

## **JOSHUA: BATTLE OF JERICHO: MAN OF FAITH**

- How many of you remember the story of Joshua and the Battle of Jericho? (...)
- Can anyone share with us what they remember of this story? (It was the first battle of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. The walls of Jericho fell down after Joshua and all the army of Israel marched around it seven times, blowing their trumpets at the end.)
- To help us understand how humanly impossible this was, here are some some historical facts about this city and its walls to understand why this was such an amazing feat for the Israelites.
- Jericho was believed to be one of the oldest cities in the world.
- It was surrounded by mountains and then backed up by the Dead Sea, giving itself a natural fortification against enemies and making it an ideal maritime trade city.
- It benefited from natural irrigation from the Jordan River, which was about four miles away, making it a lush oasis in an otherwise barren desert, an envy to all the other nations around it.
- There were two walls surrounding the whole city of Jericho, one outer wall that was approximately 46 feet high and then another inner wall that was 26 feet high and 6 feet thick. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for the Israelites to penetrate the fortified city of Jericho.

-This is where our story starts. Joshua has led the people across the Jordan River and they have come to the walls of Jericho. They are looking at this great, fortified city, wondering how God is going to give it to them. At this time, they had never experienced warfare. And here, God is telling them it is time to take over this city behind all its fortified walls.

-Can you imagine what they may have been feeling as they are looking at these impenetrable walls? (...)

-What do you think were some of their feelings? (Hopelessness, weakness, discouragement, depression, fear, etc.)

-Many times it is good to take the stories in the bible and relate them to our own lives today and learn from them.

-Let's do this here for just a moment and imagine you are facing an impenetrable wall like the Israelites. It may not be physical as it was for them, but maybe it is.

-Have you ever felt you have come against an impenetrable wall of a discouraging diagnosis in your health? Or in your finances? Maybe it is an impenetrable wall in your relationship with your mate, a family member or a friend? Or it could be a wall of loneliness or depression that seems too hard to break through? Or maybe it is something else that is too hard to even put into words? (...)

-Just as they experienced these feelings, so do we in a different time and place.

-But, there is hope! The God of the Israelite Army is the same God today as He was yesterday! Just as He helped the Israelite army penetrate these walls, He will do the same for us. What may seem impossible with man is not impossible with God!

-Let's first look at our #1 verse on our Verse Sheet to see Who this God is that is able to do this for us. Let's read it aloud together, it begins with Joshua meeting someone before the battle: (Joshua 5:13-15 "Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he

looked up and saw a Man, standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' 'Neither,' He replied, 'but as Commander of the Army of the Lord I have now come.' Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground, in reverence, and asked Him, 'What message does *my Lord* have for His servant?' The *Commander of the Lord's Army* replied, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so.")

**-Let's learn about this amazing God of ours, who fights the battles for us.**

**-When Joshua asked this "Man" who He was with, what was His response?**

("Neither, but as Commander of the Army of the Lord.")

**-Does anyone know Who Joshua was actually talking to?** (God Himself, God the Warrior, Jesus Incarnate meaning God the Son taking on a fleshly, bodily form, Ex. 3:5)

**-God fights for us!**

**-And why do you think when Joshua asked Him if He was for them or their enemies that God answered "neither"?** (Because God is always about His cause. He is the Commander of all and we must be enlisted in His cause. His cause was to give the Israelites a nation and eventually the promise of salvation to all the world through His Son Jesus. His cause in our lives is for far greater and eternal things than we can imagine.)

**-Sometimes, when you are in a difficult situation do you ever wonder "God, are you on my side?" (...)**

**-But here's a thought, maybe we should be saying "God, even in this difficult situation, I want to be on *Your* side. I trust You and Your greater purpose for me and those I am praying for in this situation that You will do what is best for all of us."**

**-How do you think that would help us view our situations?** (With more courage and peace and hope.)

**-Let's read our next set of verses to see what God tells Joshua, #2 on our Verse**

**Sheet:** (Joshua 6:1-2 "Now the gates of Jericho were *securely barred* because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, '*See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.*'")

**-What does it tell us about the city?** (It was securely barred, closed up, secure for war.)

**-And yet, what did the Lord say?** ("See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.")

**-Had Joshua and the Israelites done anything yet?** (No)

**-They were just looking at this city, wondering how they were going to conquer it and God said "Don't worry about it, it's already done! I have delivered it into your hands!"**

**-I'm sure it seemed odd to Joshua as he was looking at this fortified city that the Lord told Him "See, I *have delivered* Jericho." This was said in past tense, as if it was already done, and yet all Joshua could see was the present fortified city, nothing changing.**

