Just as the Israelites faced the seemingly impregnable walls of Jericho, we too encounter barriers that seem insurmountable. These walls can take many forms, such as sin, addiction, persistent medical conditions, or fear of the future.

The key message is that by faith and obedience, we can overcome these obstacles. Joshua's encounter with the Commander of the Lord's army (a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus) teaches us to fix our eyes on the Lord rather than our problems. We are reminded that fear is looking at God through our problems while faith is looking at our problems through God.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience, even when God's instructions seem strange or make no sense from a human perspective. Just as the Israelites marched around Jericho in obedience to God's command, we too must trust and obey God's instructions, believing that He will fulfill His promises in His time and His way.

In conclusion, the sermon encourages us to keep trusting God, pray in faith, listen intently to His Spirit, and be diligent in following His instructions. By doing so, we can see the walls of Jericho in our lives fall flat.

Key Takeaways:

1. Keep trusting God, even if the journey seems impossible or unexpected.
2. Pray in faith, believing that God will speak to you through His Spirit.
3. Know that God is purposeful and will give you orderly instructions when the time is right.
4. The outcome may not be instant, so keep actively waiting on the Lord.
5. Remember that we need God to make the plan and see it through.
6. Obedience is a necessity, not an option.
7. Believe that what God promises, He will fulfill.

Scripture References:

- 1 John 5:4
- Hebrews 11:30
- Joshua 5:13-14
- Joshua 6:1-5
- Joshua 6:6-7
- Joshua 6:12-14
- Joshua 6:16
- Joshua 6:20
- 1 Corinthians 1:18
- Psalms 1:1-3
- Joshua 1:8-9
- Matthew 28:20b

Let's remember that as new creations in Christ, we can harness God's power through faith and obedience.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. – 1 John 4:4

WATCHING WALLS FALL DOWN

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the last several weeks, we've been exploring the power of submission to the Holy Spirit and obedience to His leadership.

Last week we discussed the power of our faith when it's harnessed to our willingness to obey what the Lord asks of us.

In continuation of that theme, today we are going to look at the Book of Joshua to learn how we can harness the power that we possess in Christ Jesus to bring down the walls that are hindering our progress spiritually, and in our lives generally.

If we are honest, we all feel at times in our lives that moving forward is impossible for us.

This was the case for the people of Israel in the Book of Joshua.

Before he died on the far side of the Jordan Moses had sent out 12 spies to bring back a report of what the people were going to face in the promised land.

If you recall, 10 of the spies came back with stories of warlike giants and fortified cities and sowed fear among that second generation of Israelites that was to go and take the land.

But two of those spies, Joshua and Caleb, recalled God's promise that the land was going to be delivered into the people of Israel's hands and encouraged the people to trust in the Lord's promise despite the obstacles they might face.

With renewed faith and obedience, the children of Israel started their journey into the promised land with great enthusiasm.

The Lord had parted the River Jordan just as He had parted the Red Sea for their fathers and they were hopeful.

It was now the faithful spy Joshua who was the new leader of Israel selected by Moses and God Himself and it was by his obedience and God's power that the Jordan's waters had parted. They had reason to be hopeful.

However after crossing the River Jordan the first challenge they face is the city of Jericho.

Now Jericho was considered the greatest walled fortress of that time.

Jericho was a military citadel unparalleled in those days, with walls so thick that chariots could traverse across the top of them.

From an ancient human perspective, Jericho was considered an unconquerable city, impossibly impregnable.

And there the people were. In the land that was promised them by God.

The land that Moses was only allowed to see but not enter the land of milk and honey...and the first obstacle they face are the mighty walls of Jericho.

If we are honest, we all face walls of Jericho in our lives, don't we? A place of seemingly hopeless defeat, a challenging obstacle that we don't think we can conquer...

A barrier that stands in the way of our success, our health, our peace, which we see no way to overcome.

Maybe your Jericho is a sin or an addiction that consistently haunts you and you can't seem to gain the victory over it.

