

## Joshua ch 6-

The Israelites are now at a place where they are ready to go in and begin conquering the land. They have crossed over the Jordan, excitement is filling the air among the camp, but in our last gathering we realized that before God actually began to move them forward to victory, a couple of things needed to take place in their lives. #1 They were to take flint knives in order to circumcise those of the children of Israel, who had never been circumcised, because though all those that came out of Egypt had been circumcised, the entire generation that had been born in the wilderness never had. And now they were getting ready to go on in and claim that which God had promised to them through Abraham when He made a covenant with him to give his off spring the land that lay before them now; the land of Canaan. But as a sign of that covenant God required that every male of the Abrahamic covenant be circumcised in the flesh of their foreskins. And of course what that was to represent was a cutting off or a severing of a life after the flesh, no longer am I going to be driven and controlled by, or looking to and longing after a life after the flesh. But rather I'm going to be looking after and longing for the life of the Spirit, looking unto God to supply my every need, it was for them what baptism is for us today. Because the bible teaches very clearly in the book of Romans that the act of circumcision itself did nothing to commend them unto God, it was simply to be an outward showing of the work that God has already done in my heart. And to simply go through the rite with out having things right in your heart causes the whole act to become nothing more than a meaningless ritual, because it's not the position or condition of your physical being that God is interested in (primarily though God does care for our physical needs) but His primary concern is the position and condition of our hearts. Rom 2:28-29 says that *"he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."* and So here they were getting ready to go in and begin conquering the land and God reestablishes with them the covenant sign of circumcision, saying in essence to them take no confidence in the flesh, but rather place your trust in Me. Because you're not going to conquer this land in the efforts of your might, or by your strength, but by My Spirit, and then a few days later they kept their 1<sup>st</sup> Passover in the land. Again remembering where it was from which they had come and how it was by the blood of the lamb that they were spared the judgment of death and it was through that judgment that God had delivered them from the chains and bondage of Egypt, and from that point on the manna ceased being provided for them so they began to eat of the produce of the land. And chapter 5 closed with a very interesting occurrence in the life of Joshua, he met Jesus Christ the commander of the army of the Lord, just the when Joshua needed Him and the way He needed Him, and that's always the way the Lord meets us. W/Abraham, who was a pilgrim and a sojourner the Lord met Him as a traveler and shared a meal with Him (Gen 18), to Jacob the schemer, He came really as a wrestler in order to bring him to a place of submission (Gen 32).

There were 3 Hebrew men that met the Lord as their shield and companion in the fiery furnace (Dan ch 3) and here general Joshua meets Him as the Commander of the army of the Lord. And he met Joshua where he was at, and affirmed to Joshua that the battle was His, and that He was in control and as long as they could follow orders they'd never lose.

And the battles that we fight in this world, though they aren't against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities and rulers of darkness and spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places, even still what we need to realize is that the war isn't ours it's the Lords and we just need to follow orders, the dictates of His word and if we could do that, we'd never lose. Well, Joshua met Jesus and the Lord ordered him to take off his shoes because of the fact that He was there and therefore that ground was holy and wasn't to be defiled by the dirt of the world that he was dragging around on his feet. And we're not told exactly what the conversation was but I have a feeling that that's where Joshua got his battle plan that he decrees here in ch 6.

#### Vs1-5

Now when did the Lord tell these things to Joshua, well we're not told but I'm personally of the persuasion that these orders probably came back in ch 5 during vs 13-15. Now there's a couple of things that I want you to notice in these vs and that's that #1 the battle was over before they fought it. Notice in vs 2 that they Lord told Joshua that He had given Jericho into his hand, it was already a done deal, but the people of Jericho weren't going to come out and raise their hands, there was going to be a battle. And there was a man who once said, "you are but a poor soldier of Christ if you think you can overcome with out fighting, and suppose you can have the crown with out conflict." The enemy isn't just going to lie down and die; he wants to do everything in his power in order to keep you from claiming your inheritance. But there was really nothing for the children of Israel to worry about, why? Because they weren't fighting for victory, they were fighting from victory and there's a big difference, God had already promised them the city, they just had to seize it, and the same is true for you and me as believers. Jesus had defeated every spiritual enemy we have, he's overcome the world the bible says, and so if He be for us, and the bible says that He is, then who can be against us? God had promised to send His fear before them back in Ex 23 and we see Him keeping that promise here, Rahab had told the spies that hearts of the people of the land had melted because of them and here in vs 1 we read that as far as Jericho was concerned, no one came in and no one went out because of the children of Israel.

