

All right. Let's open our Bibles tonight to Joshua 6. Welcome to all of you that are watching at home, and those of you that should be here and are home because you're lazy, shame on you. (Laughing) Feeling better. Can you tell? (Laughing) Yeah. Well it's great. We had a guy write to us from across the country; got saved just listening on the feed. So, God has a way of getting His Word out for sure.

Joshua 6. The book of Joshua covers only twenty-five years of history. In fact, it runs from roughly 1405 to 1379 B.C., and it is much the focus of God's Spirit upon a second generation of folks who were sent to occupy a Land of Promise. It really is a book of conquest, a book of victory, if you will. We've told you a lot, but it bears repeating that Old Testament historical Israel is really a typology in terms of it's called typical history because there are pictures in their dealings with God and all that are painted for us, not only in the terms of our hearts and our outlooks but in terms of God's work in our hearts and lives today. Paul, when he wrote to the Corinthians (in 1 Corinthians 10:11), said that all of these things that happened to Israel happened for our example so that they could be an admonition to us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. He wrote to the Romans (in chapter 15:4) that everything that was written beforehand was written for our learning so that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. So the Old Testament is important to learn because in it you will find typified the relationship that you and I are supposed to have with the Lord. So, whenever we read Egypt (early on) and the deliverance from Egypt, we mentioned to you before Egypt is always a type of sin or of your old life where you were in bondage, where you were headed for death, where life was suffering, there was an enemy that was greater than you, nobody was for you, and there is no way to get out unless God comes to deliver you from it. The Red Sea, that place that parted and the children of Israel went out, is used in the Bible, from a spiritual standpoint, as baptism. It is a picture of going through, if you will, by faith that place where God brings you out from an old life and promises you a new one as you head for the Land of Promise. The Land of Promise, again, is not heaven. It is a place, though, that you spiritually win with your relationship with the Lord. You're still in the world. You're still fighting cities with big walls like Jericho. There're still giants in the land much stronger than you. But you've learned and are learning to walk with God, and so it is a Spirit-filled life where God guides and fights your battles and where He delivers

you and enables you every day to walk. There is a wilderness wandering that the children of Israel went through. It took six weeks to get to Sinai. They wandered around for a while as well on the way to the Land of Promise. It is an important place to be because it is a place where every, I think, Christian has to go through; where you begin your walk with faith and you come out of the wilderness going, "I've got to learn to trust God. I've got to learn to depend upon Him. He's faithful to His Word." It is in the wilderness where you learn to rely upon Him and not upon yourself, to seek His wisdom and not your own. But you're going to need all that when you move into the Land of Promise.

So the fact that the nation of Israel was, for forty years, in the wilderness going around in circles kind of aimlessly is a pretty good indicator of the fact that they could have been where God wanted them to be, but they didn't obey, and they didn't go there. And because of that they found themselves with little to report. In fact, I think we've mentioned to you quite often that there's very little written about those forty years; very little written at all because, like I said, there was nothing to report. It's pretty symbolic of pictures of Christians who get saved, and they come to know the Lord, and they begin to walk with God, and yet they never enter into a life of victory. They're wandering around in the wilderness. They're not really in the Land of Promise. They're not talking about the victory that God can give or the miracles of God or the power of God's Spirit. They're forever talking to you about the lack of water and the lack of terrain and the hard row to go, and, "Oh, man. It's so hard to live for Jesus, and I'm really goin' through it." They never really get out of there. They spend their entire life (kind of) there. They'll make heaven, but they're not going to bring much with them in the process. So, you find Christians that do really well for the first couple years, and then, after that initial deliverance, they just kind of settle in. That's as far as they're going to go.

