

When The Walls Tumbled Down

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Lessons From Jericho:

A. That Battle Of Jericho Is A Testimony To The Power And Salvation Of The Lord:

1. Our focus is easily captivated by the destruction of Jericho's walls, but perhaps the greatest statement of the deliverance of the Lord comes through the salvation of Rahab and her family **(Josh 6:21-22, 25)**
 - a. So much of the story of Jericho is unexpected and this is part of it – When the spies first go to the city, they are welcomed into the home of Rahab... a harlot. Not only does she give them a place to stay, she protects them when the officials sought to arrest them. During this, she lies to the officials about the spies. Then she shows faith in God's power to overtake the city and expresses a desire to be saved by the Israelites and become one of them... Amazing!
 - b. Nothing in this story condones her sinful lifestyle or the fact that she lied... But God rewards her act of courage, her service to His people, and the amount of faith she showed in Him
 - c. Yes, her life was a wreck, but there was still something right inside of her. God chose to save not only her, but her whole family from the destruction. But the greatest grace of all was giving them a place among Israel. She even became part of the lineage of David & Jesus! **(Mat 1:5)**
 - d. Here's a woman who goes from a lifestyle of sin, to serving the Lord. She goes from a pagan nation to the nation of God's people. From a life dedicated to destroying homes to a life dedicated to walking by faith. A harlot, yet she is found in the hall of faith **(Heb. 11:30-31)**
 - e. The story of Rahab gives encouragement and motivation to all of us. She is a testimony to the fact that God's grace really is greater than all our sin! If God was willing to save Rahab and place her in the lineage of His Son, He will save us. God is the God of Salvation! **(Titus 3:4-7)**
2. When God's people follow Him in trusting faithfulness, victory follows and the word gets out! People find out not only the greatness of God, but the greatness of being God's people! **(Joshua 2:8-11; 6:27)**
 - a. When the spies originally met Rahab, they didn't have to sell the nation of Israel to her or the power of God. She already knew! Their reputation had preceded them in a major way.
 - b. Not only had Rahab developed a strong impression, but EVERYONE had been impacted by the things they had heard. Everyone within Jericho had melted hearts... They had already lost in their minds before Israel even marched around it once! They had already given up the fight!
 - c. Notice what these godless unbelievers had an understanding about – They had heard what God had done for them. Not just what they did, but what God did! Did they have faith? Not real saving faith, but the kind of faith that recognizes God's power and what God has done.
 - d. One of the greatest sermons we can preach is to lead lives of simple trusting faith. People will see & hear what God is doing in our lives. When those who'd oppose us see & hear us standing strong in our faith, the will to fight against us can be crushed! **(2 Cor. 2:14; 1 Pet 2:11-12)**
3. Before God's people can enjoy His blessings, there are walls that must come down. The great thing is that God is still in the business of tearing down walls! **(Joshua 6:20; 1 Cor. 15:56-58)**
 - a. Israel was entering into the land of Canaan. It was the land of milk and honey... the promised land. Imagine their thought as the first sight they saw was that of these high massive walls. These walls stood between them and God's promise. But God was there to tear them down!
 - b. Even though God tore down the walls, they still had a part. He had a plan for them to follow. How sad it would have been if they saw the walls and walked away, giving up on God's blessings.
 - c. Today, our promised land awaits us... These are promises of blessings God has given us → Be it salvation, fellowship with God, forgiveness of sins, Heaven, our spiritual family, etc.

- d. But we have walls that stand in the way. They may be walls of sin, walls of pride, walls of worldliness, walls of misplaced priorities, walls of bitterness or anger, etc.
- e. God will tear down the walls! He gives us strength, wisdom, and a plan. We have to choose to march around the city, blow the trumpets, and shout. We have to accept His prescription!

