

Jericho Relationships

by J. Oswald Sanders

Effective ministry is built on strong relationships, mutual respect, and fervent love, which requires sensitivity to cultural differences, mutual submission, and avoiding criticism and gossip.

Duration: 57:03

Topics: "Relationships"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker highlights four things that have impressed him about the group he is addressing. Firstly, he commends the high level of commitment displayed by the group members. Secondly, he praises the depth of their work, emphasizing that it goes beyond mere quantity or area. Thirdly, he appreciates the importance given to scripture throughout the conference. Lastly, he acknowledges the wisdom and scripturalness of the leadership. The speaker then shifts his focus to the topic of relationships, emphasizing their significance in ministry. He mentions a survey that revealed 59% of returned missionaries cited relationships as a reason for their return. He emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and fervent love as the basis for relationships, particularly in a multi-racial context. The speaker encourages realistic but optimistic expectations of human nature, reminding the audience that while redeemed, humans are not yet fully sanctified. He shares a personal anecdote about a student in New Guinea to illustrate this point. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of commitment, depth, scripture, and relationships in ministry, while also encouraging understanding and grace towards human imperfections.

Transcript

May I say first of all what a joy it has been to me to be able to participate in your conference and to be allowed to be on the inside as an outsider. It's been a very happy and blessed time and I can say very sincerely that personally I have received inspiration and stimulation and challenge from you all. From the standards that you have enunciated during these days I've come to quite the firm conviction that I could never qualify to become a navigator.

Your standards right away above my head but never mind I've enjoyed being with you and I hope someday to qualify. Many have asked my impressions of my time here and I can say very with heartfelt gratitude that I have felt my impressions to be uniformly favourable. I've been surprised at the degree of correspondence between the procedures and also the outlook of the overseas missionary fellowship to which I belong.

I mean very many things which we have in common and I've been most interested to watch these things. There are four things that have impressed me very much. One was the degree of commitment of the group.

Generally in a group you have varying degrees but there seems to be a great degree of commitment. I've been impressed by the depth of the work. It hasn't been merely quantity or area but there's depth to it.

I've been impressed by the place given to scripture throughout the whole of the conference. I've been impressed by the scripturalness and the wisdom of the leadership and I say this very sincerely. I've been asked if I have any comment.

There's just one comment I would like to make. You have very wisely and of set purpose in your work hewed to a narrow line lest you lose your distinctive thrust and that's been very wise. But it seems to me looking at it from outside as though now you have established a very firm base.

There's not much likelihood of you losing your distinctives now. But it seems to me in a world like we're living in now, a world with such vast need with time obviously running out, it seems to me as though the time has come for navigators to widen their scope and perhaps more quickly than ever they dreamed. We don't have too much longer.

I know that we mustn't make policy on short term possibility but I believe that we're living in a day when we haven't got too much time and it may be that God could widen the scope of your work safely without endangering the distinctives which God hasn't trusted to you. I believe what navigators stand for is desperately needed in the churches of the world and that leads me to say this. I would have been happier in the imperatives if I had seen the last one higher up in the list.

Now I don't know whether they're there in that list in order of importance. I hope not because the church is central in God's purpose and what is central in God's purpose should be central in our purpose. I'm not saying that it's not but it just seemed to me as though that number seven had almost slipped off the page whereas to me it seems it is one of the very very important things and the future of navigators is going to be determined by the way in which it enriches the church.

I say that not in any critical sense at all because I believe that the navigators have got a most significant contribution to make to the world today. Don't limit God. Don't circumscribe God by too small expectations.

Dare to think big and to believe bigger. Dare to expect God to do the extraordinary for you in the 80s and remember that to faith the sky is the limit. Now before I bring you a message from the word I want to speak about the subject of relationships and what makes me feel this to be very important just now is that I had a survey and in it it pointed out that 59% of those surveyed of the missionaries who returned, 59% came back on the ground of relationships.

60%. Now that surely means that this is an area of tremendous importance in our work. The effectiveness of our ministry is largely influenced by our relationship with people.