When we came to the crossing of the Jordan River under Joshua's leadership, it really is a picture of a believer who reckons the old man dead now and who's going to go and take on a battle that he can't win without God's help. It's a picture of a guy who's been crucified with Christ and finds himself in a position where he has to now walk bravely and confidently in the Lord. "I'm going to go take the land. I'm going to go see what God's going to do with me." And Paul said to the Romans (8:1) about "no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." And that's certainly what we find in the lives of those who are crossing this Jordan. There's this anticipation,

and then the land of Canaan itself is a place where God's people are found battling enemies that they can't win against but yet, by God's strength, they can't lose. And it really speaks of the mature Christian life. The lust, the anger, the bitterness, the selfishness, the carnal drives or the materialistic outlooks - those things that limit me in my outlook in life - I begin to deal with. And God begins to deal with me and those sins that easily beset me. And then God gets you forward - you grow, you get beyond just getting by every day. Now you're starting to really make some headway and gain some ground, if you will. Paul, when he wrote to the Romans, said in chapter 7:18, "I know that in my flesh dwells no good thing." But that's not a statement you can make living in the wilderness. You think your flesh is fine. It isn't until you begin to really walk with God and want to walk with God that you can say, "I don't have what it takes. I find myself looking at the walls of Jericho and realizing there's no way I'm going to take these walls out." It's a sign of spiritual maturity. I remember, for so many years as a young Christian, wanting to prove to God that there was some good in me, making God promises I couldn't keep. "But You wait and see, Lord. This time I'm going to do good." And it never did work. And there was an awful lot of frustration in that. There's a lot more joy when you realize you can't, but God will still use you. You're kind of a flake, but God's still going to pour His Spirit out. You know? And that makes far more sense, and it's certainly a lot less pressure.

Just as a side note, the children of Israel were already God's children in the wilderness, but they were just weak. He didn't disown them. They died there in judgment, but they were His. They were torn by their flesh, they were going nowhere, their life was nothing but a struggle and a constant place of defeat. There wasn't much joy and peace. But here's this next generation - they're actually going to move forward now. And I hope that that's your story as well. I don't know how long you've been saved, but you've got to move forward. There's no such thing as hovering as a Christian or just kind of arriving in twenty minutes. It's a battle that you've got to continue to chase.

Well, when the children of Israel were brought to this Land of Promise - and the glorious lessons in this book of victory were all about let the Spirit lead, and let faith conquer and trust God for your every step - in reality, the LORD had already promised them the land. He says it, I think, six times in the first four chapters of this book. He says, "Just go possess your possession. I give you the land." He said it six different times, four chapters. "It's yours! It's yours. Just go get it. Wherever your foot lands, that's yours." Because God wants you to have (real

victory in your life, He wants the giants defeated, if you will, He wants your flesh put down, the strongholds of the enemy let go. He has far more available than we're willing to pick up, far more in mind for you than you have for yourself. But you find this people who had not arrived and yet were told to, "Go and arrive, go and take, and press ahead." Paul was able to say to the Philippians (3:13-14), "I'm not there yet, but I'm pressin' on. I know God's got more for me than I've been able to realize." I think he said to the Corinthians, at the end of the 1 Corinthians passage, "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Right? "God has brought me this far." It's the old Popeye verse, right? "I am what I am." That's what he said. And Paul realized that there was a lot further for him to go.

Well, so far in Joshua we've spent a couple of weeks looking at Joshua's preparation. He's a guy that is 75-80 years old by the time he finally gets to do his thing. We've looked at the two spies who met Rahab and heard from her what the impression that God left upon her heart as a heathen just hearing about what God was doing with His people on the other side of the Jordan; even the parting of the Red Sea and all. She was ready to meet their God. She had heard and had believed in Him. She was saved. She had saving faith. We looked at the crossing of the Jordan River, swollen at flood season - specifically as the priests carried God's presence, the Ark, into the waters that were raging; and the LORD rolled the Jordan back upstream some sixteen miles. They took twelve stones from the bottom of the River and took them to Gilgal, a couple of miles away from the River (that first night where they stayed) to commemorate God's work to remind the kids down the road this is what God had done. Joshua took twelve others and set them right in the midst of the River so when the River was down you could still see it sitting there. This is exactly where it took place. And then last week, in chapter 5, as the children of Israel are going into the Land of Promise, God reinstated a couple of things that He had established early on that they'd let slip: circumcision, a rite of cutting away of the flesh - it was a symbolic action on the part of the Jews that made them God's people; and then Passover, which celebrated God's deliverance for them from Egypt. But both of those things had to do with their fellowship with the LORD. The manna quit falling out of the sky. They were now no longer and did not have a visible reminder of God's presence - no cloud by day, no fire by night, no food from heaven. Now they had to begin to walk by faith. So, at the end of chapter 5 last week, we saw Joshua out scouting out Jericho, running into Jesus of all people (as the Angel of the LORD) and being encouraged that the LORD would be with him. He was the Commander of the army, and this was holy

ground, and this was God's work. And much like Moses met with the LORD, so Joshua before this begins.

