

Tearing Down Your Walls Flat

Dr. Olga Fyne: 08-16-2020

Hi Beulah family! It is a pleasure to be able to encourage you and all those who are listening in, whether you're connecting by social media or here in the sanctuary with us. We're elated that you're able to worship with us this morning and I pray and hope that your life will be impacted positively by this worship service.

I would like to speak with you on the topic, Tearing Down your Walls Flat. Our scripture lesson is Joshua 6:1-21. I will be reading verses 4 and 5 from the NLT as follows:

Vs.4 "Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day, you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. 5 When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams' horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town."

Introductory Illustration

An old writer said that every carnal heart is a Jericho shut up; God sits down before it and displays mercy and judgment: it hardens itself in a willful security and saith, "I shall never be moved." What numbers of men there are who close their hearts and keep them barred against God! God might have thrown down the walls of Jericho at once, but you must remember that He uses means to accomplish ends. God required Israel to walk around Jericho. That was their part. God is not usually in a hurry. He can afford to wait until the seventh day before bringing down the walls. I don't read that the Israelites grew tired of waiting on this occasion. They went at it day after day quietly marching ahead. Here is a lesson of perseverance for us. We sometimes grow impatient. We see no good resulting from our own labors and are disposed to murmur. (Charles Leach.)

Here is a funny story.

A teacher asked the children in her Sunday School class, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?"

"NO!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?"

Again, the answer was "NO!"

"Well," she continued, "then how can I get to heaven?"

In the back of the room, a five-year-old boy shouted out, "You gotta be dead!"

Intro: Israel has finally crossed the Jordan. They have prepared themselves spiritually and they have, thus far, followed God's orders completely and are now ready to begin the conquest of the Promised Land. They are ready to claim for themselves the promised land, the land that flowed with milk and honey.

However, like most things in life that are worth having, it would not come cheap!

For Israel, Jericho would be a benchmark. It was at Jericho that they would experience military victory and conquest. Now, just for a moment, try to put yourself in the shoes of the average Israelite soldier. For most of these men, Jericho was the first city they had ever seen that was surrounded by huge walls. It must have looked like an absolute impossibility to many. However, they listened to the instructions they were given by the Lord and they saw those massive walls fall flat.

Nothing is impossible with God. Sometimes we fall victims to our circumstances instead of becoming victors, because we sit back and try to figure things out on our own and came to negative conclusions instead of obeying God and leaving things in his hand.

I think this story is relevant to where we stand today as Christians. We are living in days of battle and spiritual struggle. We need to know how to fight. We need to know that our God is able to give the victory. We need to know how to follow Him to that victory. Joshua teaches us those valuable lessons!

Just as Israel faced the formidable walls of Jericho, you and I face walls and obstacles in our lives as well. We need to know how to tear them down as we march towards the victory. This passage holds that answer for us today. Let's watch Israel conquer Jericho and as we do, let's allow the Lord to teach us How To Make Our Walls Fall Flat.

I. v.1 ISRAEL HAD A PROBLEM

A. Jericho is known as the oldest city in the world, in Joshua's day, it was surrounded by a system of two massive stone walls. The outer wall was 6 ft. thick and about 20 ft. high. The inner wall was about 12 ft. thick and was 30 ft. high. Between the walls was a guarded walkway about 15 ft. wide. Israel's problem was that they had a city to conquer, but there were some extremely huge walls in the way.

B. As we go through life, we have obstacles that we face as well. Some of you have been bombarded by walls for decades.

- Relational walls—

a relationship that the devil has captured and have you living in misery day after day, 24/7

- Physical walls

Familial walls

- Walls of fear and doubt
 - Perhaps it is a lost loved one we would like to see the Lord touch and save. Perhaps it's family trouble that tears at our hearts and leaves us wondering what to do, financial trouble that stresses us to the limits of our patience and faith, or a besetting sin that constantly crops up in our life, or any of the other 1 million things.

Those walls seem so thick that they render you hopeless and debilitated but God has given you spiritual sledgehammers and

bulldozers to tear the devil's kingdom down in the name of Jesus

- You must tear down those walls with prayer by faith in the name of Jesus.
- Tear them down with the word of God through believing his promises that no weapon formed against you shall prosper instead of giving up and giving in to the devil's lies.

C. We must learn not to look upon our obstacles as dead-ends, but as opportunities for the Lord to work in our lives!

So often we focus on the obstacle we face instead of the God who's bigger than the obstacle. One lyricist said: There's no problem too big, that God cannot solve it, there's no mountain so tall that God cannot move it. If he carries the weight of the world upon His shoulders, He surely will carry you.