Now another thing that we notice here is Joshua's submission to the word of God, God gave him a plan and we'll see in the next few vs that He kept the plan, he followed orders, and the battle was won. And what we have in this is an outstanding picture of leadership; the finest leader that you will ever have is a man who is himself lead. And the best type of ruler is the man, who is himself ruled, and God chose Joshua to be a ruler over the children of Israel because Joshua himself was ruled over by the Lord. That's the proper chain of command; and there is no man who is fit to rule who is not himself ruled.

Because anytime that you find a leader who feels as though he's not accountable to anyone or responsible to anyone but within themselves they believe that they are the final authority, the people always suffer under that rule. Because they became tyrants, it's been said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, but those who have a consciousness about the fact that they are ruled, those who have submitted themselves to His throne are able to adequately rule on their thrones, but you have to have that chain of command. The centurion in Matt ch 8 understood that principle and the Lord highly commended him.

When the Lord listened to him reasoning out authority and knew that He only had to speak the word for his servant to be healed it says that the Lord, "*marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"*" and He said that in regards to the fact that this was a man who recognized what true authority is, and it would do us well to learn that we ourselves have no right to lead, no right to be in positions of power or authority. Those of you who are in or are aspiring to be in a position of leadership or possibly the pastorate, we ourselves need 1<sup>st</sup> to be ruled, we ourselves need to be in submission to authority, before we're entrusted with positions of authority. Why because people don't need our great ideas and plans, they need the Lord's and we need the Lords and the Lord doesn't need our help in developing a strategy or a plan of attack, He's already got it all figured out and a battle plan laid out, we just need to report for duty and carry out His orders.

There is no situation or circumstance that is too difficult for Him so that He needs or is open to our advice, you remember when Jesus was confronted with 5000 hungry men not including women and children? and He looked at Philip and said where are we going to get the bread to feed all these people? Now was He asking for Philip's advice or suggestion, was He sort of puzzled about the situation and was asking Philip what he thought He should do? No, we read in John's gospel that John He said this to test him, "*for He Himself knew what He would do.*" and God always knows what He's going to do, there's nothing that catches Him off guard and leaves Him stumped for a little while. He's got it all under control and all our part is, is to wait for our orders and then follow them accordingly.

And we're not to question the word of God for our lives Joshua could've said, you want me to do what? I don't really see the wisdom in marching around the city, blowing our horns and not saying a word and then going back to camp for 6 straight days, why don't we just skip all that and march straight up there in the 7<sup>th</sup> day format and take the city? But again understand that God's ways aren't our ways, and His reasons aren't our reasons and we're not here to question His ways or His reasoning we're here simply to be obedient to His ways and reasoning even if it doesn't always seem to make sense.

God seems to delight in taking what would seem to man to be foolish and using it to His glory, Paul spells it out very clearly in 1 Cor 1:26-29 where he wrote, *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”* and We see God doing these seemingly to us impossible and crazy things in order to bring glory to His name, whether it be marching around a city for 7 days, or Gideon, with trumpets, torches and pitchers in Jud ch 7, or David with a sling in 1<sup>st</sup> Sam, 17. God loves taking the weak and beggarly and foolish things of the world and using them in an awesome way in order to defeat His enemies and glorify His name. God said I want you to march around this city 1 time a day for 6 days, and I want you to take 7 priests with 7 rams horns to go before the ark blowing their rams horns and that’s the only sound I want coming from the people. Then on the 7<sup>th</sup> day I want you and your men of war and the priests blowing the trumpets and those bearing the ark to march around the city 7 times and after that 7<sup>th</sup> time when the priests blow the trumpets, I want everyone to shout and the walls are going to fall down flat and you’re going to march straight up to the city and take it.

#### Vs6-15

Now you’ve got to know that people of Jericho are freaking out by now, I mean can you imagine how this must’ve looked. There was a man on the wall watching for the approaching army and then one morning here they come. And the man sounds the alarm and all of the men of war approach the gate of the wall and get ready for war. But then this weird thing happens, they make a turn, never once making a sound, and these trumpets are blowing. And so the watchman yells down” they’re not attacking here, they’re headed for the other side,” and so the army on the inside shifts, and then it happens again, and again and the army on the inside is probably marching along with the army on the outside, you know here they are, there they go, here they are, and this happens until they get all the way around the city and then instead of attacking, they just head back to camp! and Then the next day they’re all kind of wierded out about it and not really sure what to make of it, and then “hey here they come again,” and it happens again, and then again the next day and so on and so on for 6 days and so no doubt as J. Vernon McGee says that by the 6<sup>th</sup> day, the midnight oil had burned long and late in the Pentagon inside Jericho. And then on the 7<sup>th</sup> day they probably felt a sigh of relief when they made their circuit and then suddenly the watchman yelled down, wait a minute, they’re making another round, and then another, and then another, until the 7<sup>th</sup> round. I mean the tension in the air, in the city of Jericho must’ve been frighteningly intense.