It's not sufficient for us to understand principles and to understand procedures and so on. We've got to understand people and relate to them in a satisfactory way. And in what I'm saying I'm not thinking merely of those of you who are here but you've got many under your care and leadership is something which is a growing thing.

And I'd just like to say something about various relationships and I trust it might be helpful. We should have realistic but optimistic expectations of fallible human nature. We shouldn't expect too much of human nature even of redeemed human nature.

We're not angels yet we're just on the way there. And while we are not to condone unchristlikeness, I think we shouldn't be too shocked if we find other people are very like ourselves, not quite fully sanctified yet. I remember in New Guinea one of our students, we heard that he'd been beating his wife, well of course that's quite cultural in New Guinea, there's nothing wrong with that, but when we heard of it I went to rebuke him and he was rather surprised.

He says, you know I never kick her now. He thought he'd really made progress but he wasn't quite sanctified yet. Well the lesson is don't expect too much of human nature.

The basis, the basis of any of our relationships is mutual respect and fervent love. Not only love but fervent love the scripture says. More than just ordinary affection even, but fervent love, a fervent love one for another.

Let that be the basis. I believe that in a multi-racial group it's tremendously important that we are understanding and generous toward the cultural differences. We can't be too sensitive on this subject.

I believe that there's more unconscious hurt than ever we dream. When you're hurt you don't let on, you smile, so do other people. And I believe that in this area, and I know because I've worked for many years in a multi-racial group, and I know how all unconsciously through being insensitive we can hurt others and make really deep hurts that last.

And here's an area I think in which we need to be very very careful. Every one of us without exception has got nationalistic sensitivities. You don't like hearing your country criticized even though it's in fun.

You'll laugh at it all right, but inside you're not laughing. None of us like to hear our countries criticized. We, you make fun of my accent, well fortunately my accent's the right one.

But even an accent in that way, you can hurt people. Even though people laugh, don't necessarily think they think it's funny. It's not always funny.

Eating habits and cultural differences like that, religious background, educational background, national traits, all these things are sensitive areas in which we too must be sensitive. Now when I come to America, America is right and my culture is the alien culture. I'm the one who's wrong.

And any country we go to, we're the guest. And that country's right. What they do is right and what I do is the alien thing.

Now I believe that if we switch right over, and wherever we go, it doesn't matter what country we go to, we find it won't be too difficult to integrate. When we say they are right, and I don't think that what they do is funny, what I do is the funny thing. And I think that to be sensitive on that point is very very important.

Christian courtesy can't bear to see other people made uncomfortable. And love never makes somebody else uncomfortable. We should recognize and accept the temperamental differences of the persons with whom we work.

God made them different. They can't help it. I can't help being like I am.

I was made that way. But when you get an electric person and a placid person together, you've got possible tensions. You get an impulsive person and a person who's rather slow, you have all kinds of possibilities.

But when each accepts that, this is the way God has made us. And we'll be understanding in that area. It'll make a tremendous difference.

Accept them as they are and don't try to make the other person over in your own likeness. And that's what many of us tend to do. Husbands or wives, they try to make the other partner over in their own likeness, and God doesn't intend them to be that way.

Very interesting of Mary and Martha. Martha said, Lord, make Mary over in my likeness. And the Lord said, I'll do nothing of the sort.

He said, if there's any choice, Mary has chosen the better part. And it's so easy for us to, because other people don't conform to our way of thinking, or we try to make them over. God doesn't.

Very interesting if you study with Mary and Martha, the way in which the Lord Jesus dealt with each of them. Here's Martha, the practical temperance. When the Lord met her after Lazarus had died and she was very hurt, what did the Lord do? They just talked backwards and forwards.

She put one proposition and he answered her back again, and they just went backwards and forwards like this. When Mary, he met Mary, what happened with Mary? Did he discuss things with her and argue backwards and forwards? No, he didn't. He wept.

Why? He recognized temperamental differences and he dealt with each according to their need. To practical Martha, he met her on that level. To emotional Mary, he met her on that level.

And he didn't say that Mary was wrong because she wasn't like Martha and vice versa. It's true. And I believe that if we adopt that attitude, it's going to make a great difference in relationship.