So tonight we begin the conquest of the land. It isn't very long in the book of Joshua. There aren't many insights, if you will, from the battles. The next three chapters are very important. After that, there are some applications before the land is divided and all, and that'll go a lot quicker towards the end of the book. But we're going to go into the conquest. Tonight - Jericho - that was a victory. Next week - Ai - that wasn't so good. And so we'll look at four principles tonight on how to win in taking the land back. We'll look next week at some principles on how you can lose it. And chapter 8, there is an application of presumption, and it's also not good; so that the children of Israel are learning to move forward. But there's lots for them to learn. So there are these two battles at Ai and Jericho, there's this deal with the Gibeonites, and then there's very little told to us. In fact, the whole conquest of the land is written out in about a chapter and a half without any battles really being told to you, other than they fought these four guys, and they fought those five guys, and pretty much then they mopped up. You don't get much more lessons than these in particular, which the LORD sets before us to teach us.

So, let me give you four principles about (at least will come out of the chapter itself) that you might want to write down and remember. And here's the first one - and it's found in the first couple of verses: God has already provided victory for you. God has already provided victory for you. Verse 1 says this, "Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the LORD said to Joshua, 'See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.'" When Rahab had met with the spies (back in chapter 2), she had said to these spies, "We've heard about all that your God has done these past forty years. We're aware of the fall of those kings on the other side of the Jordan. We've heard all of the details, and we were moved by those things." And it had been that last year - God never judges without first warning and giving a time of repentance. There were few people in Jericho - though they knew what Rahab knew - that it mattered to. Rahab had that faith that saves. She heard. She said, "If that's the case, man, He's the One I've got to know. He's the One I have to serve." And though there were these amazing works that were laid out before them (in history and also in report), nobody really moved. But Rahab did. She moved enough to go and get her extended family to come to know the LORD, to gather in her house there so when the LORD came to judge that they would be saved. And they were. No matter how many in the city turned to the

LORD, however, He's always willing to forgive and to restore those who call upon His name; and that was no different from her. It was Peter who wrote in chapter 3:9 of the second letter, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." So, she came. But the people didn't come. Now, the LORD said to Joshua, the leader, "The city's yours." But I would challenge you that outwardly he couldn't have found that to be very comforting. "The city's yours," and then we read, "Yep, it's all closed up, it's locked up, the gates are closed, nobody's going out, nobody's coming in. They're terrified, but it's yours." "Okay, I guess that's mine. I don't know how I'm gonna get in there. I don't know how I'm gonna take it over. I don't know what I'm gonna do." The people in the town, rather than repenting as Rahab did because she had information about this God of Israel, were not yet under attack, but they were greatly afraid. There were 2½ million people outside the wall. That's enough to frighten you. Right? And they don't look necessarily threatening, but 2½ million loiterers is enough to get you upset. But it didn't cause them to repent as it did Rahab; it just doubled their efforts on their own to try to lock God out. Notice the words, "Let's make the city secure." Well, now, wait a minute. He rolled back the Jordan sixteen miles. He parted the Red Sea. He's leveled kingdoms - big, strong kings on the other side (on the east side of the Jordan River). What are these guys thinking? They're now just going to lock the door and throw away the key? That's gonna be good. No. That's silly! That was the best they could do. The LORD says to Joshua, "Take a look. That's yours. The king is yours. Their army is yours. That city belongs to you." God has already provided victory for me. You should know that that's true. They said, "Batten down the hatches." The LORD says, "I'm going to give you the city." Now He had said the same thing back in chapter 1:3 about the entire land - the whole Land of Promise. "This is yours. I'm going to give this to you." Given. And what they would have to do simply is to appropriate what God had given, to look to Him, to be brave, to always obey His direction by faith; and, as a result, following His Word, they would find themselves overcoming in these monumental battles that they could not win on paper but could not lose with the LORD's help. So the first thing they had to be convinced of is that God was telling them the truth, that this was the only way that they were going to have victory - trust God.