(III. The great Apostle Paul had such an obstacle - 2 Cor. 12:7-10 - This attitude is foreign to us this morning. Yet, we must come to realize that the power of God is best revealed in and through us when we are unable to handle life. God is more clearly visible when we are totally out of the picture! In a sense, that is what He did with Israel here. As we will see, He completely removed them from the equation! The victory at Jericho was all God's. The battle you're now facing does not belong to you. The battle is the Lord's. we must learn to take ourselves out of the picture and stand still and watch the Lord fight our battles. In Exodus 14: 14, Moses said to the people: The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Then the Lord said to Moses: "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water, so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

You must use the power that God has given you by faith to tear your walls down.

II. v.2 ISRAEL HAD A PROMISE

A. As Joshua and all the men of war stood looking at those walls around that great city, God had a word of comfort for their hearts! Here, God promises Israel the victory before they ever attack Jericho! He lets them know about the conclusion before they ever enter their battle! Your victory is guaranteed before your battle began because the Lord is on your side.

B. As we face our obstacles, whatever they may be, we can do so with confidence, because we have the Lord's promises as banners to march under:

1. We Have His Promise That Our Weapons Are Powerful Through God - 2 Cor. 10:4-5.

2. We Have His Promise That Our Battles Have All Been Arranged by The Lord - Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:17.

3. We Have His Promise That Our Ability Is Limited Only By Our Faith - Phil. 4:13; Eph. 3:20.

4. We Have His Promise of Power in The Day of Battle - Eph. 6:10.

5. We Have His Promise of ongoing Victory - 1 Cor. 15:57.

6. We Have His Promise That We Will Never Fight Alone - Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20.

7. We Have His Promise That When the Battles Are Ended, we will Celebrate the Victory In His Presence - John 14:1-3.

C. As we face the walled cities in our lives, we need to learn to believe the Lord, to take Him at His Word and trust Him for our victories! (Rom. 4:21.

Jesus did not save you for you to be defeated! He saved you for the victory and He will be there all the way to help you secure it for His glory! There will be trials but, there will also be victory - Luke 22:31-32.) So,

I. Israel Had A Problem

II. Israel Had A Promise and thirdly,

III. v.3-5 ISRAEL HAD A PARTNER

A. Israel's partner was none other than God Himself! He was in absolute control of the battle, He was leading them, and He was the guarantee of their victory!

Some of you listening to me this morning might be thinking, I don't have a partner. Let me tell you this morning, you might not have a spouse but if you have God, you have the best partner in the universe. So, wait patiently until God sees it fit to send that person in your life. He is a never-failing friend

- He will never leave or forsake you
- He will always be there when you need him most.
- He will never go back on his words and he will fight every battle you face successfully.

Let's look at: The visit of the Captain of the Lord's Host - Josh. 5:13-15.

Remember that He came to tell Joshua that He did not come to take sides, He came to take over!

B. As we face our walled cities and the obstacles of our lives, it is a blessing to know that we do not have to face them alone, Matt. 28:20, or in our own strength, Phil. 4:13.

C. No obstacle is insurmountable if we face it in the Lord!

(III. We've heard a lot before about the power of God's promises. For a moment, let's talk about the weapons we have been given to fight the battles.

1 Cor. 10:4 says:

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. So, the first piece of artillery that we have as Christians is:

1. **The Word of God –**

God has given us a perfect, inspired, infallible, inerrant record of His Word. The Word of God is called the "logos". This word speaks of the entirety of the revealed word of God. It speaks of your Bible. When Paul was listing the armor that is to be worn by the saints as they battle the enemy, he mentions the one offensive weapon we have and that is the Word of God, Eph. 6:17. You see, the Bible is like a vast armory. In this armory there are weapons of every description. They have been

specifically designed to fight particular battles. It is interesting to note that when Paul mentions the Word of God as a weapon of spiritual warfare, He does not use the word "logos". He, instead, uses the word "rhema". This word means a particular Word of God. If we continue to think of the Bible as an armory filled with swords of all descriptions, then the "rhema" would be a sword for a particular battle. This truth is illustrated by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Temptation. When the devil tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread, Jesus responded by saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Here, Jesus also used the word "rhema". Each time the devil attacked our Lord, Jesus walked into the armory of the Word of God and chose just the right sword for each attack. Each time, Jesus went into the Deuteronomy section of the armory and carefully selected just the right sword He need to stick the devil.

The same principle will work for you and me today. God has a word for what you are facing. However, if you don't know your way around the armory, then you will not be able to select the right sword. It is imperative that we study this book so that when the day of battle arises, we will be able to grab the right sword and vanquish our enemies, The second piece of armory is:

2. Prayer - Far too often we ignore the great power that has been given to us in prayer. Pray is far more than me just taking my grocery list to the Lord and reading it off. Prayer is entering into a conversation with the God of the universe. I speak to Him and He speaks to me. I am able to tell Him about what is on my heart and He is able to tell me what is on His heart. Prayer has the ability to get things done! You see, we have been given some pretty awesome promises in the arena of prayer.

