

Joshua: Walking by Faith, Growing in Grace

Jericho

Joshua 6:1-27

August 24, 2025

HDBC

In the fourth century A.D. there was a courageous Syrian pastor and theologian named John Chrysostom. He suffered opposition from the Roman emperor and was eventually martyred for his faith. He said, *"You are but a poor soldier for Christ if you think you can overcome without fighting, and suppose you can have the crown without the conflict."*

He was right. As Christians we have enemies that constantly wage war against us, trying to keep us from claiming our inheritance in Jesus Christ. The world system, our own flesh, and Satan himself are all united against Jesus, His followers and the church, just as the pagan nations in Canaan were united against Joshua and the people of Israel.

Some people don't like the idea of thinking of the Christian life in militant terms. But it is Biblical. **Eph. 6:10-18. 2 Cor. 10:3-6. 2 Tim. 2:3-4; 4:7.**

And one day God is going to declare ultimate victory when Jesus returns. There is a powerful picture in **Revelation 19** of Jesus riding a white stallion, coming back as the conquering general, defeating all opposition.

If we eliminate this militant reality of our Christian faith, then we have to **abandon the cross**, because it was on the cross that Jesus won the victory over sin and Satan.

In **Col. 2:15** Paul talks about the meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus:
He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.

It's easy for us, if we're not careful, to focus only on **the love of God**, the peace of Christ, and good will among men, and to ignore the spiritual battle against sin.

So we are called as soldiers of Jesus Christ in this spiritual war against Satan and his minions. There is no place for neutrality. Jesus himself said in Matthew 12:30, **He who is not with me is against me....** He spoke those words in the context of spiritual warfare. The Scriptures over and over again use military images to describe the Christian life. We can't ignore it. **With that in mind, let's look at the first major battle fought as the people of God took steps to receive what God was giving to them.**

We'll divide the chapter into six parts.

1. The fear in the city (1)

The point of verse one is to highlight just how secured the city was. The Hebrew construction stresses the permanence of the situation. No door was left ajar. This place was tightly closed.

To further stress the point, the text says no one was coming or going. No one could get in or out. **I think of the watertight compartments in a ship. When those hatches are closed, there is no movement between areas.** This gave the people a false sense of security. They had a wall and locked doors, but these would be ineffective against the powerful hand of God. **Just a few days ago Jan and I visited *the Alamo* for the second time. Its history is a stark reminder that walls and fortifications can sometimes offer only a shadow of security.**

Israel's escape from Egypt and now their miraculous crossing of the Jordan river had sent a panic through the land. God had said He would send His fear before Him, and He had. **It was said that Mary, Queen of Scots feared the prayers of John Knox more than any invading army.** May our faith and prayers create that kind of fear today!

2. The divine plan (2-5)

Remember Joshua's meeting out on the plain with the Lord Jesus. He was told to remove his sandals because he was on holy ground. He did. In the course of that worship experience the Lord revealed to Joshua His plan for taking the city of Jericho. But first He assured him of victory.

This means the Hebrews were fighting **from a perspective of assured victory** rather than desired victory.

However, they would need to step out in faith and obey the instructions of the Lord. God gave precise directions for taking the city. Notice that it was not a military strategy. It has more of a **ceremonial flavor than a military one**. Their actions were as much a celebration & announcement of God's faithful work as it was a military action.

They would march around the city once a day for six days. On the seventh day they would march around it seven times. On the seventh time they would shout. At that sound the walls would come down.

Specific order in which they were to march. The **Armed men** would lead the way. They would be followed by **Seven Priests** who were blowing ram horns. **The Ark of the Covenant** would come next, followed by all the **Hebrews**. Note some things about this plan.

1) **Supernatural Plan**

This would require an act of God. It would take a miracle. It would be a clear sign that the victory belonged to God not the people.

2) **Untested Plan**

Joshua could look long and hard through his military manuals, but would never find this strategy mentioned. This was a new way of doing things. Joshua had not history of this kind of warfare to rely on. But he did have the history of the one in charge of it.

3) **Purposeful Plan**

This was meant to show not only the Hebrews but also the other people of the land that God meant business. He really would give them the land, if they would just obey Him.

4) **Inclusive Plan**

Seems to have involved all the people. They were a unified group.

There are some who doubt that it included all the people, for that might have meant more as many as a million or more. But the text seems to indicate that all participated.

