

## The Walls Came Tumbling Down (Joshua 6:1-27 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

10-May-26

### **Joshua 6:1-27**

Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

<sup>2</sup> Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. <sup>3</sup> March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. <sup>4</sup> Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in."

<sup>6</sup> So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." <sup>7</sup> And he ordered the army, "Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord."

<sup>8</sup> When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the Lord went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the Lord's covenant followed them. <sup>9</sup> The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. <sup>10</sup> But Joshua had commanded the army, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" <sup>11</sup> So he had the ark of the Lord carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there.

<sup>12</sup> Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. <sup>13</sup> The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the Lord and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets kept sounding. <sup>14</sup> So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

<sup>15</sup> On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. <sup>16</sup> The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! <sup>17</sup> The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the

prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. <sup>18</sup> But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. <sup>19</sup> All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury.”

<sup>20</sup> When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup> They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

<sup>22</sup> Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her.” <sup>23</sup> So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

<sup>24</sup> Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord’s house. <sup>25</sup> But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

<sup>26</sup> At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: “Cursed before the Lord is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho:

“At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates.”

<sup>27</sup> So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

## **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

<sup>3</sup> For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And a sermon **outline**

Please have your **Bibles opened** up at **Joshua chapter 6**.

Let me pray first...

### Context/Impenetrable Jericho (Joshua 6:1)

#### **[Slide-Context]**

**Context** – we left Joshua in the Promised Land - facing the Commander of the Lord’s Army – which we said was most likely Jesus – and Joshua and the Israelites are just about to take the city of Jericho

A lot of people have a problem with this chapter and the conquest of Jericho – especially because the whole city of Jericho – men, women and children are wiped out.

So it’s helpful if we get some background before we go any further...

#### **[Slide-Gen 15:16]**

Back in **Genesis 15:16** – 500 years or more before Joshua - the nomadic patriarch **Abraham** is living in the land of Canaan at the time – the land that would one day become the Promised Land – and God said to Abraham - *In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.*

What God is saying to Abraham is that Abraham’s descendants can’t inherit the Promised Land (Canaan) immediately but would come back in four generations

time once one of the occupants of the Promised Land – the Amorites have completed their sin.

The implication is that God was being patient with the present inhabitants of the land but that one day when their sin reached the limit, God would use Abraham’s descendants to bring judgement on them!

The first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – confirm that God plans to cast out the current inhabitants of Canaan because of their gross sexual perversions (Leviticus 18:24-25) and their zeal for magic, divination, worship of false gods and idols and all sorts of pagan hanky-panky (Deuteronomy 18:12)

But the Israelites must not have a holier than thou attitude, because God will not bring His people into the land because they are righteous and deserving – but because of “*the wickedness of the nations currently living in the land*” (Deuteronomy 9:4-5)

So this conquest of Jericho is not a bunch of marauding Israelites wiping out people at the behest of their vicious God – but rather God using the not so perfect Israelites as His instrument for His just judgment on a people who a persistently revelled in their sin

### **[Slide-Deut 18:9-14]**

Here’s what God said to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 18:9-12 - *When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one*

*who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.*

**So this conquest of Jericho is a Holy war by a Holy God against a wicked and unholy people!**

We pick up the story in verse 1 of chapter 6

**[Slide-v1]**

Humanly speaking Jericho is **impenetrable!**

No one can go in or out of the city because of the walls.

**But this battle belongs to the Lord; not the Israelites!**

**Joshua and the Israelites don't fight this Battle of Jericho – God does!**

**[Slide-1<sup>st</sup> Point]**

Our **1<sup>st</sup> point** this morning – **God Promises a Certain Victory** – verses 2 to 5

**God Promises a Certain Victory (Joshua 6:2-5)**

Look at verse 2 — God promises Joshua,

*“I have delivered Jericho into your hands.”*

Not *“I will”* but *“I have.”*

Before a single wall falls... before a single trumpet sounds... God declares the victory is certain.

In these verses, God's instructions to Joshua are strange:

- They are to march around the city once each day for six days,
- With the priests carrying trumpets,
- And with the Ark of the Covenant in their midst.

This is not a military strategy.

There are no battering rams, no ladders, no attack plans.

Instead, it is repeated, faith-filled obedience.

The Ark symbolized God's presence among His people. God — the Divine King — was claiming the city of Jericho as His own. Israel would learn that victory would come not through human strength, but through trusting and obeying the Lord.

### **Application**

For us...

How slow we are to learn that:

- God's Word never returns to Him empty but always accomplishes His purposes (Isaiah 55:11).
- God always keeps His promises.
- God's ways often seem strange to us, but His plans never fail.
- Victory comes through faith and obedience, not merely human effort

For us...

**We have the certain victory over sin and death because of JESUS – as long as we believe in His death and resurrection!**

### **[Slide-2<sup>nd</sup> Point]**

2<sup>nd</sup> point – **God has a different way of fighting battles** – verses 6 to 14

## God's has a Different Way of Fighting (Joshua 6:6-14)

God gives Joshua clear instructions

7 priests carrying 7 trumpets (shofars) are to go before the Ark of the Covenant blowing the trumpets and marching around the city once and return to camp

They are to do this same procedure for six days

This must have seemed very strange to the people in Jericho watching from the city walls.

