

Joshua 6; II Cor. 10:1-6; Let the Walls Fall I. The Insurmountable Enemy II. The Strange Tactics III. The Glorious Victory

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, have you ever felt outmatched or outnumbered? I remember playing basketball in 8th grade and I was supposed to guard this particular player on the other team. There was really no contest- I was out of my league. Well, we find something similar in our text today. The Israelites are going up against a city that to all external appearance should have been able to repel their attack. Israel is outmatched! Jericho is too strong- or so it seems. Our passage opens with Joshua receiving a command from the commander of the LORD'S army- so the Son of God is instructing Joshua how to proceed. Last week we considered that the enemy we face is not an enemy of flesh and blood. This week we continue to see that we are to be engaged in a spiritual battle- we fight with divine power and we are equipped with spiritual weapons. We consider this theme: Jesus Christ secures complete victory for His people as He causes the walls of the enemy to fall down. As we work through our passage, we are going to see that our battle is a spiritual battle- and a victory that Christ has already gained!

### **I. The Insurmountable Enemy**

In our first point we consider the enemy- and how this enemy appears to be insurmountable! Our passage opens in v. 1 with Jericho being shut up inside and out. None went out- and none came in. Jericho was one of the oldest cities to be established. It has sometimes been called the "city of palms" because of the palm trees that grow in the area. It was well provided for- the land around it was fertile and the double walls were stable. And the city was itself supplied by a spring of water within its gates. Having just finished the harvest season and noting the advance of the Israelites, we can be sure that this city has been stocking up on food and would be well prepared for war. So the city of Jericho is shut up tight- we could say that it was locked up like Fort Knox. The gates were barred- the people were safe and secure behind her walls. Now the walls of Jericho will become our focus later on, but it is helpful to

note the size of these walls. The city of Jericho was built on a plateau of sorts. And on top of this plateau there was a great wall- over 13 feet high and 4 feet wide. Now this may not sound very tall to you- a little over a one story in height. But remember that this wall was on top of the natural plateau- the effect would be a 4-story sheer cliff that rose up from the ground. This is why the spies said that these cities are great and fortified up to the heavens as we read in Dt. 1:28. Now being well defended, supplied with plenty of grain and endless water, this city could last for months. A siege or blockage would likely be Joshua's only option- but that would take months to carry out. So at first blush, it looks like the deck is stacked against Joshua. Now there is a great lesson to be learned here. We need to learn not to be discouraged when we face enemies as well. The fact remains; insurmountable enemies are no problem for God! Giants fall before shepherd boys. Fiery furnaces do no harm. So even though we do face enemies- like the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh; we should not be discouraged and think that all hope is lost! We have Jesus as our conqueror and commander- we have the Holy Spirit who lives within us! If God is for us, who can be against us? Even death- that last and final enemy- cannot remove us from God's love or stand in the way of God's good purpose!

## **II. The Strange Tactics**

So Jericho has battened down the hatches as the storm of Israel's army rages against it- right? Well, not exactly. As we consider the strange tactics in our 2<sup>nd</sup> point, we see that the battle begins with a promise. In v. 2- I have given this city into your hands. There is an immediate promise of divine victory! I will fight for you- the LORD says- and I will give this city to you. There is no doubt about the outcome of this battle. After the promise of victory, we find the strange tactics that Joshua is to use. Go out as v. 3 continues- and march! March forth- not into battle- but march around the city! Marching is not the way to get to the battle here- marching is the battle itself! Now this does not make sense to your human minds- what little we know of war- we know that battles are not won simply by walking around. A marching army is more for a parade than for a battle! Walk around the city for 6 days. Let there be

