

WALLS OF JERICO: Hebrews 11: 30-31

Verse 30-31. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled seven days. By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient after she had welcomed the spies in peace." He mentions the walls of Jericho falling before he mentions Rahab the harlot. I guess the reason for that is the sequence refers back to Joshua, the 6th chapter. After he has given us the account of the walls falling in verse 25, "However Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared. And she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day. For she hid the messengers from Joshua, whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."

The term Joshua spared is literally, Joshua left live. He let Rahab the harlot live. We're still talking about faith and life. Faith has to do with living. And Rahab the harlot, like Abraham, Had faith in a God who could give life. She had faith that Joshua would spare her life, and he did.

Rahab is first mentioned in Joshua 2, whenever they're getting ready to go into the land, Joshua sends spies in to spy out the land, and they are discovered. But Rahab hides them and helps them escape the authorities. We have an interesting passage in verses 8-11, chapter 2 of Joshua, showing us something about the faith of Rahab. "Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof and said to the men, 'I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen upon us. That all of the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard.'" Faith comes by hearing, hearing from the word. "We have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you came out of Egypt. And what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And when we heard it our hearts melted and no courage remained in any men any longer because of you. For the Lord your God He is God in heaven above and on Earth beneath."

What she is talking about happened 40 years before. They have been in the wilderness 40 years, a whole generation has died and a new one has been raised up, and Rahab is saying, "When you first came out of Egypt 40 years ago and we heard what God was doing as he brought you out of Egypt and through the wilderness, our hearts melted within us. There was no strength or no courage in us." They were a defeated people 40 years before they crossed the Jordan to take the land. And Israel didn't know it. They could have marched on over into promised land when they first came out of Egypt because God had already defeated their enemies. But they wasted 40 years in the wilderness without enjoying the blessing that God had for them. And a whole generation died off because they did not know and they did not believe what God had done.

But this woman, who was a harlot believed. And she is acting now upon her faith that she has had for 40 years, or at least going back 40 years. As a result of her faith, it is her household that is saved when Joshua and Israel comes across the Jordan and takes Jericho. Interesting that God could use a harlot in this way. It's always interesting who God can use.

Rahab is mentioned three times in the New Testament. Enoch is mentioned three times in the New Testament. Rahab is mentioned twice, once in Hebrews, and once in James as an example of faith. She also appears in the genealogy of Jesus. Don't ever look over or overlook who God can use. He uses this harlot to demonstrate what real faith is.

We need to find out what God has already done. The battle has already been fought and the victory is already ours for the taking. That's something that very few modern church members realize. They don't even know there's a war going on, much less a victory already won. Let's go back to Exodus the 23rd chapter for a moment. Now this listen to these verses where Moses is speaking of what awaits Israel. Now they have just come out of the bondage. Beginning in verse 20, he said, "Behold I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way, and to bring you in the place which I have prepared." I am bringing you into the place that I have prepared for you . . . what does that remind you of, John 14, "I'm going to prepare a place for you." He went and prepared that place for us, and He expects us to enter into it.

Verse 21, "Be on your guard before him and obey his voice. Do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgressions since My name is in him. But if you will truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries." I am an enemy to your enemies, I am an adversary to your adversary, you are not alone. "My angel will go before you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them."

Let's go on down, verse 29, "I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you." **It's going to take time. You don't enter into all the promises of God overnight. "I will drive them out before you little by little until you become fruitful and take possession of the land." It's little by little, it's here a little and there a little, it is line upon line, and precept upon precept, it is growing in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord. But if you don't ever start, you're never going to get there. And when you do start it's going to take time.**

Verse 31, "And I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness of the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand." **And notice now what he says, "And you will drive them out before you." Notice what he said throughout this passage. He said, I will give you the land, I will defeat your enemy, I will drive them out before you. I will deliver the inhabitants in your land. But you, you will drive them out before you. I'm going to do all of this, but you have to enter into it.**

Referring again to John 14, God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, and he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing the heavenly realm, and it's up to us

whether or not we enter into them and whether or not we accept them. God is not going to do any more than what he has already done. The place is already prepared. And as far as He is concerned, that's it. It's up to us. We can either drive the enemy out, we can deal with the enemy, and we can be prosperous in the land, we can settle the land, and receive the blessings of God; or we can wander around in the wilderness for 40 years, and die in the wilderness, and be buried in the wilderness, and nobody will know any different. But it's up to us, we don't have to do that. So, by faith, the walls of Jericho fell and by faith Rahab saved her life.

