

Preparing For A New Beginning.

Sermon 5 – The Sound Of Victory! Joshua 6

Pastor Roger Ridley, Gretna Baptist Church, March 26, 2006

First Sunday in our building!

Do you hear what I hear? ...

What I hear is the sound of victory. Now obviously, our being in this building this morning is a big victory. It's big enough to tell the story to others and your children's children.

But the sound of victory I hear this morning is much bigger. This building is an illustration of it, but what I hear is so much bigger than this building!

It is the God-given victory of faith.

And yes, it is much bigger than this building and reaches far beyond it. This is not the end of what God is doing with us; this is only part of the beginning.

You and I are involved in a huge battle of faith. In this battle of faith and as God has brought us this far He will take us the rest of the way.

I find this illustrated for us in Joshua 6 in the battle of Jericho with **four assurances** from God.

I. His Presence...

In any battle, whether physical or spiritual, I can't imagine a more encouraging place to be than in the presence of the Commander. That is where we find Joshua in 5:13-15...

What happens here seems very rare, but I suspect it is far more common than most of us have eyes trained to see.

Consider the circumstances...

As Joshua stared at those walls of Jericho, oblivious to everything else going on, thinking of the impossible challenge before him, suddenly as if out of nowhere he saw a man standing in front of him with his sword drawn.

Joshua did what any good fighting man would do...

That's when things really got interesting...

This was no ordinary man... (verses 14, 15, 6:2)

Why didn't Joshua recognize Him?

His eyes were not properly focused...

That's why this incident seems so rare. Our eyes are more trained to see problems than they are to see the Lord.

What purpose did this serve? It was 4-fold: God was reminding...

1. His presence...
2. His Side (not God on ours or theirs)...
3. His battle (Spr not just phy)... Ephesians 6:12
4. the victory was already won...

Do you think Joshua could hear...

Recognizing the presence of the Lord changed his perspective. He could see better and hear better!

As we keep our eyes focused on the presence of the Lord, we too will see better and hear better. And yes, we will continue hear the sound of victory.

That's reassuring isn't it?

It is for me, because having this building project done, and being able to enter it is not the end of our challenges. There's more ahead. And I for one am glad that the Lord is going to be with us.

II. His Plan...

Not only did the Lord reassure Joshua by His presence, but also with His plan. Look with me at 6:1-5a...

You did notice who is doing the talking in these verses didn't you? ...

I've got a feeling as Joshua listened... a stir of mixed emotions...

Surely he liked what he first heard...

But then there was the plan itself. Stop and think about that for a moment...

No battle-plan could have sounded more unreasonable than that one. They would be like targets in a shooting gallery...

Isn't that the way God's plan often appears? At least to the world, but too often for us as well.

Proverbs 3:5...

Philippians 4:6...

That's a hard plan for most of us to follow. Isn't it?

Here's what must always be remembered however, the Lord is with us, the challenge belongs to Him not to us, and so if we want to enjoy the victory He is prepared to hand over to us, we must do things His way.

2 Corinthians 10:4 provides this important insight,

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

The walls of Jericho were enormous. According to Deuteronomy 1:28, that's how the spies 40 years earlier had described them. They had two walls 30 feet high. The outer wall was 6 feet thick, there was a space of 15 feet, and then the second wall was 12 feet thick. No wonder Joshua was anxious, from a human perspective; the taking of Jericho seemed impossible.

But look at the promise of God's plan in Joshua 6:5b...

When we do what God says... THEN, the walls come down.

Those walls in Jericho were physical, but they can represent any kind of wall in our personal experience or the experience of our congregation that keeps us from enjoying the victory God already has for us.

Our strength, our wisdom is not enough to bring such walls down, but when we do what the Lord says, those walls begin to crumble and we are able to enter into His victory.

When I first moved here, I couldn't imagine our ever having a big enough group to buy 1 acre of land, let alone 5 ½ acres. When we started talking about building and I was meeting with contractors, I could not imagine that we would ever have anything more than a glorified garage. But when we do what the Lord wants us to do, He makes possible what seems impossible.