silence. No war shouts or battle cries. Just have the troops go forth armed for battle- and yet orderly in their ranks- walk! We notice something about the order as well- the Israelites were to have a guard around the ark of the covenant. A forward guard and a rear guard behind it. The king sitting on his throne did not normally go to the front line of the battle- but when they did it was to encourage the men! So here- the very presence of the LORD with His people would have been a great encouragement and reminder- this is the LORD'S battle! He is leading us forth! Now this marching in a circle around the city went on for 6 days. Now you are likely familiar with the saying- he brought a knife to a gun fight. That is simply to say- they were hopelessly outmatched and outgunned. So it is clear- there is no offensive action taking place. So what was missing? Well, there are no archers who are loosing their arrows- no stones being slung against the enemy. There are no ramparts being built- no battering rams to be found. No catapults to take down the wall. Nothing but a lot of walking and a lot of patience! But finally on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, something different happens. Normally the 7<sup>th</sup> day is the day of rest- well here the 7<sup>th</sup> day is the day of battle! After going around the city seven times, as we find in v. 16, the battle begins. And this last time is not silent- the priests blow their trumpets and the people shout! And the walls come tumbling down. The very wall that was the hope of the enemy becomes the rode by which the Israelites rush into the city. The tower of defense becomes the steps upon which their destruction arrives. So Joshua and the people were told what to do- and they obeyed by faith. As strange as it may seem- and futile as it appears to walk around the city a bunch of time- they did it! As Heb. 11:30 says, by faith the walls of Jericho fell down. We can learn from this- that Israel had to listen and obey by faith. The futility of the promise is to be embraced! Even when God says that victory will not be gained by your work- that salvation comes only by trusting in me- we are called to believe! Because the fact is, we too are called to live by faith! When facing enemies, we do not live by sight! We know that Jesus has won the victory for us- and we are called to follow Him in obedience and faith! By faith, Gideon won the battle against the Mideonites. By faith Joshua received the victory at Jericho- and by faith we have

victory over sin and death in Christ! And here again is a reminder- our battle is not against flesh and blood- we battle a spiritual enemy- and we battle with spiritual weapons. The victory Joshua received is a reminder of our battle as well. We read earlier from II Cor. 10- that our weapons are not carnal- not of this world. But that does not mean we are not in a battle! No- we are engaged in battle just like Joshua was. Our weapons- as II Cor. 10:4 puts it- are divine weapons- they have divine power. Power that can destroy strongholds- knock over walls! The same power that toppled the walls of Jericho are toppling walls today! The towers of deceit, disobedience and the devil! The wall of the lie, rebellion and unbelief! The army of darkness out there and temptation right here! These are the strongholds that are falling- the strong men that Jesus has bound so that Satan's house could be plundered! So here is where we find our good news- the battle must be waged- but the victory is secure!

### **III. The Glorious Victory**

So as we come to our last point, we find that the very victory promised to Joshua is secured. As we find in v. 20- the walls fell down, the people ran in and the city was captured. Very straightforward! What was promised by the LORD happened- the battle was won without firing a shot- without a single Israelite life being lost! The battle belongs to the LORD- and the battle was won in a swift and complete victory! And who gets the credit- well Joshua did not fight the battle of Jericho after all. The walls just fell down on their own- because the LORD knocked them down! This is a victory that will bring glory to God as He proves His promises are sure! So the army of Israel rushes in- and city is devoted to destruction in v. 21. This mean that all living things were killed- and all precious metal was set apart as holy. Now this was a glorious victory! Since the earth is the LORD'S and everything in it- God is free to do with His creation as He sees fit. This is not to make light of the massive loss of life- but rather to keep things in their proper perspective. This is a holy war- everything in the city was devoted to destruction. The word for this is HARAM- meaning that everything was devoted to the ban. To touch something that was HARAM was to rebel against the LORD'S declaration as we will see in the next chapter. Touching something that God

claimed as holy and defiling it. So the victory is glorious because God shows His holiness- His power and might over the armies of darkness are put on display- none can stand before His wrath. Only Rahab and her family were spared. This also is a glorious fact- as v. 23 reveals- God keeps His word even to a Canaanite prostitute- and this pagan is grafted into the family of God! Glorious! And finally, this victory is a glorious because God is exalting His servant. In v. 27 the LORD uses this victory to exalt Joshua in the eyes of the people. So Israel, her God and her leader are exalted and their fame spreads throughout the land!

But what about us- how do we get the victory? Well, we know that the Devil has fallen! False teaching is being exposed by the truth, and the church is continuing her conquest! The spiritual battle is fought with spiritual weapons. The weapons we have are these- prayer and the Word! We have the HS within teaching us God's word and leading us into prayer. So as we continue to speak the truth- as we continue to trust in Jesus our commander- we will go forth into victory! No wall of deceit can stand before the truth! No army of darkness resist the sword of the Son and the Spirit!

As we close, the book of Joshua is bringing a spiritual battle before us. Jericho represents the army of darkness holed up behind their impenetrable wall of lies and deceit. But Jesus brings them down. Just as the walls fell- Satan fell- and death will one day be thrown down! Jesus Christ secures complete victory for His people as He causes the walls of the enemy to fall down. As I John 5:4 assures us- we have overcome the world. This victory is ours by faith! Although we may be outmatched on our own- we are not on our own! Since God is for us- since Jesus is our commander- we will overcome!