Let's go back to Joshua 6. The background of chapter 6 should be seen in the light of verses 14 and 15 of chapter 5. Joshua has met the captain of the host of the Lord. The captain of the Lord's hosts said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet because the place where you're standing is holy ground." Joshua is standing on holy ground. That's a good place to stand before facing the enemy. Before Joshua could go over and face the enemy and take the land, he had an encounter with the captain of the Lord's hosts. **He realized he was standing on holy ground, and that wasn't just a physical place. He knew that he was standing in the presence of God. And anything that we face in life, whether it's a personal problem, an individual problem, or whether it's something concerning the kingdom of God, or whether it's something concerning life itself, that's the starting point. We've got to get on holy ground.**

We get in the presence of God and there is no fortress, there is no wall, there is no city that can stand before us. We see all things then from God's point of view, you see. "Men look on the outward appearance, Paul says, "but God looks upon the heart." We walk by faith and not by sight. In I Cor 2: 9-10, the Apostle said, "Things the eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those that love him." And that's not talking about something that's over yonder, wherever over yonder is. Because in the next verse Paul says, "For to us, God revealed *them* through the Spirit; and he has given us the mind of the Spirit in order that we might know the things freely given us of God." And verse 16, "But we have the mind of Christ."

So we see things that the eye of man cannot see. And we hear things the ear of man has never heard and cannot hear. And we know things that the world will never know and never perceive. Sometimes we don't act like it. We're taking our cues from the world, instead of from the Lord. But God has revealed them to us through the Spirit. There is no lack of divine revelation. The revelation is so complete there will never be any more given, because there's no need of it. Unbelief in that revelation, or a lack of faith blinds the mind, not the eyes, but the mind of man, and he is not able to see it.

Joshua, chapter 6, verse 1, "Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the sons of Israel; no one went in and out." The city was absolutely paralyzed, tightly shut up, no one going in or out. To me, that's a symbol of death itself. No one in and no one out, no activity. "The Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have given Jericho into your hand with its king and the valiant warriors.'" See, I

have given (past tense), Jericho with its king and with its valiant warriors into your hand. God has already done that. Now Joshua's going to have to go in and take it, but God has given it into their hand. And he tells Joshua, "See", see I have given it to you." **Faith sees it, and then it is accomplished.**

Let me call your attention to that verse, Psalm 27:13, I've cited it many other times, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." We believe it, and then we see it, and then we experience it. So, He tells Joshua to "See."

In John 11:40, when Jesus is having the encounter with the grave of Lazarus, and that episode of raising Lazarus from the dead, He said to the sisters, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" If you believe, you will see the glory of God. Most people want to see the glory of God, and then believe. He says, "If you will believe you will see the glory of God." That's why these healing meetings are so popular today is because people want to see the glory of God before they believe. But you believe it and then you see it. Our problem is we have to see it in the flesh before we act on in faith.

What we're talking about is a faith of most Christians that sees no way that it can be accomplished, no way can it be done. But, in faith, we see it done. We see it already accomplished. We believe in it and we act on it. **That's faith.** Now Joshua, chapter 6, verse 3, "You shall march around the city, all the men of war encircling the city once. You will do it for six days." You will march around the city six days. You'll take all your men of war, circle the city, once a day, for six days. **God wanted all of Israel to see Jericho.** The whole bunch of them was to march around the city every day for six days, so they would know what they were up against. They got a good view of the city. They marched all around it, and they knew what Jericho was. But that's not the only thing. **God also wanted Jericho to see them.**

Here was a king with all of his armed men, and here was this wall, which was literally a fortress. And Jericho had probably withstood many battles in the past. Now here it is a bunch of ragtag people who have come out of the wilderness, and they're marching around the city, one time each for six days, and Jericho gets a good look at them. **When God does something He wants everybody to see it.**

See Paul said to Festus, when he was talking about Christianity and its spread in the Roman Empire, he said, "These things have not been done in a corner." That means God isn't taking second place, and He's not doing anything secretly. That's one reason why we're not going to have any so-called secret rapture. God doesn't do things in secret. He doesn't do things in corners. In fact, whenever God gets ready to send Isaiah with His message, Isaiah says, "Listen O heavens and hear O Earth for the Lord speaks." God wants everybody on the Earth to listen. But not only that, He calls heaven itself to listen. This is not something that the newspapers are just overlooking and is insignificant, and doesn't amount to anything.

In fact, if you want to know what's going on with the real body of Christ and what's going on with Christian people who are tuned to what God is doing, read this astonishing verse in the third chapter of Ephesians. In verse 10, he tells about why God has called him and why he's doing what he's doing. He says, "In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now," it is not something that is going to be demonstrated 2000 years down the road. People are always talking about how great it's going to be when Jesus returns, and what great things the world is going to see, and what a great demonstration it's going to be. They can't wait for that time.