And it's another thing to remember too, and that is that your opposite qualities are just as trying to the other person as theirs are to you. If you think somebody else is difficult to work with, you can be 100% certain that they think you're difficult to work with. But we don't think that way.

We think we're the normal one, but not so. When it comes to a conflict of wills with your fellow worker, who wins? Is there one person to give in every time or is there going to be some mutual sharing? Very interesting in Ephesians 5.18 where it says, be filled with the spirit. It goes on in verse 21, it says, submit one to another out of respect for the Lord.

Submit one to another. Mutual submission. Very interesting that this comes before Paul goes on to speak about the relationship of husband and wife.

It isn't that the husband is to have all the say and the wife's to do all the submitting. Before that, in the ordinary things of life, there is to be mutual submission, husband and wife, and worker and fellow worker. It comes to the realm of the headship of the home.

Ah yes, now the wife submits to the husband, because this is the way, this is the divine order. But I believe this submitting one to another in committees, even in the ILT. I don't suppose they ever have any problems there, but it doesn't matter where it is.

Here is the area in which there is to be mutual submission. Let your moderation be known to all men, it says in King James, and the word there means your yieldingness. That's not when it's a matter of principle.

But the strong person is the person who knows how to yield, not the person who digs their toes in. That's the weak, stubborn person. Let your yieldingness be known to all men.

Admit mistakes quickly and apologize quickly. The ability to apologize is the mark of a mature person. If there's going to be a problem, determine that you're not going to be the one to initiate it.

Very easy to have problems, but remember that takes two to make a problem, or three. Well, you say, well I'm not going to be the one who initiates it anyway, and that eliminates quite a lot. I read an article for Eternity Magazine once, and when they sent me a copy of the magazine, I saw Christian sin number one.

I didn't write that. But I did. It was an article dealing with criticism, and I think probably that's one of Christian, if it's not number one, it's quite probably number two.

Criticism, isn't it one of the things that is tremendously damaging in our Christian relationships? In a small and a closely knit community like we have in our mission fields and so on, we're fairly small, we're fairly closely knit, and one of the great problems, I wonder whether it obtains in Navigators, I'd be surprised if it didn't as well as anywhere else, one of the great problems is critical gossip, gripe sessions, anybody ever had a gripe session over policy? Rumor spreading? These are things that Satan delights to insinuate into any group in order to mar unity and mar fellowship, and there's nothing will undermine fellowship more quickly than that. Now, nobody intends to be harmful, but criticism and gossip and rumors of that kind are never helpful. They never help the work.

It's out of the fullness of the heart that the mouth speaks, and if I find myself giving vent to criticism, the structure of criticism, it's an indication that there's something wrong inside, because it's out of the fullness of the heart that the mouth speaks, and what overflows is an indication of what's inside. And I believe that this kind of thing grieves the spirit. It hinders him from working in the degree he wants to work.

It hurts the person who's criticized. Criticism never helps anybody else. Have you ever thought that criticism is always spoken from a position of superiority? It's always flattering to the person who criticizes.

You see, so and so did so. I would never have done that. Immediately you're up here and they're down there, and that in itself lets you know where it comes from.

There's a big difference between constructive and honest appraisal of a person or a situation, and as a leader you've got to do that. I'll never forget one day I was walking in the country with my wife, and I had my testament, and I was reading it, and I was just reading, we were reading it together, and I was reading in Romans chapter 14. I had no particular connection, but I came to verse 13, and it just hit me like a rocket.

Let us not therefore judge one another anymore. Boys, it just stood out. Let us not therefore judge one another anymore.

Moffat puts it, let us stop criticizing. Let us stop criticizing. They're one of these awful absolutes of Paul.

He's a terrible fellow. Let us not do it anymore. Are we to obey the Bible, or what are we to do about it? It also says judge righteous judgment, of course.

We have to exercise our critical faculty, but you can exercise your critical faculty in an uncritical way, an unjudgmental way, and that's what it means. Even although I am criticizing in the sense of appraising a person or appraising a situation, I'm not doing it in a judgmental way. I'm critical of that person.

Criticism of leadership, of course, is good fun. It's done and often it's deserved, but God's blessing never rests on criticism of leadership, whether they deserve it or not. Now, Miriam's criticism wasn't in the realm of Moses' leadership.