III. His Procession...

We see exactly how that happened for the people of Israel as they proceeded with the Lord's plan. Follow as I read verses 6-20...

Apparently when Joshua spoke with the people he did not give them...

Quite often that's what we think we want...

A HUGE part of faith is acting on what we do know, and as we do so the rest then follows.

On the first day Joshua gave out the orders...

The men

The ark

7 priests blowing trumpets or rams horns

Orders not to talk or make any verbal sound at all

Dressed in battle array, solemn, hearts pounding - The sound the marching, the trumpets blowing and the silence – It must have been impressive!

I've got a feeling at that point Jericho was shaking.

They finished their walk, went back to camp, it was kind neat, but nothing **seemed** to have happened.

I stress SEEMED because whenever we do what God wants us to do then lots of things are happening whether we see them or not.

2nd day – same thing

Still kind of neat but by now if anything like us

Israel is thinking...

Jericho is thinking...

But again they finish the march, go back to camp, no fighting.

The same on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th days.

By now I'm assuming that some of them are weary of marching and more than just a little confused. We've been there haven't we? When what God is doing doesn't seem to make sense to us?

To their credit, it may not have made sense but they kept doing it.

By now, Jericho must also have been getting just a little bit braver.

But on that 7th morning, the orders were a little different-
Joshua said, "We're going to march 7 times." 7 TIMES!

Be honest – what would you have thought? ...

At the end of the 7th they were to give a shout...

Then God promised that the walls would fall and He would give them the city.

Again they go out. Now we have no way of knowing Jericho's reaction, but if they were like us today I assume by now they were jeering/ridiculing...

Very likely it seemed that their fears had been for nothing and they were convinced that Israel didn't know what they were doing.

But when they finished the 7th trip.

The trumpets blew.

The people gave their **shout!**

And the walls came tumbling down.

Have you, in person, seen a building imploded? ... (while a student at MBI)

In that moment, Israel received her victory.

However, the real victory of Jericho wasn't the wall. The wall was never really the issue. God could have blown them down the first day. Just like He could have given us this building immediately instead of waiting 8 years.

The real victory was in the heart of Israel.

Hebrews 11:30 says, *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell."*

That is where the REAL victory was at.

I am excited about this building, but I am far more excited about the faith God has developed in our hearts while getting us here. Sometimes it may have seemed like we were walking in circles but God was working and a great victory has been accomplished in our hearts.

Whatever our Jericho, the victory will be gained in the day to day exercises of faith.

III. His Provision...

But lets not miss a very important point. It is not just about what God is doing in us. At the same time God is providing mercy. Look at verse 21...

That doesn't sound like mercy does it? We hate hearing of God's judgment!

But in judgment God **always** extends mercy. Look at 2:8-11...

For 40 years while Israel wandered in the wilderness, God was saying to the people of Jericho REPENT! That delay was a sign of God's mercy (2 Peter 3:9-10).

And then Israel was on Jericho's doorstep. Each day as they marched God was saying REPENT!

And on the 7th day – REPENT! REPENT! REPENT! REPENT! REPENT!
REPENT! REPENT!

And if the people of Jericho would have repented, God would have forgiven them, and would have welcomed them into fellowship with Him.

Remember Jonah and the city of Nineveh?

God would have done the same thing at Jericho and the proof is Rahab. She exercised faith and God promised her deliverance, Not only that, she shared that promise of deliverance with others... AND THEY TOO RECEIVED DELIVERANCE!

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world! God's provision **does** make a difference!

The message should be extremely clear for us today.

For those of you that have never...

God has made provision and right now by His delay is giving opportunity for repentance.

If you would like to receive His provision here is all you have to do...

There is also a tremendous message in these verses for the rest of us. It is a message of victory. Did you hear it?

The victory has already been won!

When you and I as God's people do what He says and by faith keep doing it, then we will enjoy His victory.

The walls have come down and we have entered in to enjoy this building, but let's not forget there are still challenges ahead, let's keep going forth

Exercising faith in the Word of God.

Allowing the Lord to develop an even stronger faith in us.

And sharing that faith with others that they too may enjoy the victory!