Now God has given you and me, as His people, tremendous promises of victory in His Son. We have promises in the Bible that we can have peace. Do you have peace? And if you don't have it, is it because God's holding it back, or you're just not appropriating it? He's told us we can overcome sin in our life by His power,

that we can have joy in the midst of trials, that everything works together for good to those who love Him. But all of those things, though they are available, have to be put into practice. If you're not responding to that, you might very well shake your head and say, "Well that's not true. I don't feel that peace."

But look what God said to Joshua. "I've given the city and the king and the army into your hand." Now what do they have to do? Well now they're going to have to go take it - somehow. "God, lead us. Show us how." But don't lose the principle. God has given, God has delivered, God has provided victory before they ever took a step forward.

How am I to conquer the flesh that I battle with in my own strength? I don't know. I can't. "All right. From this day on, I'm not gonna worry anymore. I swear to God. I'm not gonna blow my stack anymore. I'm not gonna talk out of turn every morning. I'm gonna count to 10 before I say anything. I'm not gonna sin today. I'm not gonna tolerate it anymore." Well good luck with all of that. (Laughing) Joshua could have taken that tack, but if he'd have followed that track, how would he have ever overthrown the city? He could have never overthrown it no matter how well-intentioned he was. He had to simply turn to the LORD, believe in Him against all odds, and realize that God would give him the victory. And the same thing with you. You got worrying problems? Hey, look. "God, help me to rest in You." Right? "You've given me the victory. You have it all in store. It's my issue that has to be dealt with by You."

So when the LORD says, "I've given," then the only thing He says to Joshua is, "Now you go in and possess it." The victory was available, the victory was sure, the victory was unalterable. It's not going to change. The LORD wasn't going, "Man, I hope we win." He's not in Vegas bettin' on the Jews. No. He knew. He knew. And in your life, Jesus paid the price. He's fought the battle. He's won the war. He doesn't need my help. He doesn't need my advice. He doesn't need my strength or my ability. "I have given. I have given you....." "Thank you." So receive it. And you do it by faith. First principle. Never forget that God has provided victory for you already. It's not dependent upon you. It's dependent upon Him and His work in you.

Secondly, principle two - always follow His directions, even if you don't agree with them or understand how they work. Now that might be a given, but boy, there're a lot of folks that stop here. "Well I don't get how that's gonna work. I don't agree

with that." Well, with the declaration and the promise in verse 2, God then gives to Joshua a rather unique battle plan. Notice verse 3. He said, " 'You shall march around the city.' " (Now remember he's already said, "It's yours"). " 'But I want you to march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him' " or literally, "There'll be nothing in his way."

So, God has provided victory for you - one. Number two - now follow His direction to find that victory, even if you don't understand how it works or you're not in agreement with His instruction. Now, I agree with you. I read this, and I say to you it's very specific instructions, and it's very clear instructions, and if it wasn't for the LORD saying them, they would be very weird instructions. Or very bizarre. They would be ridiculous. I would not sign up for this army. It makes no sense to anyone except the man whose eyes are upon the LORD. It makes no sense. I'm not trying to get you to explain why you're obeying the LORD, but do so because His ways will lead to the victory that He's already provided. So this is the first battle into the land. This is the first battle. They've had battles on the other side for a year. They've experienced that God is not to be trifled with. You can trust His Word. They didn't come to this thing unarmed, so to speak. They knew that God had strategy and that His ways worked. They'd been obedient to Him. But they were going to learn - in this first battle for this big town, this huge victory going in - that the victory that God provided was always discovered by them through obedience. The only way you discover God's victory is through obedience. No other way. No other way because faith drives the obedience. So I don't know what the people of Jericho were thinking when they heard these directions. I don't know if somebody looked at somebody else and said, "Who voted for him? I don't even believe what we're doin' here. This is ridiculous." And watching this go on every day. When Isaiah wrote, in chapter 55, "The LORD said, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways. They are higher than your thoughts. They are higher than your ways.' " They're beyond you finding out. You can't figure out what God is doing. Well, there's the principle - do what God says even when you don't understand because it's God who said so. It seems to me that it is often our lack of understanding, when the Lord gives us direction, that keeps us defiant or