What was it? He'd marry her. Why feed Mary? And yet God thought it worth giving her a dose of leprosy. I think that's a tremendous commentary on God's view of criticizing leadership.

Saint Augustine had engraved on his dining table a motto. It was in Greek, but the English equivalent is this, Who loves another's name to stain, he shall not dine with me again. Who loves another's name to stain, he shall not dine with me again.

And there was a table full of bishops, and one of the bishops in the course of the dinner began to speak derogatory of another person. Augustine just pointed him to the motto, and that man never sat at his table again. Well, what are we to do? Whoever else criticizes the leader, I'm not going to initiate the criticism.

If I disagree, I'll go to the leader, direct or through the proper channel, and I won't undermine his or her authority by talking behind their backs. I think some determination like that could be very helpful. And may I just make a suggestion? Isn't it true that when we get together, mostly we talk shop, don't we? I wonder how much extraneous things than shop has been talked during these two and a half weeks.

Not too much. And that's one of the things, we get into such narrow channels of conversation, and when two, there are only two, one or two, or two or three together, our lines are so narrow. And I believe that one of the things that could be very helpful would be to do some wider reading, so that you've got something to talk about, a book that you can talk about, and don't talk about shop, because talk about shop all the time makes you stale.

Get a wider sphere of interest. Dwell on the good points of other people purposefully. It's a sign of our fallen nature, we find it so easy to dwell on the unpleasant side.

Refuse to believe the worst about your brother or your sister until there's no longer any possibility of what's being said not being true. Just refuse to believe it. You see, love hopes all things.

Love believes all things. Love is optimistic and refuses to accept a bad report until there's no alternative left. And I think that is helpful.

Now, just one or two other things with regard to leadership. And I know what I'm talking about, I've suffered and enjoyed leadership positions for nearly 50 years now. I know what's involved.

But remember, we're in a battle, and the devil is a dirty fighter. He'll do anything he can to mar our unity and to break our fellowship, and there's no way he can do it better than getting people to be critical of leadership. Remember that leaders are there by the appointment of God, the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers and guardians.

The leader's responsibility is to watch for the souls of those under him. That's his responsibility. He's got to give account.

And those who are being led, their responsibility is to obey the leader and to submit to them because they are the representatives of God. Now, your leaders may and will make some decisions that are not popular. I've never met a leader yet who enjoyed making unpopular decisions.

It's really a very hard thing to make a decision you know when you're making it is going to be unpopular with your people. And it's all the worse when you know that they won't understand why you make it because there's something you know that they don't. I'd like you to bear this in mind, especially with regard to your top leaders.

There are, by the time you get up near the top, there are things you know that others don't. You know personal things about other people. And I've had to make decisions, difficult decisions and suffer for them because if I had given the reason why I made that decision, it would have reacted adversely on the person who had done the wrong.

And for the sake of that person, the leader takes the blame themselves and is misunderstood. I think that that's something if you remember, you may know something that nobody else does and because it's in confidence you can share it with nobody else, you take the blame. But my brothers and sisters, that's the time when your leader needs your loyalty.

I don't need loyalty when you agree with my decision. I need your loyalty when you don't agree with my decision and you think I've made a wrong decision. That's when the loyalty of the group is so precious to the leader.

And I do trust that you will remember that in your relations with your leaders. If you don't agree with a decision, first go to the Lord about it. It may be you and not the decision that's wrong, you know.

It may be that the leader is more right than you think he is. So go to the Lord first about it and then go to the person concerned or go through whatever channel is the right channel. Prayerfully commit the result to the Lord.

Pray it through and then accept the result and meanwhile give your utter loyalty right through. If it's a policy that has been decided upon and you've accepted it, you are bound to be loyal to it whether you like it or not. Be absolutely loyal and if you if you can get satisfaction and okay.

If you can't and you feel you can't give loyalty, well there's one option open to you. If you can't give loyalty to your organization, you shouldn't be in it. I think that's true.