Maybe it's a persistent medical condition you are dealing with that just won't go away.

What is your Jericho?

An unhappy marriage?

Guilt over the past?

Lack of education? Lack of motivation? Lack of confidence?

Fear for unsaved loved ones?

Perhaps it is just fear of the future...

From the beginning, the devil has been attempting to erect a Jericho-like fortress around you that will negatively affect your ability to be successful, that will affect your self-esteem, your inter-personal relationships...

he has tried to put you in a constant state of fear.

But here is a hopeful thought...

Let me speak encouragement to you today, as Joshua and Caleb did to the people of Israel...

We are living in the church age which means that the devil is bound from deceiving the nations.

Does that surprise you?

It has been taught from some pulpits in the modern era that the devil will not be bound until Christ returns,

But I believe that if Jesus is ruling and reigning from the throne of Grace right now, which the Bible assures us He is, and if God answers the prayers of the saints spoken in obedience to His Will and in faith, which He does, then Satan is surely bound by those prayers and also by the intercession of the King of Glory, Jesus Himself when the saints gather and pray.

So that said, today we are going to talk about how we can see the walls of Jericho in our lives fall in Jesus' name.

Let's pick up where we left off last week and talk about faith.

In John's gospel Jesus assures us that we should be unafraid because he has overcome the world.

John the beloved also tells us this in his first letter to the churches in Asia...

1 John 5:4

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

So even as Jesus has overcome the world, those who are begotten by faith in Christ, us, have also overcome the world.

God's chosen people Israel also had the ability to see the deliverance of the Lord by faith and obedience.

The writer of Hebrews tells us...

Hebrews 11:30

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

Let's look at scripture to see how Joshua approached Jericho.

Joshua went on an inspection trip to Jericho. He went to survey the situation.

Imagine Joshua looking at those high walls of Jericho, and no doubt he is trying to strategize as a General of an army, when suddenly he sees a man who came out of nowhere. He just appeared!

The Word of the Lord...

Joshua 5:13-14

13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, 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?"

14 So He said, "No, 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?"

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.

Who is this mysterious person? It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Trinity, making an appearance in the Old Testament.

This is what we call a Christophany.

How do we know this?

Because if this was an angel, even an Archangel, it would have turned down the worship that Joshua offered.

As it is this is God appearing in human form, demanding that Joshua, like Moses at the burning bush, remove his sandal because he is standing on Holy ground.

This was Jesus, pre-incarnate.

Now, here is the point. When we approach our Jericho, we like to go with our strategies and plans just like Joshua.

Should I use a ladder? Should I build a catapult?

We come up with our own plans on how to defeat Jericho.

Then when we have finalized our plans, we want God to fit into our plans. We want God to help us do things our way.

But see what Joshua did when he encountered God Himself in Jericho. He worshipped.

When we encourage you to get alone with God early in the morning and spend time with Him, that is worship.

Pray for God to show you what you need to do.

Don't try to get God on your side; get onto God's side.

We can assume that Joshua was looking intently at the walls of Jericho trying to work out a solution.

But now after seeing Jesus, the Commander of Angel Armies, Joshua is fixing his gaze, his heart, soul, mind and strength upon the Lord.

He is looking unto Jesus not at the walls.

What does this tell us? To get our eyes off our problem and fix our eyes on the Lord.

In the New Testament, Peter walked on the water as long as he kept his eyes on the Lord, but when he started looking at the storm, he began to sink...

...but all he had to do was look back up at the Savior and he again rose above the waves.

Fear is looking at God through your problems.

Faith is looking at your problems through God!

Hear the word of the Lord...

Joshua 6:1-5

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. 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."

What strange instructions. From a military standpoint they made no sense. Here God was testing Joshua's obedience.

In last week's message we talked about how God gives to each person the measure of faith. As believers in Jesus, we all have faith that is sufficient to do amazing things.

Agreed?

The problem is that although we all have faith, we do not always want to be obedient to what we hear from God by that faith.