reasoning that disobedience is a likely course to take. I can't begin to tell you how many people, when they come in for counseling, you'll say, "Well, this is what the Bible says," and they'll say things like, "I can't see how that will possibly work." No, no, no. "I don't know if you know, really, my situation." I say, "No, I don't. But here's what the Bible says about your situation." And they'll say, "Is there anyone else here I could talk to?" (Laughing) Because they don't want that. They're sure that somehow we've missed the boat on that. And so I can understand that some of these folks with Joshua might have been prone to second thoughts. Attacking a big walled city like Jericho, somebody might have said, "Well, can you just pick a smaller place? Can you pick a place that maybe would be a little easier to deal with? Do we need to really stretch ourselves that far? I didn't hear you talk about battering rams. I didn't hear anything about catapults. You didn't even use the words 'scaling ladders.' You said, 'March and blow a trumpet and shout.' Really? And then we're going to scare them on day seven? We're all going to yell at them? Come on, Joshua!" But you see, God wants to give you a victory in such a way that when it's all said and done, He gets credit. Right? So if you'll do what He says, and it doesn't even make any sense to you, "But I'm going to do it Your way, Lord," if you'll go His way, and you'll do the way that He says, then He'll get the credit. You'll just stand back going, "I didn't think that was ever gonna work! Lord, You're awesome. I can't believe You pulled that off." If Jericho had been won by a battle strategy that everyone would have applauded as marvelous in wisdom, they would have spent the time patting each other on the back rather than worshipping the LORD. "We're so ingenious. We had such good fortune. Man, we got some breaks." This way, this ludicrous way, the only One who gets credit is the LORD. Nobody else gets any credit. And often God will require things of you and me that we don't understand just for the purpose of setting Himself apart in our sight. I don't know how many times I've said to the Lord, "How is praying and blessing my enemy going to make him any less my enemy? Why would I pray for him? I don't like him! Break his teeth in his mouth. Is that a prayer, Lord? Does that count?" (Laughing) If I start loving him, I'm going to lose track of him. I can't do that. I hate him, I can find him. I don't see how that's going to work. I don't know how my giving regularly to those in need is going to meet my needs. How does that work?" And my answer to you is I don't know. I don't know. My answer in most things to you, when it says, "What about the Lord?" is going to be I don't know. "How is Bible study going to bring me peace?" I don't know. "How is marching around the city seven times and blowing trumpets and yelling going to knock the walls down?" I don't know. I just know He knows. I don't know. You want to ask God, "Why?" Ask Him. When people come to me, and if you should be in the same shoe, and they say,

"Why do you think the Lord.....?" just say, "I don't know." Just stop them. It's a short conversation. You can walk away. You get your day back. It's fine.

(Laughing) "I don't know." "Why do you think?" "I don't know." I love saying, "I don't know" because I don't know. I just know God needs to be obeyed, and He's not about to explain it to me. His ways are beyond my finding out. They are higher than my ways. So I don't know. I don't know. "Well how is this real?" "I don't know." But God said do it. We can always rationalize not acting in faith. That's easy. People will agree with you. "I was going to do that, but that didn't seem reasonable." You're right. Everyone will agree with you. "It doesn't look good on paper. How is it going to work?" And my answer is if you just do what He says, obedience brings victory from the Lord's hand which He has prepared. And just as a side note - and you can kid of mark it as you go - we will read time and again that Joshua got up early to go do what he was told. Verse 12 says "Joshua rose early in the morning" to do God's Word. He doesn't drag his feet. Verse 15, "They rose early." It was like, "Let's get up and do what God said" rather than, "Let's have a meeting and talk about how crazy this is and why we shouldn't do this." The second principle that you find from this first victory in the Land of Promise, which was just a huge step for these guys, was, look, follow God's directions even when you don't fully understand how it works or whether you even agree with it.