If I'm in an organization, I want to be loyal to it even though I may not dot every I and cross every T, but I want to be loyal while I'm in it. Well, just one more thing and that's this. There's a tendency when a headquarters is a long way away for people to speak about they and we.

They, anybody ever thought in those terms? Who are they anyway? Who are they? What is the society? It's the members. And the they are those men or women who against their own interests are doing the thing they don't want to do and which you wouldn't do if you could. They're doing that to serve you.

So it isn't they and we, but it's these sacrificial people who are doing the things they don't want to do. Anybody who wants to do administration ought to have their head read. So never talk about they and we.

Remember that it is we, we are one. And when you remember that, I think it's helpful. All right, so much for relationships.

And I want to speak about the capture of Jericho. That's better subject, isn't it? You know the story so well, time's going and I won't read it to you. You know it so well, the story of Jericho and the way in which the city fell.

Just try to put yourself in the position of the Israelites. They had crossed the Jordan, they crossed their Rubicon. Retreat was impossible.

There was the flooded Jordan between them and the wilderness. They had no fortresses to retire to. Their food was going to supply, which had come every day for 40 years, is going to stop.

There's going to be no more manor and they've got to live on what they can get in the land. The old and the experienced warriors had died in the wilderness. They were just the young bloods left.

Moses was dead and now here they were shut up in this land. There is the impregnable city of Jericho. The Jordan behind them and no alternative but to conquer or die.

And the new leader is starting out on his first assignment. What a wonderful opportunity he had, didn't he? Could you imagine how he would feel as he faced this tremendous ordeal? But before ever that city could be conquered, three things had to happen. The first was circumcision had to be revived.

Chapter 5 verses 2 to 8. In the 40 wilderness years they had forgotten or they had failed to keep the sign of the covenant circumcision. They had forgotten that they were a covenant people. But at Gilgal, the reproach of Egypt was rolled away and the people were circumcised.

And when you come to think of it, that was a tremendous act of faith. Here they were shut up in the promised land. There was Jericho with those well-trained soldiers and the impregnable army.

And for several days the whole army was immobilized because all the men were unable to do anything. They were absolutely at the mercy of the enemy. That was a marvelous step of faith on the part of Joshua first and on the people.

They were willing to do it. So let us remember now that faith, Joshua, is beginning with the people to exercise faith in God. Then the next thing that happened was the Passover was observed.

Chapter 5 and verse 10. They couldn't observe the Passover while they were an uncircumcised nation. But now the Passover was observed.

And of course, the Passover was the remembrance of their deliverance by blood. They'd forgotten that they had been delivered by blood. And I believe the lesson for us here, of course, is that we must never get very far away from Calvary either.

We mustn't forget the basis on which the covenant, we're in covenant relationship with God, but the covenant is based on the blood. Then the third thing before Jericho could be conquered was that Joshua had to be conquered. Chapter 5 verses 13 to 15.

Jericho was the key to Canaan. All the roads radiated out from Jericho. It was the key to the whole land.

And Joshua's strategy would be to try to divide and conquer. But here is this young commander and he's self-engrossed. How am I to attack the situation? When you come to think of it, all the troops were green.

They were not experienced. There were the massive walls of impregnable, two walls, 33 feet thick. Those walls could stand a siege of months.

They had no weapons of attack. They had no battering rams. They had nothing.

Time was against them. They had to, the food problem was there. Here they were in a totally impossible situation.

And Joshua sneaks out one night and goes down to the walls of Jericho and there he's reconnoitering to see what the walls are like and see is there any way in which I can gain entrance into the town. While he's doing this, all of a sudden he's confronted by a man with a drawn sword. Immediately hand goes to his sword.

Are you for us or for our enemy? And the reply comes, no. As commander of the army of the Lord am I now come. Suddenly Joshua finds himself before God and he bows down in surrender.

What does my Lord bid his servant? Here you have the Lordship experience. Before Jericho could be conquered, Joshua had to surrender the command to the commander of the Lord's host. That couldn't have been easy.

Here he was, he just started out. The Lord says as I was with Moses so I'll be with you. There he is the leader.

And suddenly he's told you're not the leader. The commander of the Lord's host didn't come to supplement Joshua's efforts. He came to supplant Joshua altogether and to take over control.

