

# Joshua 6

## Walking Through Closed Doors

To illustrate opportunities the Lord makes available to us the Bible uses the metaphor of an open door

Colossians 4:3-4

*Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

Paul petitioned the Colossians believers to join with him in asking a God to open a door for ministry so he could effectively share the gospel with others

Paul wrote Colossians, along with Philippians, Ephesians and Philemon from a Roman prison cell

If we compare this petition with what Paul shares with the Philippians we learn that God answered their petitions and opened very effective doors for ministry

Philippians 1:12-14

*But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the **furtherance of the gospel**, so that it has become evident to the **whole palace guard**, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, **having become confident** by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*

Philippians 4:22

*All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of **Caesar's household**.*

This door opened so widely that Paul saw Roman soldiers and members of Caesar's family coming to faith

In addition, his boldness to walk through open doors lit a fire in others who began to boldly proclaim the gospel throughout Rome

Revelation 3:7-8

*"And to the angel of the church in **Philadelphia** write,*

*“These things says He who is holy, He who is true, ‘He who has the **key** of David, He who **opens** and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”:* *“I know your works. See, I have set before you an **open door**, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*

Jesus wrote to the church in Philadelphia promising that He would use His key to open doors for them to minister in Asia Minor.

There ministry endeavors would prove to be so effective that we read

Revelation 3:9

*Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.*

Since believers are forbidden to receive worship, one possible interpretation of the statement of Jesus is that those who once belonged to Satan and perhaps even opposed the work of Christ will one day sit with the believers engaged in worship of Jesus

From this metaphor it has become commonplace within Christian circles to hear people refer to open doors.

- It is used in the context of ministry to describe an opportunity the Lord has provided to minister somewhere or to someone
- It is what we are often looking for when we attempt to share Christ with others.

This may be particularly relevant when we consider how to reach those we have long term relationships with; like our unsaved family members or co-workers

It seems pretty clear what to do when we have an open door

We walk through it

I want to address another subject from our text

What do we do when the door is closed?

The story of Israel’s first battle in the Land illustrated how to walk through a closed door

## The Setting

Joshua 6:1

*Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.*

Jericho sat on an ancient trade route connecting Egypt to Mesopotamia

Their location provided them with great wealth and Jericho became the foremost city in the region

Jericho had a natural water supply.

In addition to being close to the Jordan, Jericho also received water from a natural spring

Jericho was called the city of palms because it stood as an oasis in the desert

Today the ancient city is surrounded with rows and rows of date palms

Jericho sits under the shadow the eastern Judean Hills.

Behind it is a steep cliff upon which the traditional location of the temptation of Jesus took place

This location would naturally provide the city with protection from the west

To provide additional protection the city was surrounded by high walls

Excavations have caused archeologists to suggest the city had an outer and a inner wall

Joshua tells us that at this time the city was on high alert

Now Jericho was securely shut up

Every window barred

Every gate shut

Every door closed

Every turret manned

Every weapon sharpened

Every guard working overtime

Every person sleeping with one eye open

Securely is a word that could be mean to imprison

Jericho was on lockdown like a high security prison

## At this point the Lord speaks to Joshua

Joshua 6:2

*And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.*

### See-

The Lord asks Joshua to look at the city

When he looked he saw a city on lock down that seemed to be impenetrable

But the Lord does not see as we see

1 Samuel 16:7

*But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

We can only see what is happening on the outside, God sees what is really going on

### I have given Jericho into your hand,

Joshua sees a closed door, the Lord sees a wide open one

Same thing happened to Paul

Acts 18:9-10

*Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."*

### The story of Jericho illustrates how to deal with a closed door

Israel had been chosen, redeemed, called out of Egypt, trained in the word and sent out to further the kingdom of God among men by taking the Land of Canaan

It is not difficult to see the parallels between Israel and the church

We have been chosen, redeemed, called out of the world, trained in the word and sent back into the world with the gospel message

John 17:18

*As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

Mark 16:15

*And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Matthew 28:19-20

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

**Israel's came face to face with a closed door.**

Yet we find that they were successful

The passage tells us that Jericho was **conquered**

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.*

It's **spoils** of were taken to the priesthood

Joshua 6:24

*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.*

And **Rahab** and her family came to faith

Joshua 6:23

*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 will become a key player in the redemption story

Matthew 1:5-6

*Salmon begot Boaz by **Rahab**, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.*

How they conducted themselves will speak volumes to us about ministry

We learn how to approach a closed door

There are many doors that seem to be closed tight to the church and the individual Christian

- There are many places in the world where Christians are being persecuted and missionaries are forbidden to enter
- Every city in America has places where the gospel has yet to penetrate and have an influence upon the people and the subculture
- On a personal level many of us have loved ones who will not listen to us when we try to share Christ with them. They become angry or avoid us at all costs

## 4 Steps For Walking Through Closed Doors

### We Pray

Colossians 4:3-4

*Meanwhile **praying also for us**, that God would **open to us a door** for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

We saw how effective this open door became, but when Paul first mentioned it the door was shut

He saw the need in Rome and had a desire to bring the Gospel but the opportunities did not seem to present themselves

So he prayed and enlisted others to pray with Him

Prayer is the key that opens doors that are locked up tightly

Jesus told a parable that illustrates this idea

Luke 11:5-8

*And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within and say, "**Do not trouble me; the door is now shut**, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet **because of his persistence** he will rise and give him as many as he needs.*

The application drawn is that when the door is shut it calls for more persistent prayer

Jesus provided commentary on His own illustration when He added

Luke 11:9-10

*"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

## We seek Direction from the Lord

Before Israel engaged in battle with Jericho Joshua had an encounter with the Lord. He learned that the Lord was the commander and if they were going to be successful they must report to Him for direction

It was King Joshua who came up with the battle plan for taking a walled city

This plan could not have been executed any other way.

In the history of humanity many battles have been waged.

None have followed the battle plan for Jericho

Conversely at other times in Israel's history they failed to look to the Lord for direction

Jeremiah 10:21

*For the shepherds have become dull-hearted,*

*And **have not sought the Lord;***

*Therefore they shall not prosper,*

*And all their flocks shall be scattered.*

If we are going to walk through a close door we must get direction from the Lord

Planning is important

Sharing different vision, perspective and giftings has its place

But if we are going to succeed we need to get direction from God

How do we do that?

First, direction is found in the word

We will find general principles to govern all of us in every ministry endeavor

Second, Direction is found in seeking the Lord

Acts 13:1-2

*Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."***

The team could look through the word and find guidelines but before they ventured out they also needed specific instructions that could only be found as they set aside time to seek the Lord in prayer

## We need to Step Out in Faith

Faith is an essential element of all kingdom work

Hebrews 11:6

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Their endeavor required great faith

- It violated the rules of warfare
- It violated past experience
- It violated common sense

But it was the approved method from heaven for the task at hand.



There are times when the ways of God violate human reason. This does not mean that if something does not make sense it must be God although at times God will ask us to do what seems to make little sense.

- Noah built a arc
- Gideon went into battle with torches and horns
- David stepped into the arena with a handful of stones
- Jesus chose uneducated and untrained men from a fishing village

## We need to remember the God goes before us

This is vividly illustrated in their encounter with Rahab

When the spies arrived in Jericho Rahab had already heard of the Lord and made her decision.

When the day of battle arrived she had convinced her whole family to leave their idols, sin, culture and way of life behind and to join with the people of God

The men entered into an arena to which the Lord had already gone before them.

Our world is filled with doors that seem to be closed up tightly. These obstacles are not too much for the Lord who holds the keys that can unlock any door.