Here's the third principle - important one - praise the LORD for a victory that is yet to come. Praise the LORD for a victory that is yet to come. Now I'm not suggesting that if you'll do that, you'll twist God's arm to actually bring it. I'm suggesting that faith would allow you to worship before it's done. And that's certainly what the LORD calls upon them here. Verse 6, "Then Joshua the son of Nun" (one of my first kid jokes I remember was that Joshua had no parents; he was the son of Nun). You remember that one? I can't help but think about that every time I read the "son of Nun." It was really funnier than that. That's okay, though. (Laughing) Think about it, you'll get it at home. "Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.' And he said to the people, 'Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD.' So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, 'You shall

not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, "Shout!" Then you shall shout.' So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp" back to Gilgal. And notice verse 12, "And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: 'Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.' " So, praise the Lord for the victory yet to come. On day seven, after this whole long week, I imagine those in Jericho might have said, "All right. You can unlock the doors. They're no threat." But on the seventh day, they went around seven times, the priests blew the horn, Joshua said, "Shout," and as the command (verse 16) was to "Shout" from the leader, the shout of faith, because verse 16 the shouting was faithful shouting, isn't it? The walls were still standing, the city still looked strong. Nothing has, by any means, changed. They were told, "The spoils aren't yours. Don't touch the stuff we take. Later on, you'll get it as a reward. This time you didn't do anything except obey. God did all the work. He gets all the stuff. He gets all the credit. He gets all the honor. You didn't do anything, so don't touch it. Don't bring God's curse upon you. This all belongs to Him." But the last bit of instruction from the LORD to the people, through Joshua, was that they should shout praises to the LORD for the awesome work of overthrowing this secured city. Now look, it would be easy to yell and scream if the walls fell down. I think there'd be a lot of hootin' and hollerin' then. There are many people who are just so happy when God answers prayer, as well we should be. But faith comes when you're waiting for an answer. Faith comes when God hasn't answered, and you still believe that He's good, and His timing is still

better than yours, and His decisions are far smarter than your own. That's when real worship begins because now I've placed God in a position that He belongs in, and I'm not motivated by any false sense of, "Well, I got what I wanted." I'm only motivated by my knowledge of who He is. And so the people were told, "Yell, shout, scream at the top of your lungs. Worship. Acknowledge God's work. You're doing what God has said. He's to be praised." Only God will require of us those kinds of behaviors - where we acknowledge His work not because we've seen it already but because He said He would. Right? When they shouted (in verse 16), it required that they do that based solely upon the fact that God had said, "When you shout, the walls fall. When you shout, you'll be able to go in." So, as they go into the Land of Promise to possess their possessions, you'll hear even today lots of shouts of faith, that the Lord's on your side in the battle, that the Lord's on your side in the challenge, that the Lord is on your side in the trial. But shouting ..... and victory shouts, when you hear them before the victory is brought, that's important. That's an important issue, and you would do well (as you go forward) to worship the Lord before the victory comes. It's coming. God's faithful. He's able. So worship rather than, "Oh, man. I hope He comes through." No, He will.

Notice in verse 20 these words, "So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword." One statement tells God's fulfillment of His promise to the faithful. Paul would write to the Hebrews years later, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30). God was blessed by their faithfulness. The miracles followed their actions of faith. Obedience leads to the fruitfulness of faith. Know that. Obedience to the commandments of God will yield the fruit of faith. Always true. Just do what He says, and worship Him in the process. Look, you could be in church tonight facing some very severe times - daunting challenges, insurmountable obstacles, difficulties. How glorious it would be if you could take those things and set beside them God's promises, line them up with God's promises, and be able to worship God knowing that He'll handle them. That's a big step in the right direction when it comes to growing spiritually, to sing His praises before the outworking of His promised deliverance, before I see it. I remember Pastor Chuck years ago, in our classes that we took there for leadership, said, "My dad" (speaking of his father) "would always make promises like, 'Tonight after church I'll take you for ice