And it's never easy to be supplanted. But Joshua was a man of God and his reactions and these things are very, very wonderful. He accepted immediately the commander's authority.

His authority to direct the strategy and the tactics. But what a difference it made to Joshua when he realized he was no longer on his own. Why? Here was the commander of the army of the Lord.

Here was a new force brought into play, the army of the Lord. And I'm quite sure that a tremendous load rolled off Joshua's shoulders when he realized that the commander was responsible. My brothers and sisters, this is something that we can learn too.

When we don't look upon the Lord as somebody who supplements our efforts, our best good efforts, but the one who supplants us altogether and dictates the strategy and so on. It makes a big difference. Joshua was no longer a lonely man, a burdened man.

He had someone on whom he could lean. Now, it's one thing to surrender in principle, but it's quite a different thing when it comes to work it out in practice. And it wasn't very long after Joshua had surrendered before the reality of his surrender was put to the test.

The surrender to the Lordship of Christ is always tested, isn't it? And I think then as now, every new step of faith lays us open to a new test. Any step of faith you take, you'll be tested on. So immediately, Joshua was tested.

I'm commander of the army of the Lord. All right, I'll give you my strategy. It's really very good.

You march around the city 13 times and then give a yell and the walls will go down flat. Very convincing. Imagine if you had been in that group and those were your instructions.

How do you think you'd have taken it? I think it says something very wonderful for Israel, that they responded so well, and that Joshua responded so well. Here was this impossible situation, but Joshua's eyes now were directed away from Jericho to the Lord. That was the first thing that happened.

He got his eyes off the size of the problem, and he got them fixed on the Lord, the great God. In public, Joshua was leader. In private, he was servant.

Here's something for us too. In public, you're the leader. In private, you're the servant.

And it says you are faithful in that attitude in private, that the Lord will be able to honor you in public as the leader. The two things go together. There's something more.

This incident tells us that wherever there is a forbidding Jericho facing us, there is also a very powerful, omnipotent commander of the Lord's army. And something more. There's always a third force available.

He came as the commander of the army of the Lord, and too often we forget the third force. When the Lord is in control, we're not dependent merely upon the human resources. We are dependent upon the divine resources.

Now, in the victory which God gave these people, there were six activities of faith involved. The first was, it was to be a victory of faith. And in Hebrews 11, 30, you get that verse, that by faith, the walls of Jericho fell down by faith.

The whole setting of this incident was in order to teach that victory is by faith alone. These people, the Israelites, took a tremendous risk on the faithfulness of God. They burnt their bridges behind them.

We've got to honor them. Israel had been a very unbelieving nation, but you think what it must have meant to take that final step when all their bridges were burnt and they had no resource but God. And this is what the Lord had been working up to all the time.

He does that with us time and again. He arranges the circumstances so that we've got no resource but himself. And it's wonderful when he gets us shut up there, though we don't always appreciate it at the time.

They were staking everything on God's faithfulness. And of course, he didn't let them down. But the whole incident was intended to highlight the fact that it was to be a victory by faith alone, holy of God.

And the thing is that here, the newfound faith of Israel stood this preliminary test. Very wonderful. The second activity of faith was the obedience of faith.

Chapter six, verses three and four. They had to march around the city once a day for six days, and then on the seventh day to march around seven times. The armed men went first, and then the white-robed priests, blowing discordant ram's horns.

Have you thought of the significance of the ram's horns? They had silver trumpets. Why not blow silver trumpets? It's that much nicer. Ram's horns aren't very, very much, very musical.

But why is this? Why not the silver trumpets? The silver trumpets were a summons to war. The ram's horns were a subject for worship, a summons to worship. And what God is saying here, it's not going to be by military might or military endeavor.

It's going to be by the power of God. It's going to be a worshipping people blowing the ram's horns, the priests blowing the ram's horns, even though they were discordant. Yet they were a summons to worship.

I think this tells us something too of God's method of victory. There was to be no show of force. They were just to walk around.

They were not to utter a sound. They weren't even to make faces at the people up on the walls. That must have been very difficult, mustn't it? There they were, looking down, look at these poor people.

