

Joshua 5:13-6:5

¹³When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" ¹⁵And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. ¹Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. ²And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. ³You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. ⁴Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him." *ESV*

Christian, God is in front of you--leading the way into every twist and turn of your life--In a very personal and relevant way. Do you wonder why you face formidable challenges while following Christ?

Like Jericho, problems in life exist because we are not able to rest, yet. We have not yet attained that life to which we were called, completely. We are pilgrims on a journey. No settling point. Change is a constant, and is to be quite expected in the life of every believer. We should crave God's change in our lives. We should stop being so surprised when "everything" is changing around us. God is merely exercising His mercy to move us from a place of control to a place of submission.

Jericho is formidable because we must feel overwhelmed before we become utterly God-dependent. Some archeologists have estimated that the wall was 12-17 feet high, high enough that you would not be able to see in. It was thick and had no windows, but likely had several towers. The city was approximately 320 acres and 2,000 feet in circumference. It would possibly take about an hour for the nation to walk around it.

We tend to categorize our challenges in life using a sliding scale of difficulty. A "10" means "I got this." A "1" means "this is impossible." But God does not intend for us to live that way. We have not been bought with so high a price for God to only offer intermittent help and grace. God intends that problems have an "overwhelming" appearance to us so that we can become God-dependent.

Jericho is the means by which God will show Himself to us. Like a sleeping giant guarding the entrance to a cave, Jericho loomed at the daunting entrance of the Promised Land. There was no way the Israelites were going to take the land of Canaan, unless they would pass through Jericho from Gilgal. This was certainly the sovereign positioning of God. God often brings us up against seemingly insurmountable circumstances to reveal Himself to us in a greater way.

Joshua was out on a walk. Perhaps he was considering what challenges were ahead for the nation, and for him as a new leader. He was doubtless casting his eyes upon the walls, when this Angel of the Lord appeared in soldier's clothing. Joshua had a prepared heart (circumcision, Passover, memorials, etc...) now he could

see clearly that God was there. Jericho was a “God and His people” project.

We are often baffled that God delights in using flawed and weak human vessels to accomplish His tasks. But God does. Though the Angel of the Lord is identified as the Lord of hosts, the Captain of the armies of Heaven, there is still a Divine command issued that the people must sweep in over the fallen walls. God delights in exercising His almighty power through weak vessels to win eternal victories.

Just as every Christian, and person for that matter, is underneath God’s sovereign reign, so too was Jericho. Israel would learn that God was bigger than Jericho, just as their fathers had learned that God was bigger than Egypt and Pharaoh. **There are no walls that can keep God out.** He is over all!

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

Canaan was not given to Israel because they were a “better” people. God explains:

Deuteronomy 9:4-5

"Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you. Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

That we are able to overcome challenges and struggles in our walk of faith is not to our own credit. (see Phil. 4:13) **God Himself is the Divine Enabler for us to do everything that He commands us to do.** God used Israel, not because of their deserved merit earning His

favor, but because of His design to use weak and broken vessels to accomplish His purposes. And that is exactly His view toward every child of His.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. **What hardships exist between now and the end of our lives?**
2. **Why can't the Christian's life be without its problems and challenges?**
3. **Why does God allow us to enter into overwhelming situations?**
4. **Why does it take “walls” for us to recognize God's nearness and power?**
5. **What does having a “prepared heart” have to do with entering into the trials in our lives?**
6. **How does God seek to change us through “Jericho” moments?**

If you have any questions or want to discuss anything in these weekly lessons, please be sure to contact me! Brad.Jury@Capitol.Com.org

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