cream. I know you guys love ice cream.' And we'd all go, 'Oh, yeah, can't wait for ice cream. Can't wait for church to get over so we can have ice cream.' He said, if I'd have said to my dad, 'Oh, please, help me to believe you, please tell me that you're not lying to me, we're going to really have ice cream,' he said, 'my dad's heart would have been broken.' He said, 'The Lord does the same thing.' Here're the promises. Now you can rest in them and know them to be true." So, look. What about worshipping the Lord while you're out of work and looking for work? Because God's going to provide your every need, isn't He? How about worshipping Him with rejoicing while you're looking for that perfect husband or wife that you don't have? Or while you're praying for that kid that's gone astray? Or while you're witnessing to someone who just won't hear you, and you love them? Or while you're churning over somebody who's hurt you or disappointed you? And God can still be worshipped. He's still in charge. So shouts of victory - it's a secret from the Lord to His own. This is they're entering into a Spirit-filled life. This is the first battle that they have in a land where they're supposed to learn to live trusting God. And so they go forward.

Verse 22, "But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, 'Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.' And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, 'Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.' So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country." The fruit of Rahab's faith is evidenced now - her whole family is saved: from a country, in a city, among a people that hated God, that were marked for destruction; and she comes out, and she's this gem. It was Hebrews 11:31 where Paul says, "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace." So, her faith on display brought salvation to her family. Now we know that her house (verse 15 of chapter 2) was upon the wall. Now we read all of the walls fall down. So we have to believe - at least putting those two verses together - there's a little part of the wall that

stayed up - her apartment hanging over the edge, maybe 30' up off the ground from what archeologists tell us. If that's true, can you imagine? Everything falls down, and there's that one apartment, and everybody in it, and they brought them out. And then it can fall down. But what a testimony to God's people. She's brought out safely. Now, she would eventually have a child named Boaz, and he would marry Ruth, and they'd have a boy named Obed who would bear a boy named Jesse, who would have a son named David. So here a woman from a very cursed race of people, a Moabitess, finds her way into the genealogy of Jesus, and she's listed in the family tree in Matthew. You know how when you have family, and there's always that one uncle you don't want to tell anybody about? Jesus' got all kinds of those people in His genealogy - folks that culturally and behaviorally would have been, "We don't want to talk about them guys," the Lord puts them right out front. "This is why I've come to save." So Rahab is there in Matthew 1. So worship God before the victory is seen because you are sure that He will do as He says.

Finally, the last two verses and the fourth principle, take no credit or reward for yourself for God's work. Take no credit or reward for yourself for God's work. Joshua, at the time of the overthrow of the city, prophesies and pronounces a curse upon the next person who would try to rebuild the city of Jericho; a curse that literally said, "If you try to rebuild this city, it's going to take your life. Your firstborn son is going to be there when you start, and your youngest son is still going to be around to help you when you've put on the gates." So, it's really a word of, "This city will not be built for a long time, and when it's built, it will take a long time." If you write in the margin 1 Kings 16:34, there was a fellow that did come along in those days, and he built this city again. It was finished in 930 B.C., which would have been 475 years, if you will, down the road from where we are. And this verse is referenced in that 1 Kings 16:34, and the guy's name was Hiel of Bethel. "He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun."

Now remember back in verse 18 that Joshua had declared that there was a curse upon the things in the city because God had claimed it for Himself - the spoils were His. The fourth principle, I think, comes from this thought in the sense that, "Give the Lord His honor." That's really what Joshua is saying. "Don't take anything out of the city because you didn't do anything. God did. You just obeyed." The reward for obedience is victory. You have that already. But Paul said to the

Corinthians, "No flesh should glory in God's presence" (1 Corinthians 1:29). And when God begins to deliver you, in your life, from difficulty, whether it is your most feeble efforts that He blesses, or whether He blesses your hardest work, make sure He gets the glory. Right? One of the things that the LORD spoke when Aaron's boys were killed for their burning of strange fire (there in Leviticus 10), He said, "Before the people, I must be glorified. He who comes close to Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified." Translation - don't ever do anything in such a way that you get credit. Let God be glorified. And I'm telling you it works, doesn't it? The times in the Bible where you'll see people wanting honor for the work is about the time they fall.