#### Vs 16-20

Warren Wiersbe said, “When we accept God’s plan, we invite God’s presence and that guarantees victory.” and Thus the importance of those who are leaders taking the time to receive instruction from the Lord and then those who are under those leaders, getting behind their leaders and being able to follow those instructions. And so pray for me, that I be hearing from the Lord as it pertains to the work that He’s doing here, because again He’s the head over all things to the church, of which we are apart. And we want to be busy about His business and taking ground for the kingdom and we’re all in this thing together, so if we are able to be of one accord, of one heart and one mind as unto the Lord, He’ll do awesome things. But if we grow bitter against one another and begin to bite and devour one another we’ll be consumed by one another. Again Wiersbe said, “When God’s people rebel against spiritual leadership, as Israel often did in the wilderness, it leads to discipline, and defeat.” But if you notice when Israel got their act together and got behind what God was doing and they were all in line with the direction God was taking them, they experienced victory and exaltation. Why, because they were walking by faith, that’s what they were doing here, they were literally walking by faith. Heb 11:30 tells us that it was “*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.*” This Jericho experience was an encouragement to God’s people to trust the Lord’s promises and obey His word. Even when it seemed to be an impossible feat, there’s no way that you can reason how marching around a city for 7 days and 7 times on the 7<sup>th</sup> day would somehow cause the walls of the city to fall down flat, so it had to be by faith that they obeyed. And God honored that, now, we may not ever capture a city liker we’re reading here, though hopefully we’ll capture this city for Jesus Christ (amen?) But surely we would agree that in our everyday lives we are confronted by various enemies and high walls that stand before us as a challenge.

And the only way to grow in our faith isn’t to run from those challenges, but rather to accept them and trust the Lord to give us the victory in them. A man by the name of Phillips Brooks once said, “don’t pray for tasks equal to you powers, pray for power equal to your tasks.” Don’t be afraid of situations that challenge you, because it’s in those challenges that God is going to cause you to grow. Now this account of the fall of the walls of Jericho seem to be a bit far fetched, a bit hard to swallow, and I confess that they would be if your God wasn’t big enough. You should have no problem with the fact that God brought down the walls of Jericho if you can get past Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” If you can believe that then knocking over a few walls shouldn’t be a problem, and they were to bring all of the vessels of bronze and iron and silver and gold into the treasury of the Lord, why? Because this represented the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of the land, and God always gets the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits, that’s a principal that He established in the law and we see it all through out the scriptures, God gets the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits and so here they were required to give these things to the Lord and were warned against seeking to obtain any of it for themselves.

Now we're told in Romans 15 that these things were written for our learning and we're told in 1 Cor 10:11 that they were written for our admonition, so what is that we can learn from this and what is the admonishment or rebuke that's here in this for us? That God won't tolerate compromise with sin in the lives of His people, you remember that these people were so vile that they had filled up the wine cup of the wrath of God and now God was making them drink it. Every base and immoral act that you can possibly conceive was being practiced by these people under the guise of worship to their gods. And God wouldn't allow the children of Israel to mingle with that sin and be a part of compromise in their relationship with Him. The NT says what fellowship has light with darkness and righteousness with lawlessness? G. Campbell Morgan said, "Thank God that He will not make peace with sin in my heart! I bless His name for the thunder of His authority and for the profound conviction that He is fierce and furious in His anger against sin, wherever it manifests itself." God won't share your life with any other rival god in your life, nor is He up for compromise with the enemy, you're either for Him or against Him, He either reigns on the throne of your heart or He doesn't. Now I'm not saying you'll never stumble but I'm talking about the position of your heart, are you longing for the things of God or the things of the world, what dominates your time and efforts and energies and thoughts, that's your God.

#### Vs22-26

Now this is a pretty wild statement here because in reality Joshua is prophesying here, because when you get to 1<sup>st</sup> Kings ch 16 vs 34 you read that this is exactly what wound up happening. The king there decided to rebuild Jericho and he began building it and laying its foundations in the time of his 1<sup>st</sup> born son and with his youngest son he set its gates, and of course the curse was upon him even as Joshua had said here.