And very strange to the Israelites too!

Even frustrating when they thought they would be involved in some military activity!

The Ark of the Covenant is mentioned 9 times in this chapter. So it must be important! The Ark symbolized God's presence and that **the battle belongs to the Lord** – not the Israelites!

God's people must simply obey even if it seems weird or feels stupid!

It's not about the Israelites military strategy but God's sovereignty

You see – God is in the miracle business and He could have simply zapped the whole city and brought the walls down

**But God graciously involves His people in His Work**

**[Like the miracle at Cana; like the feeding of 5000; like Lazarus coming from the tomb]**

All in all – the Israelites make 13 circuits of Jericho in silence [other than the trumpets]. Why? To take a good long look at the enemy and to understand that it was utterly impossible for them to capture Jericho without God being with them and **without waiting on God's perfect timing!**

### Application

For us...

We have to get to the point where we are prepared to admit that whatever problem we have is too big for us – and to realise if our Jericho is to fall – then somehow the Lord must bring it about.

When will we learn – ***“apart from Jesus we can do nothing!”***

The instructions that God gave the people to take the city of Jericho were specific and required **complete obedience**; **not selective obedience**.

Sometimes WE can be guilty of **selective obedience**

For example:

- We are willing to forgive some people but hold resentment towards others (Matthew 18)
- We show holiness/godliness in our “public” life but not in our “private” life
- We are generally honest and truthful but justify exaggeration or “white” lies
- We pray when we are in need but not in adoration or thanks or confession
- We read our favourite parts of the Bible but avoid the challenging parts
- We worship on Sunday – but not during the week

- We show kindness to people whom it's easy to like but we are distant towards difficult people
- We avoid obvious slandering of people but we're happy to gossip and talk behind people's backs
- We give when it feels comfortable and easy – but we don't give when it's costly or sacrificial
- We like serving in the “visible” roles but avoid the costly or “unseen” roles
- We are happy to share our faith in safe settings but remain silent about Jesus when it might be awkward for us

Selective obedience is when we **treat God's commands like a menu rather than a mandate**—choosing what suits us and ignoring what costs us.

(pause)

Joshua and the Israelites had to wait on God and rely on God's power and strength not their own!

What about us?

- Do we use our own strategies instead of praying and trusting God?
- Do we rely on our own experience and wisdom instead of consulting God's Word?
- Do we want to control things and try to “help” God - instead of realizing God is in control – and we must sometimes wait for Him to tell us when to act!

**[Slide-3<sup>rd</sup> Point]**

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> point – **God brings down walls we cannot** – verses 15 to 20

## God brings down walls we cannot (Joshua 6:15-20 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

On the seventh day.

The Israelites march around the city **seven times**.

On the **seventh** circuit, as the trumpets blast, at Joshua's command, the people shout and the walls collapse.

This is the climactic act of faith and obedience.

This march took place over seven days, which means that the Israelites had to have marched on a Sabbath Day; but this would not be considered "work" because it is the work of God's sovereign grace and power, not human work!

**The number seven is repeated twelve times in this chapter and three times in v15 - seven symbolizes God's complete perfection!**

### Application

For us...

We've crossed our River Jordan – become a follower of Jesus – and suddenly we are met with our "**Wall of Jericho**"?

What is our "**Wall of Jericho**"?

Well - not every difficulty in our life is a "Wall of Jericho"

**A "Wall of Jericho" is something that cannot be overcome by human effort, strength, strategy, or persistence alone.**

1. Our Wall of Jericho could be **-a personal spiritual "wall"**

- Addictions (pornography, alcohol, gambling, drugs)
- Persistent anger or bitterness that won't leave us
- Long-standing patterns of anxiety or fear

- Chronic unbelief in a particular promise of God

These are “Walls of Jericho” which feel **unmovable**, despite our repeated efforts.

## 2. Our Wall of Jericho could be **-a relational “wall”**

- A marriage marked by deep breakdown or emotional distance
- Or estrangement between family members
- Or Children making ungodly choices
- Long-term unforgiveness that no conversation seems to fix
- Repeated conflict that never gets resolved

These are relationships where reconciliation feels **impossible without divine intervention**.

## 3. Our Wall of Jericho could be – **Ministry barriers or Spiritual opposition**

- Like a community resistant to the gospel
- Hard hearts towards our Lord Jesus and His Church
- A lack of spiritual fruit even after we have laboured long
- Divisions within a church that human strategies cannot heal

## 4. Our Wall of Jericho could be – **our own internal mindset “wall”**

- An attitude that says “I will never change”
- Or lies about ourselves (“I’m worthless”, “God can’t use me”)
- Or pride that resists correction
- Or being cynical about God’s promises

These are often the most entrenched “walls” because they are **internal rather than external**.

5. Our Wall of Jericho could be - **Life circumstances that feel immovable**

- Long-term unemployment or financial pressure
- A chronic illness or disability
- Ongoing uncertainty about the future

Situations where human effort has reached its limit.