B. Respecting And Obeying God's Authority Matters:

1. When God gave Israel their marching orders, God was very specific and detailed. There was a plan God wanted them to follow in conquering Jericho (**Joshua 6:3-5, 6-8**)
 - a. For six days they were to march around the city one time a day. They were to take the Ark Of The Covenant with them. Seven priests were to march before the ark carrying trumpets made out of rams horns. One day seven they were to march around the walls seven days. Then the priests would blow the trumpets. When they blew a long blast, the people would shout.
 - b. There was pattern – Number of times around a wall, specific days, type of trumpets, priest location
 - c. As Joshua gave instructions to the army of Israel and to the priests, He told them exactly what God had commanded him. He seems to be careful to get it right. And they did it just as he said.
 - d. I wonder what would have happened had Israel chosen to do things differently?
 - 1) What if they decided marching around the walls 7 times on the 7th day would be too much, so they broke it up and did an extra lap on each of the other days?
 - 2) We aren't left to wonder! We can look at other cases when men failed to follow God's pattern and see the consequences... Like Nadab & Abihu (**Leviticus 10:1-2**)
2. Joshua and all of Israel had come to possess a strong appreciation for the authority of God and His will:
 - a. One thing that grabs my attention is what is not found in this story line... There is no explanation by Joshua of all that would take place or how it would happen, just the relaying of a strange battle plan. Then there is no questioning by the people, just complete submission to the plan
 - b. They were careful to do everything just like God instructed. This pursuit of authority did not cast a bad light on their faith in God's power, their love for God, or their spirituality.
 - c. This seems like such an obvious point that it's pointless, but it's not. Today many say those who demand Bible authority for all they believe and do as being legalists... as being people who are more concerned with the letter than the spirit. Would you accuse Joshua of this?
 - d. Because... They loved God, they sought to please Him... They had faith, they trusted God's plan not their own... They were spiritual, they could accept what normally would be so illogical.
 - e. You can see this great attitude in Joshua when the Lord first speaks to him about Jericho... He recognized God's authority, respected God's authority, & rested in God's authority. When he removed his shoe & gave it to God he was saying "I can't do this, but you can!" (**Josh 5:13-15**)
3. Their respect and submission to God's authority continued... They stayed true until the end (**Josh 6:21, 24**)
 - a. Once the walls had fallen it would have been easy to get caught up in the amazement and the excitement & forget the rest of God's instructions. Many do this. But they finished well!
 - b. Because they trustfully and fully followed God's plan, all they had to do is walk in and claim the victory God had given them. Had they stopped short, the battle would have been lost.
 - c. Sadly, the story doesn't end here. One man ruined it for so many... Achan decided to steal some of the goods from Jericho and hide it under his tent. It cost Israel victory at a little city called Ai and many men died. It ultimately cost him his life. God is serious about authority!
4. People who love God, are spiritually minded, and walk by faith are people who seek and establish God's authority for all they believe and practice. God's people are a pattern people! (**2 John 9**)

C. The Inseparability Of Faith And Works:

1. God could have created any battle plan for His people, but He chose a very strange one (**Joshua 6:1-2**)
 - a. Marching around walls, blowing trumpets, shouting... None of these sound like a typical battle plan. Nothing is said of arrows, swords, or battering rams which were common in that day.
 - b. It's easy to imagine the army of Jericho and its people up on the walls watching Israel and making fun of them. I'm sure they thought the heat of the desert had finally gotten to these people!
 - c. Such a bizarre battle plan made it clear to everyone this victory was not the result of the strength and wisdom of the army of Israel, but it was from the Lord. God was making a point.
 - d. Trumpets, marching, and shouting really had nothing to do with the walls falling except that it was God's plan for Israel in giving them this victory. The only power it held was power from God!
2. This situation is reminiscent of other battles that God's people had fought by faith:
 - a. Gideon (**Judges 7:2-3, 5-6, 15, 20**) – He was to lead the army of Israel into battle against the great army of the Midianites with 22,000 men. God had him trim them down to 10,000 and then finally to 300. He had them go to battle with trumpets and torches covered by pitchers.
 - b. David (**1 Sam 17:46-47**) – God used David, a young shepherd not a trained warrior, to defeat Goliath, a giant of great strength and experience in war. He chose five pebbles and a sling as his weapons. Without armor he fought Goliath. It was clear this battle was God's victory!
3. Even though the army of Israel had to put forth the effort to full obey God's instructions, this victory was not of their strength and doing. The glory belonged to the Lord (**Joshua 6:16**)
 - a. **Picture this:** They walls crash down and they start shouting – “LOOK WHAT WE DID! We sure can shout loud... look how well we can blast trumpets! We're awesome!” - NO! The people were likely left somewhat speechless, even though God said that's how it all of this would happen!
 - b. There is no doubt that the walls fell down because of faith, but no where in the account does God tell Joshua to believe or does Joshua instruct the people to believe. But faith is all over it. Faith was found in their following through with God's strange battle plan!
 - c. What if Israel had total confidence that God would take down Jericho, but they didn't go out and march around the walls? What if they marched 6 days, but not the 7th day?
 - d. The victory at Jericho was God's doing not Israel's doing; however, God still required that Israel trust & obey Him in order to receive the victory He had promised. The glory was still God's!
 - e. The way the wall fell makes it clear who did it – If it was by the shouts, trumpets, or something else Israel did they might have fallen, but they wouldn't have fallen FLAT – God took them down
4. The walls of Jericho are still a great place to go to help us understand the way faith and works combine together in our salvation and our service to the Lord: (**Psalm 33:16-22; James 2:24-26**)

Parent saying, “Son, stop playing that trumpet in the house! You remember what happened at Jericho!”