**-Have you felt that way in your own lives? You prayed and prayed and are trusting in the Lord but all you see is the present circumstances in front of you? (...)**

**-How can that affect your faith?** (It can challenge it.)

**-Do we believe that God has already made a way even though we cannot see it? (...)**

**-Let's look at how Joshua handled this in his own life and learn from his example of faith.**

**-Let's read #3 on our Verse Sheet together:** (Joshua 6:3-7 “[The Lord said] ‘March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 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. 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.’ *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.’ And he ordered the army, ‘Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord.’*”)

**-What did Joshua do when the Lord told him to march around the city for seven days? (He did it, right away!)**

**-Did he ask how or why? (No)**

**-Do we sometimes ask God how or when He is going to fix something? (...)**

**-Or maybe, when you prayed about that certain situation, did God ask you to do something that you thought was just crazy? (An example: You're praying and He tells you to call that person who is super angry with you and apologize to them, even though you know you are right?)**

**-Do you do it right away? (If you're like most, probably not!) ☺**

**-We can learn from Joshua's example. He didn't question God, in obedience he just did what God said, trusting the outcome to the Lord.**

**-Do you think during those 6 days Joshua may have wondered as he was marching around the city if the Lord was really going to come through, maybe when he was tired and thirsty? (...)**

**-Have we ever done this when we are tired and weary from a situation, wondering when God was going to come through?(...)**

**-But, look at this faithful man. He and Caleb were two of the tens spies who faithfully believed that God would help them conquer the land of Canaan 40 years earlier when Moses sent them over to spy on the land.**

**-He believed and had faith that God would be their Warrior, their Conqueror and their Provider. Not much has changed in his faith since those 40 years ago! He jumped right up when the Lord told him what to do with Jericho and said, “I believe, let's go!”**

**-Are you willing to have that kind of faith in God as well? (...)**

**-Are you willing to say, God, even though I can't see it, I believe and I'm letting it go at Your feet, trusting You in every situation? That whatever the outcome, it will be for Your glory and not my desire?(...)**

**-Let's continue with our story to see what happens, #4 on our Verse Sheet:** (Joshua 6:15-16 & 20 “On the seventh day, they [the Israelites] got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner [blowing their trumpets but never making

any other sound], except that on that day they circled the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, *Joshua commanded the army, 'Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!* 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.”)

**-What did Joshua command?** (“Shout! For the Lord has give you the city!”)

**-The walls haven’t even fallen down yet and Joshua is shouting “The Lord has given you the city!”** What faith we can learn from!

**-Can you proclaim that today? Can you shout out “Lord, I believe in You! I believe in your promises and I believe you are taking care of this situation even though it looks as if nothing has changed, but to you it is already done?” (...)**

**-When we do this, it gives God glory because it is an act of faith in Him and what He is doing in our situations. Faith is believing in Him, His Word and His promises even when we cannot see.**

**-Just when it seemed impossible to the Israelites, God crumbled the walls and destroyed that city of Jericho, crushing the army within and only leaving a little for Joshua’s army to finish.**

**-This same Commander is with us too.**

**-He is doing that same mighty work in our own lives and situations even today. He is crumbling our own walls and strongholds and delivering us and others as we pray and walk in faith and belief in Him.**

**-Let us remember that God is crushing the armies of discouragement, hopelessness, pain and suffering, even if we cannot see it at the moment with our human eyes.**

**-He crushed Satan and all that he stands for when He died on the cross and then rose from the grave. He stepped forth a Victor, and the scripture even records it by saying in Colossians 2:15 *“He disarmed the powers and authorities [of darkness]...made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”***

**-So, let’s trust in Him to set the battle plan. Follow His leadership. Surrender our struggles and cares to Him and let Him fight for us ---for His own glory and not our own desires.**

**-Let us pray, Father, give us that kind of faith that follows You wherever You lead. Make us warriors in your great army and not our own private one. Grant that we may join the hosts of heaven on that great Day when Jesus returns. For His sake, we pray. Amen.**

## “Joshua: Battle of Jericho: Man of Faith” Verse Sheet

1. Joshua 5:13-15 “Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a Man, standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, ‘Are you for us or for our enemies?’ *‘Neither,’ he replied, ‘but as Commander of the Army of the Lord I have now come.’* Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground, in reverence, and asked Him, ‘What message does *my Lord* have for His servant?’ The *Commander of the Lord’s Army* replied, ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”
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