Paul said, it's not something that's going to happen, it's something that is happening now, 2,000 years ago, "That the wisdom of God might now be made known through the church." What God wants the world to see and to know, is being made known through the church. The great thing about Christianity is not what's going to happen, the great thing about it is what is happening today, what's happening right now.

And not only does He make it known to the world through the church, but he said it may be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. God is doing something, but not only does He call the world to see, which for the most part the world ignores it, but He's called all the host of heaven and He's put us on demonstration and on display. And He's called all the host of heaven to see what He's doing in the church. So, in Joshua's day, God says He wants Jericho to see what I'm doing, and He wants Jericho to see His people.

Let's continue, verse 3, "And you shall march around the city all the men of war, all the men of war for six days." When He said all the men of war, I can see Joshua saying, Hallelujah! . . . We have spent 40 years raising up and training a new generation of warriors. I've had a vision of God, and I've talked to the captain of the Lord's host, the men of war are ready, Lord lead us on!

But look at verse 4 and 5, "And seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And it shall be that when you make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead." And I can hear Joshua thinking, Lord that's not the way to take a city . . . all the men of war, we are ready. But God sends the priests with ram's horns and trumpets and all the people, and tells them to march around the city.

Now note verse 6 and 7, "So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, 'Take up the Ark of the Covenant, and let the seven priests carry seven trumpets of ram's horns before the Ark of the Lord.' Then he said to the people, 'Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the Ark of the Lord.'" Take the Ark first, you see, they had carried the Ark around for 40 years in the wilderness with no victory. Now they would take the Ark and it was to go before them. In a sense, the Ark had gone with the people for 40 years, and now the

people were to go with the Ark. The Ark is the center of attention. We've carried it around for 40 years and not much has happened.

Now, the same thing continues to happen during our modern time. For the last 2,000 years, we have, by covenant, possessed the promises since our conversion. From the time that we are converted, we come into all of the promises of God (and don't let any Charismatic or fundamentalist tell you any different). When you come into Christ, you come into all the promises by covenant. But, possession does not guarantee victory! It's not the possession of Christ, but the position of Christ that is important. Just because you possess Christ in your life does not mean you're going to be victorious. You can possess Him and yet He's not the Lord. It is His position. Is He Lord of your life? It's when you position Him as Lord in your life that you're going to be victorious. They had the Ark, but no victory in the wilderness. Now the Ark becomes paramount and they have victory. The Lord is in their midst.

Now notice this, verse 6 and 7, he says, "The Ark is to go, the priests are to go, and the people are to go." Then, it is as if he says, oh by the way Joshua, "let the armed men go also." Did you notice that? He's mentioned the priests, and he's mentioned the ark, and he's mentioned the people. "Go forward and march around the city." And then he says, "Let the armed guards go before the Ark also." Now that's the way the Lord is doing things.

In verse 9, "And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets." You see, the priests are the ones who are important. God is using the Ark and the priests. The armed guards are just window dressing. It's not by might, nor by power, but it's by My Spirit. We have a lot of window dressing in the church today. But it's not these armed guards that God is using. He continues, "And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the Ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets." Once they get started blowing, they are to keep on blowing. Verse 13. "And the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them, and the rear guard came after the Ark of the Lord, while they continued to blow the trumpets." When they started blowing, they kept on blowing the trumpets.

I like that bumper-sticker t-shirt, shirts that you wear with messages on them. You know, that's like a bumper sticker on your car, you put it on your body, body stickers. But that one that came out back in 1973, I liked it when it had the old gentleman with the whole in his shoe, with a little fellow walking along, and underneath it said, "Keep on trucking." I liked that, keep on trucking. Now when they started blowing, they were to keep blowing.

But now go down to verse 10, "But Joshua commanded the people, saying, 'You shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word proceed out of your mouth until the day I tell you, Shout! Then you shall shout.'" Now for six days they were to march around the city and not speak a word. Complete silence. And on the seventh day they were to march around seven

times and not say a word, not a sound. Thirteen times around the city in complete silence. You know the reason we make so much noise in religion today is because of a lack of faith. Faith does not need a lot of noise. Faith can be absolutely silent and not say a word. And then when God gives the order, Joshua gives the order to shout, they are to shout. It's hard to keep quiet until God tells you to speak. But that's what they were to do. And the walls, he said, would fall.