And you couldn't do a thing. That must have been hard on the young men, wasn't it? There they were, itching to try their strength somewhere, and all they could do was grab the closed mouth. Well, that was the third thing, the discipline of faith.

Absolute silence. I've heard it said that it's rather difficult for women to be silent, but in this case it was men, wasn't it? What more disconcerting to the enemy? I can imagine that to the people on the walls of Jericho would be rather good fun the first day or two, but after two or three days, it began to get on their nerves. Absolute silence.

And you think of it from the point of view of the Israelites. Supposing every one of that group was able to express his opinion of the wisdom of the strategy. Can you imagine what would have happened? They would have talked themselves out of faith in five minutes.

There's profound psychological as well as spiritual wisdom in the silence. They were shut up. And what were they doing? They were inwardly relying upon God.

They were shut up to God. And every step they went round the walls of Jericho was a step of faith, appropriation. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you, the Lord said.

And here they are, tramping round, marching round the city. That's what William Penn did in Philadelphia. When the Indians told him they would give him all the land, he could walk round in a day.

And William Penn got up the next morning and put on heavy boots and set off very early. And he marched for all day and came back pretty late at night and found the chiefs waiting there. And they smiled rather quizzically.

And one of them said, the pale faces had a very long walk today. But what did they do? Were they displeased because he had taken them at their word and had gone round a large area? They weren't. They were delighted that he had taken them at their word.

And the land William Penn walked round is Philadelphia. Every step an appropriation of faith. And so here it is as they walked round Jericho, claiming it by faith.

Every place the sole of your foot has trodden upon, that have I given you. Then there's the perseverance of faith. Chapter 6, verse 14.

So they did for six days. The novelty soon wore off. And there they were, just going round and nothing happening all the time.

Each time they went round, they looked to see where the cracks were coming. And not a single crack in the walls. Not the slightest evidence that anything was happening.

Waiting God's time is one of the most testing of spiritual experiences, isn't it? To wait. My father said, boy, there are three elements in guidance that you'll find very important. I said, what are they? He said, the first one is wait.

The second one is wait. And the third one is wait. Well, sometimes it works out that way, doesn't it? And that's not easy.

It's not always easy to wait God's time. There was no visible evidence, not a crack in the walls. And I think that this has got a lot to teach us about unanswered prayer.

They did exactly as they were told. They marched round and they had finished 13 times round. They had done all that God told them, and there was still not a crack.

And that is the most testing moment of all. When you arrive at that point and nothing happens. Tennyson, I think it was, one of the poets wrote a hymn on unanswered prayer.

And it deals with this very thing. One verse says, unanswered yet? Nay, do not say I'm granted. Perhaps your part is not yet fully done.

The work began when first your prayer was offered. And God will finish what He has begun. Say not omnipotence hath not heard your prayer.

You shall have your desire. Sometime, somewhere. You see, perhaps your part is not yet fully done.

How many times have you marched round your Jericho? You say, I don't know. But I'll tell you this. When you have completed the 13th time, you will know.

When you've completed the 13th time, you'll be able to shout the shout of faith. And that's the next activity of faith. Chapter 6, verse 20.

They shouted the shout of faith. And you'll notice that they shouted the shout of faith when there was still no evidence that anything had happened. And this is where the great test of faith comes in.

Whose faith was it that brought the walls down? Well, primarily it was the faith of Joshua to begin with. And Joshua, the leader, had been faithful. He'd submitted to the lordship of the commander.

And now he's communicating his faith. They see how he stands in this crisis. And that's what people look to leaders.

How do they react in a crisis? And they saw Joshua standing firm, believing God. And as he did that, their faith rose. And then, when he told them to shout, they did as they were told, and they shouted, and the walls fell down flat.

But so often, we do the circling of the walls of Jericho, but we don't shout the shout of faith. And that's the crucial thing. Nothing happened until they shouted the shout of faith.

Robert Moffat was the father-in-law of David Livingstone. He worked in Bethuanaland, I think it was, for seven years, and not a single convict. His church in Scotland wrote to him in the middle of the year.