It is interesting that the one thing that they seemed to do best was the thing God would have them do in taking the city. What did they do best? **Walk**. They had walked out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, across and through the wilderness, and now through the Jordan River. They knew how to walk.

3. The serious warning (17-19)

Skip down to verses 17-19 and note a serious warning. They were to avoid taking anything from the city. Normally, a conquering army could take the spoils of battle and keep what they could carry. Not this time. They were to consider the entire city as sacred unto the Lord. It belonged to Him. This would be demonstrated in two ways.

First, they were to take the gold, silver, bronze, and precious metals and place them in the treasury of the Lord. They were to keep none of it for themselves.

Second, they were to destroy everyone and everything else, with the exception of Rahab and her family. This included animals, women, children and men. Sounds cruel and from our limited perspective it may seem to be so. Consider a few things:

1) God is just, and merciful.

When He acts we trust that He always acts without violating those two things. Remember that He knows things we do not know. He has access to information that we do not have.

2) Rahab's conversion points to the opportunity to be saved.

Rahab's salvation means that the opportunity was there.

The fact that Rahab stepped out in faith, is an indication that others could have done the same. All were not automatically condemned.

Clearly mercy was offered and grace was available. However, both mercy and grace, once rejected, were withdrawn. **In other words, they came with an expiration date. They still do.**

3) The death of the people was a judgment on their wickedness.

When God initially revealed to Abraham that He would give the land to his descendants, he made it clear that there would be several generations before this happened. Each generation was an opportunity for the people to turn to God. But with each generation their wickedness increased.

4) The death of the people was a protection for the Hebrews.

Listen to God's explanation. Deuteronomy 20:16-18

Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you, **in order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the LORD your God.**

4. The walk of faith (6-21)

The people did just as their leader instructed them. Each day they circled the city one time, then quietly and mysteriously they went back to their camp. They were not to shout or even speak during these hikes. This would take great patience and self-control.

Imagine the thoughts and conversations that would be taking place on the walls of the city. As the Hebrews walked silently around the city, it must have created a rising sense of fear and uncertainty within the city.

Then, on the seventh day something unusual was noticed by the guards on the city walls. As the people completed their first trip around

the city they did not go back to camp. They continued to circle. This must have caused a degree of alertness that they had probably not had for at least four or five days. Something was different.

This day they made seven dusty trips around the city. It would have taken most of the day. By the time they finished the seventh trip they would have been hot, tired and thirsty. **Was this God's way of making sure they were dependent upon Him and not their strength?**

At the conclusion of the seventh trip the people shouted and the walls crumbled. Each man drew his sword and rushed through the city, fighting his way through, killing everyone and everything.

5. The protection of Rahab (22-25)

The two spies went to the house of Rahab. Miraculously, the only part of the wall still standing was the part with the scarlet rope attached. It was her house. The men brought her and her family outside where they would be safe. The harlot would become a famous mother in Israel.

She married a man named Salmon.

They had a son whom they named **Boaz**.

Boaz married a young widow named Ruth.

They had a son named **Obed**.

Obed had a son

whom he named **Jesse**.

Jesse had a son

whom he named **David**.

6. The future of Jericho (26-27)

Joshua wanted it clear that this city was not to be rebuilt. Anyone who would attempt it would lose his firstborn son and his youngest son. Good motivation to leave it alone.

However, this prophecy came true years later when Hiel, rebuilt Jericho. It cost him two sons. 1 Kings 16:34.

Takeaways:

1. The victory is a picture of faith

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days. Hebrews 11:30. It required an exercise of faith in God. They were willing to trust God even when he required something that seemed totally illogical. And they persevered in that obedience.

2. The victory came out of weakness, not strength

Think about this. Each day they walked around the city one time. Most scholars who estimate the size of city indicate that it would take about an hour for the group to make its way around the city one time. This was no problem on days one through six. But in the seventh day they walked around seven times. This would have included seven to eight hours of walking and may have included a distance of twenty miles.

At the end of that seventh trip around the city the people would have been hot, dusty, thirsty and exhausted. That is when God brought the victory. God does not need for us to be at our peak, in order to be victorious. In fact, He often wins the battle for us when we are weak, helpless and fatigued.

3. The victory required the patience to wait on God

It would have been understandable for the people to have wanted to rush ahead and take Jericho. After all, God had promised to give it to them. Why all the waiting? Why couldn't they just take the city? They needed to learn to wait on God. All victories do not come instantly. Some come over a period of time or season of waiting.