A. God has promised that He will hear our prayers - Jer. 33:3; Isa. 65:24.

B. God has promised that He will answer our prayers - John 14:13-14; 1 John 5:14-15.

C. God has promised that He will help us pray - Rom. 8:26-27.

Essentially all true prayer begins with God. He speaks to our hearts and we offer the prayer He led us to pray back to Him. This is the way to pray in the will of the Father.

- J. Sidlow Baxter said: "Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our argument, but they are helpless against our prayers!" End of Quote.

Think of what Hannah, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, Abraham, and others accomplished through prayer.

Think of the many things you and I have accomplished through prayer. I know for a fact that God came through for me numerous times through prayer and I still have battles I've been fighting now. We will always have some form of battle to fight but as long as we are walking in obedience to God's word, we are guaranteed victory although it might not seem that way at times. In fact, I doubt I would be alive today had not it been for the privilege of prayer. Thank God, prayer has the potential to change any situation! Over the years people of God who have held onto the promises, power and the practice of prayer, are seeing their walled cities conquered and you will see yours conquered by faith in the name of Jesus.

The battle may be fierce

The battle may be long

The battle may be hot but hold on to your faith and the promises of God. I want to remind you that the hotter the battle is the sweeter the victory.

I. Israel Had A Problem

II. Israel Had A Promise

III. Israel Had A Partner and fourth and last:

- IV. v.6-21 ISRAEL PREVAILED. Hallelujah! And you will too if you haven't already by the:
 - Grace
 - Power
 - Strength

- And might of God

A. Israel marched around the city in obedience to the Lord and they prevailed! The command to March around the city seemed absurd to everyone. Can you imagine how the people of Jericho must have reacted? They saw the armies of Israel approaching their city and they probably thought that they were about to be invaded by the enemy. Then, just as Israel came near the city, they turned and began to march around the walls. I can see those inside Jericho as they ran to see where the Israelites would mount their attack. However, instead of attacking, the soldiers and the priests merely marched around the city one time. All that was heard was the sound of the ram's horn, trumpets and the pounding of the soldier's feet upon the ground. This was repeated for 6 days. By this time, the people in Jericho were no doubt mocking and jeering the Israelites. Then on the seventh day, they compassed the city seven times. When they had finished that seventh lap, the priests gave a long blast on the trumpets and the people of Israel shouted with a great shout! It wasn't the shout of an attacking army, it wasn't a shout of fear, but it was a shout raised in praise to almighty God Who had promised them the victory. When the people shouted, the walls fell flat and Israel ran into the city and utterly destroyed it. Theirs's was a great victory!)

- I promise you today, if you're going through something now, your time to shout is approaching
- Your time of singing and dancing in praise is a prayer away
- Your time of rejoicing in thankfulness to God for the victory is fast approaching
- Your time of victory is coming but you have to learn from Israel.

B. There are some reasons why Israel experienced victory at Jericho:

1. They had a Word from God - (vs.2-6) 2 Tim. 2:15
2. They believed God - (vs.8-20)

God said it, that settled it! Do we really believe God?

3. They acted in faith - Heb. 11:1; 11:6)
4. They did it God's way –

This is the secret to success!) His way may seem too hard, too slow, or as in this case too foolish or absurd, but His way is always the best way! Isa. 55:8-9)

5. God gave them the victory - (v.20-21)

C. God's church will prevail, Matt. 16:18; God's people will prevail! You can prevail in whatever situation you are facing right now! Learn a lesson from Israel, God has promised us the victory - 1 Cor. 15:57;

But that is only if we live in obedience to his words and follow his precepts. You can only hold 1 flag up at a time. Someone said you cannot hold the flag of victory and defeat at the same time.

Finally:

- What kind of walled city are you facing right now?
 - Does it appear to be unconquerable?
 - God can conquer the unconquerable
 - He understands the incomprehensible
 - He can fathom the inscrutable
 - He can make the impossible possible
 - And he can make all the rough paths smooth.
 - Do the walls you face look too high and appear too thick?
 - Does it seem that victory is impossible in your case?
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- Let me remind you that if your walls have not already fallen flat, they will! They can fall right now! You need to learn a lesson from Israel and start handling your Jericho God's way. Will you come before Him this morning with whatever your need is? Will you bring it to Jesus right now? God is greater than any obstacle, able to move any mountain and is far stronger than any barrier you might face today. Bring it to Him and watch Him work it out.

Let us pray.