It used to take about six months for mail to go backwards and forwards. His church wrote to him, they said, we want to give you something for Christmas, something that you would like very much. And so he wrote back, and he said, will you please send me a communion service? A communion service when you've got no converts.

What's the point? That was Robert Moffat's shout of faith. What he said was, in effect, I am believing that by the time that communion service arrives at Christmas time, there will be those who will sit with me around the Lord's table. And it happened.

They were there. When Christmas came and the communion set arrived, they sat together and there were a number of converts who shared the Lord's supper with Robert Moffat. He risked everything on the good faith of God.

And my brothers and sisters, this often is the crucial point. It isn't sufficient to walk around the walls of your Jericho 13 times. Nothing will happen until you shout the shout of faith.

But I believe that when you have walked around the walls 13 times, God will enable you to shout the shout of faith. May I share this? It's very personal. In 1934, Dr. Graham Scroggie came to our city, and we'd arranged a convention for him, and he was giving a series of messages on Joshua.

I took my wife with me and also a young lady who many years afterwards became my second wife. But we went to hear Dr. Scroggie. Now, my friend Mary, my second wife, was engaged to a young man who was a student in our Bible college, and he'd had 100 operations for osteomyelitis.

There was no penicillin then, and this disease would come, and he'd had 100 operations. And at the moment, he was in the hospital in great pain. And, well, we went to the meeting, and Dr. Scroggie was speaking on this chapter.

And he spoke about the shout of faith, something in the way in which I did this morning. As we were going away home after the meeting, Mary turned to my wife and me, and she said, I was able to shout the shout of faith for Jock this morning. Well, I must confess that I rather had my reservations, because I'd been to see him the day before, and I said, how are you? He said, I wish a 10-ton truck would go over me, the pain's so terrible.

Well, she went to see him the next day in hospital, and he was very bright. And he said, you know, I had rather a wonderful experience yesterday morning. She said, oh, what was it? He said, I was reading a Bible.

I was reading in the 6th chapter of Joshua. And he said, I was reading about the conquest of Jericho. And he said, as I read, I came to the place where it says, when they shouted a great shout, and the walls fell down flat.

And he said, I was able to shout the shout of faith. How wonderful. There were we, way over on one side of the harbor, and he's in hospital here, and the same Lord directing to the same passage, enabling him to shout the shout of faith, enabling Mary to shout the shout of faith.

What happened? Never again did that disease break out on him. And for 27 years he was a Baptist minister, and when he died, he died of a coronary and not of osteomyelitis. Shout of faith.

They'd circled the walls for a long while, but now God enabled them. That's what Mary said. The Lord enabled me to shout the shout of faith.

It wasn't something she did. It was, she had done her part in praying, and then God enabled her to shout the shout of faith. And I believe that God will do that with us too.

There's one other thing, and that is in chapter 6, verse 24, the dedication of faith. The gold and the silver and everything else was dedicated to God and was to be put into the treasury. You see, it was a victory of faith, and therefore all the glory must be God's.

And they were able to take the gold and the silver from Ai, but not from Jericho. It went into the treasury. This was to be a victory of faith, and the glory was to be all the Lord's.

Obviously all the Lord's and not theirs. Well, what are the contemporary lessons? What is your Jericho? Personal one? Family one? Work one? Ministry one? What is it? The impossible situation. What are we going to do about it? Are we going to keep on walking around the walls, looking for cracks? Are we going to keep on in faith every step, a step of appropriation, believing God, refusing to doubt, even although no evidence whatever that prayer is being answered? Well, I believe that that's part of it, and I believe that we'll come to the place where God will enable us to shout the shout of faith, and we'll see the walls, those forbidding, those impregnable walls fall down flat, and immediately the people went up, and there all the roads into the interior of the promised land were open.

Jericho. There usually is a Jericho right at the very beginning. You're starting 1980.

There'll be a Jericho for the navigators as a whole. There'll be a Jericho for you and your particular piece of work, but also there is a commander-in-chief who has never lost an engagement. Don't get your eyes on Jericho.

Keep your eyes on the commander, and believe God that the 1980s are going to see victories the like of which you have never dreamed before. Why? Because navigators are such a wonderful organization. No, because you have such a wonderful commander.

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