So do this. Obey God even when it doesn't make sense.

In our flesh, we want to wait to understand God and then obey.

The point is, you will not understand the Word of the Lord until you obey it.

Joshua did not hesitate to obey once he knew the word of the Lord. Look at the next verse...

Joshua 6:6-7

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." 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."

The Israelites faith was being tested here. They knew that Joshua was God's anointed and that the Lord had spoken to him. Now it was their turn to trust and obey.

Here's an interesting thought... The scripture says that Jericho was securely shut up because of the Israelites.

The rulers of Jericho had heard about this horde of people who had miraculously crossed over the Jordan on dry land.

They were already afraid of the Israelites and the God of Israel even while the Israelites were afraid of them.

The Israelites may have been thinking that the people of Jericho were seasoned warriors and that they would insult and abuse the Israelites because of their superior military prowess.

Maybe you are afraid that the world is looking at you and laughing at your faith.

Like the Israelites facing those giant soldiers and giant walls, maybe you feel small in your own eyes.

For some of you, the walls of Jericho that you face may be speaking the truth of the gospel to your neighbors who don't know Jesus... You are afraid they will ridicule and abuse you.

Has it ever occurred to you that the enemy is terrified that you may discover that your faith is the most powerful weapon on earth and that when you use your free will to do what God tells you to do, he is powerless to stop you?

Never fear beloved, what is foolishness to the world is the power of faith for a child of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

When you want to see God move in your life and you have prayed in faith believing for God to reveal the answer to you, and you are truly willing to walk out the good works that He has prepared beforehand for you to do, then you may want to do what Joshua did next... wake up early and face the day.

Joshua 6:12-14

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.

Understand, the Israelites faith was really being tested here.

Each day for six days they made a circular trek around the walled city and nothing happened.

On the seventh day they circled the city once, and Joshua told them to go again, as if they needed to keep trying until they succeeded.

They circled the city seven times and still nothing happened.

Waiting time is not wasted time. God's delays are not necessarily denials.

Some of you have done your rounds with your Jericho many times and you're about to quit just before God moves.

God doesn't work on our timetable. He doesn't consult our schedule – we need to wait on the Lord and get on His schedule.

Naaman was a great Syrian General who came to the Prophet Elisha to be healed.

The General was told to dip seven times in the Jordan River to be healed of his leprosy.

He didn't see how that was going to do anything, but his people convinced him to do as the Prophet said.

Each time he went down in the water and came up he must have looked down at himself to see if his leprosy was progressively getting better, but it wasn't.

Nothing seemed to be happening.

But I know he was glad he kept at it until the seventh time when he was cleansed and healed by the power of the Word of the Lord!

Joshua 6:16

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!

Joshua 6:20

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.

God gave them the victory over Jericho in God's time, God's way.

God will give you the victory over your Jericho in His time, His way.

Here are 7 things that you can do to see your Jericho walls fall flat.

- 1. Keep trusting God, even if the journey seems impossible or unexpected. Pray in faith believing.**
- 2. Listen intently with your spirit and believe God will speak to you through His Spirit.**
- 3. Know that God is purposeful, not random. He will give you orderly instructions when the time is right.**
- 4. The outcome may not be instant, so keep actively waiting on the Lord.**
- 5. Remember that we are not sufficient in and of ourselves. We need God to make the plan and see it through.**
- 6. Remember that your obedience is a necessity not an option.**
- 7. Believe that what God promises, He will fulfill.**

The key takeaway from today's lesson is to believe God to fulfill His promises, wait on His instructions, and be diligent to follow them.

Hear the Word of the Lord from Psalms 1...

Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree

**Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.**

God's Word is always consistent with itself. In the first chapter of the Book of Joshua, God told him this...

Joshua 1:8-9

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

And then told Joshua this...

Joshua 1:9

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

And Jesus tell His disciples, all of us, this, at the end of Matthew's Gospel...

Matthew 28:20b

lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Let's pray...