Can you imagine these folks in the camp that night, if they had sat around the campfire, and they said, "Man, that was really hard for us the whole week to march in silence, I didn't even say a word, it was the hardest thing I ever did"? Or somebody that would say, "Man, I yelled so loud I think I hurt my voice, but I did it for Jesus, did it for the Lord. Because of that, look what happened to Jericho." That's kind of silly, but that's kind of what we do. Look, if God hadn't promised and then knocked down the walls, what would have all of that actions of your God have gotten you?

So the fourth principle is very important because the next chapter literally says when you take credit for yourself, you're probably going to run headlong into God's judgment. Joshua glorified the LORD. Verse 27 says (the last verse) that the news of this victory spread like wildfire, and everyone got to hear it. If you wanted to write out the mission strategy of God in the Old Testament, it was pretty straightforward. And the strategy was this - choose a people (not the greatest, not the best, not the strongest, ones that You would choose), put Your name upon them, and then send them out to bear Your message that You were willing to love anyone that would listen to You, and let them demonstrate that relationship to the world. Whether it was a Jew or a Gentile - anyone that would call upon His name - He would save. When Solomon stood, and he dedicated the Temple that he was allowed to build with the stuff that his dad, David, had gathered together, part of the prayer, there in 1 Kings 8, that he prayed over the dedication was, "LORD, if a foreigner who's not a part of our people Israel comes from another country for Your name's sake" - in other words, he's drawn here because of what he heard about You - "(for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm)" - they're going to hear about You like, "That's what happened to Rahab" - "and when they hear about You and they

come to pray in this place, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name." But Solomon had it absolutely right. If our lives are lived in such a way that people meet the Lord through our lives, that's God's intention, that's the mission strategy of the Old Testament. Right? And at least for this portion of Scripture, they did exactly what they were told. They did the right thing until that Achan fellow who decided he would help himself to the glory that God really deserved and should have only deserved.

With the miracle of the fall of Jericho, the rest of the Canaan cities received a pretty strong warning. Not only did they see the River run upstream, not only had they heard about the kings on the other side being overthrown, if they had heeded like Rahab had, many people would have been saved. Had they heeded like Nineveh did when Jonah preached, the whole city could have been saved. It didn't happen. But God's missionary method is still pretty much the same in the sense that God wants to use you and me to walk with Him in such a way that when people see us, they'll recognize who He is. And it starts with being. We are the body of Christ, and the foundation of most Christian communities is that there's a church in a community where people care for each other and pray for each other and serve one another. That's an attraction, and it attracts unbelievers. There's not a lot of that in the world. You trust nobody in the world. You know what I mean? When you find genuine love, it moves people. It usually drives them to you first and then, hopefully, you'll drive them to Jesus because of who you are and what He's made you. So the being is a huge deal. Be that Christian in the community.

Going is the next step, though, because body visibility lays the groundwork for sharing our faith. Unbelievers need to know the gospel. It needs to be explained to them. It isn't something that you just gather and understand. Even the law of sin needs to be shared. We should be the body, but we should then go and tell the world, and then, when it goes to the mission field, we should send people. And not all of you are called to go, but we're all called to be a part. So you're either a "goer" or a "sender," but you're a part. The equation doesn't work unless you have "goers" and "senders." All of you are missionaries wherever God has put you. By the way, if you ever want to go visit our missionaries, we will house you with them at no cost to you if that's where you want to go and see what the Lord is doing with them. We'll find a place for you to stay there so you can check it out. We can work that out with them. If you really want to go see what it's all about or what



they're doing, that'd be a good place for you to go. And then we give together to support what God is doing, and we pray.

I love the last verse here because it really says that God's work through the lives of His people leaves an impact and a legacy that people are moved by.

So it's a great chapter of victory. Unfortunately, the next chapter is a great chapter of defeat, and this is how you can just throw away all that God wants to do.

But here're the principles you want to walk away with tonight. Number one - God has provided victory for you already. Know that. Know that. Second of all - follow His directions even if they don't make any sense to you or you don't agree with them. Do what He says. Third - worship Him before victory is seen because if it's sure, you can sing. And fourthly - don't take credit for God's work; give Him credit. And then you can be used because God's not going to share His glory with you anyway. He wants the high five. Right? And He gets it for all He's done for us.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
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