Let me comment on the method that is used by God here. Number one, it had never been done before; and reason, and experience labeled it foolishness. That's what faith is. Faith works. And a characteristic of faith is first of all, it has never been done before, and if you mention doing it, reason and experience will say it is foolish. Read the 11th chapter of Hebrews, and that will be true with every one of those people that are mentioned there . . . reason and experience would tell them it was foolish. Noah going out on dry land, it had never rained before, and he goes out on dry land, and builds an ark; reason and experience say it's never happened before, it will not happen, it is foolish. Abraham was foolish to leave his country, his kindred, and his home, and go out not knowing where he was going. It would have been bad enough if he'd known where he was going. He didn't even know where he was going. He's leaving home, "Where you going?" "I don't know."

Another example, a 100-year old man and a 90-year old woman had never had a baby before, and when they said, "we're going to have a bay," the world would have said, and reason and experience would have said, "That's foolishness. It just doesn't happen." But that's the way faith works. Joshua was exposed to ridicule for such an unorthodox way of doing things. Marching around a city six days, one time a day, and then seven times on the seventh day, and blowing a bunch of rams' horns . . . is that anyway to take a city? Reason and experience say it's foolish, and it's never been done before.

God talks about the foolishness of preaching. **as long as you can do it, and as long as you can see a way, and as long as it is reasonable, and acceptable, and logical, and within our power to do it, it doesn't take any faith. But you step out when you can't do it, and you can't see any way for it to be done, and reason and experience says it's foolishness, and the world says it can't be done, that's when faith begins to work.**

Another thing, there is no connection between the act of faith and the end attained. There is no connection walls falling down and somebody marching around the wall. See, the act of faith, there's no connection between that and the result that it got. No connection at all. Especially when you're using priests, and an Ark, and religious people. That's like Jesus saying, "Speak to mountain," or, "love your enemy," or the act of prayer. Or as Paul says, "Reckoning righteousness," or reckoning something to be done. There is no connection between what you do in faith and the end obtained.

The third thing, the end result of faith is always out of proportion with its beginning. Now understand that. The end result of faith, what faith accomplishes in the end is always out of proportion with its beginning. Jesus said, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed

you will move mountains," that's all out of proportion. That reminds me of one of my favorite passages, Ephesians 3, beginning in, verse 20, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly beyond all that you ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be glory in the church and Christ Jesus for all generations." Do you understand what he's saying? He is able to do, Paul runs out of words, exceedingly, abundantly beyond what you can even ask or think. Now you can ask God for some stupendous things. You can ask God for some outrageous things. But Paul goes beyond what you can ask, and he says, "God can do exceeding, abundantly beyond what you can even think." Your mind cannot even begin to comprehend what God can do. And yet we say, "Well, I don't know." No, I don't guess we do know. As long as we're wandering around out there in the wilderness, we won't know. But the end result of faith is always out of proportion with its beginning. And if you have just a little bit of faith you can't even think in terms of what that little bit of faith can accomplish.

And let me say something else about this. The same thing done day, after day, after day, did not produce any effect until the seventh day and the seventh time on that day. If they had marched around that city one time each day for six days, and they'd marched around six times on the seventh day, those walls would have still been standing. Nothing would have happened, because God told them to walk around seven times on the seventh day, and then blow the trumpets, and shout, and the walls will fall. And that's exactly what happened.

It's like Naaman dipping in the Jordan River; if he had dipped six and a half times, it wouldn't have worked. But he dipped seven times because that's what the Lord said for him to do, and then it worked. If you'll do what the Lord tells you to do, in the way that He tells you to do it, it'll work. But the problem is when you let doubt come in, and you're not quite ready to do it the way the Lord says do it, then it's not going to work. By faith the walls of Jericho fell.

And there's not a wall in your life, there's no barrier that you come against, there's not a fortified city ahead of you that you cannot take by faith. And there's nothing that the people of God cannot do, if they do it by faith. That's the reason why we have so many languages today, by the way. They were building the Tower of Babel and God came down and he looked at them, and said, "If we don't do something, it's impossible to even put in words what these people will be able to do." Let me read it for you, Gen 11:4, "They said, 'Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole Earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all the same language. And this is what they begin to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.'" This is men of the world. And God said, Once they set their mind to it, because they're of the same language, and because of their worldly determination, nothing they purpose to do will be impossible. And so God intervened, and mixed up their language, and scattered them, and stopped the building.

If that's true of men of the world, if they are able to accomplish these things and nothing would be impossible for them to do once they set their mind to it, what about the Church, who has all the resources of heaven? If we turn our faith loose, and begin to act and to live according to the word of God, and by faith live in the promises of God, nothing will be impossible. In fact, that's what Jesus says, nothing will be impossible, you cannot fail. You cannot fail. Isn't that amazing?