But thankfully our NT reading from 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 helps us with these “Walls of Jericho”

**[Please turn there now]**

This passage reminds us:

We don't fight like the world

We have God's weapons – spiritual weapons!

V3 – even though we live in this world, we don't wage war like the world does

V4 – Our weapons are not **physical weapons** of the world but weapons of divine power – they are **spiritual weapons** – the witness of the Gospel (good News of Jesus); the power of the Holy Spirit; prayer and God's Word

V5 – We use these spiritual weapons to demolish anything that is against the knowledge of God – and we take captive every thought so it is made obedient to Jesus

**The answer to our “Wall of Jericho” is to get on our knees and come to God!**

**[Slide-4<sup>th</sup> Point]**

Our **4<sup>th</sup> point** – **In the Midst of Judgment – there is God’s Grace** – verses 21 to 27

**In the Midst of Judgment there is God’s Grace (Joshua 6:21-27)**

After the walls collapsed

God’s judgment came – v21 – the city was “**devoted**” to the Lord

Jericho is like the “**firstfruits**” of the land of Canaan in that it belongs wholly to the Lord—but unlike firstfruits, it is given to God through **judgment** rather than in thanksgiving. The valuables of Jericho are set apart for the treasury of the Lord.

Everything in Jericho is either destroyed or given to the Lord.

This is not plundering but judgment and consecration.

The people, animals, and possessions of Jericho are devoted to destruction under God’s judgment, while silver, gold, bronze, and iron are devoted to the Lord’s treasury rather than taken as personal spoil.

The destruction of Jericho is tied to **divine judgment on Jericho** not just random violence!

But **in the midst of this judgment there is grace!**

A prostitute named Rahab is spared from this judgment because of Her faith in the one true God which we read about in Joshua chapter 2.

As v22 says – the spies who checked out the Promised Land, whom Rahab helped, made an oath to save her from destruction and they honoured that oath!

This meant – v23 – because of Rahab’s faith, her whole family was saved.

**In other words, Rahab was saved through faith; not through her nationality!**

Rahab’s story shows us

- No one is beyond saving – no one is beyond God’s grace and mercy
- Outsiders can become insiders
- God uses/chooses the most unlikely (humanly-speaking) people to achieve His purposes [Moses, David, Ruth, Saul/Paul]
- Faith is what matters; not background, race, colour, education, social status

Is there someone you know whom you consider most unlikely to become a Christian? Pray for that person’s salvation!

The severe judgment brought against Jericho — and against the other cities of Canaan in general — did not come because the occupants of Canaan stood in the way of God’s people. It came because these nations were living in deep rebellion against God, given over to great wickedness and aligned with evil practices, as both Scripture and archaeological discoveries from the period show.

Such judgment seems harsh to us because it IS harsh. Yet we must understand that, at unique moments in history, God has commanded judgment to be

carried out. Sometimes that judgment comes through an army God uses, like here in Joshua. At other times, it comes directly from God himself, like in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Book of Genesis 19:24–25).

Even then, however, God shows mercy to those who trust him. In Sodom, God spared Lot and his family. Likewise in Jericho, God spared Rahab and her family because she believed in the one true God.

Right at the end of the chapter, Joshua makes a solemn oath (vv26–27), placing a curse on anyone who rebuilds the city of Jericho. Jericho was to remain a permanent testimony to God’s judgment. It was also a warning not to undo what God had declared and done. As the first victory in the Promised Land, Jericho was unique — set apart and devoted to the Lord.

In many ways, Jericho was to stand like a memorial site — something like Ground Zero in New York City or Hiroshima where the atomic bomb fell — a place that permanently reminds people of a devastating event that must never be forgotten.

In the Old Testament, the firstborn belonged to the Lord (Book of Exodus 13:1). In a similar way, Jericho — the “firstfruits” or first-born city conquered in the land — was devoted wholly to God. The city and everything in it came under God’s judgment and belonged to him alone.

## Conclusion

### **[Slide-Blank]**

To finish up then...

Jericho represents the evil and opposition to God in this world.

Ultimately, every “Jericho” will fall when Jesus returns in power and judgment.

How did the city of Jericho fall?

There were shouts and the sound of trumpets.

**[Slide-1 Thes 4:16-17]**

The Apostle Paul describes the day Jesus returns in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17:

***<sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.***

Just as the shout went up, the trumpet sounded, and the walls of Jericho fell, so one day the trumpet of God will sound and Jesus Christ will return in victory.

He will gather all who belong to him, and evil, sin, Satan, and even death itself will be destroyed forever.

Let's pray

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are the God who gives victory—not by our strength, but by your power. Help us to trust you, even when your ways seem strange or difficult, and to walk in faithful obedience to your word.

Forgive us for the times we rely on ourselves instead of you. Teach us to depend on you fully, and to follow you with patient, persevering faith. Thank you for your mercy, shown even in Rahab's story—that you save those who trust in you. Help us to live as people of faith, and to give you all the glory in every victory. In Jesus' name, Amen.