

# Let God Be God

by Paris Reidhead

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of letting God be God, surrendering to His sovereignty, and trusting in His promises and ways, even when they seem absurd or difficult to understand.*

**Duration:** 51:35

**Scripture:** Joshua 6:1-3, Joshua 6:5-6, Joshua 6:9-10, Luke 4:16-30

**Topics:** "Character Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a profound statement he encountered in Nigeria. The statement, inscribed on a fisherman's boat, consists of four words that hold the secret to victory in life's problems. The speaker emphasizes the importance of obedience to these four words, as demonstrated by Joshua in the Bible. He also highlights the significance of individual obedience in the overall success of the body of Christ. The sermon concludes with a reminder of God's timing and the need for patience and obedience in fulfilling His will.

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## Transcript

Will you turn, please, to Joshua, chapter 6. Tonight marks the conclusion of several months' ministry on the types and shadows of Christ in the Old Testament, Christ and the Christian life. We would have you refer back to them, and we trust that as you read the Pentateuch and Joshua that you will find your reading enriched because of these studies together. We begin on May 22 with a series of messages on scriptures intended to awaken sinners.

But this now marks the conclusion of the typical studies that has engaged us since the third Sunday of October last year. I shall read, beginning with the first verse of the sixth chapter. Now Jericho was straightly shut up because of the children of Israel.

I think the marginal reading is very interesting. May I give it to you? Now Jericho did shut up, and was shut up, because of the children of Israel. None went out, none came in.

And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of ram's horns. And the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times. And the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

And it shall come to pass that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout. And the wall of the city shall fall down flat. And the people shall ascend up, every man straight before him.

And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram's horn passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets.

And the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the roared came after the ark, the priests going on and blowing with the trumpets. And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make your voice to be heard in any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you to shout, then ye shall shout.

So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once, and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. Now the background of this is that which we considered last week, where we saw the captain of the host of the Lord revealing himself to Joshua. What we have in chapter 6 is the instructions that the captain of the host of the Lord, the Lord Jesus, gave to Joshua.

Remember, one of the last things I said last week was that the captain did not intend to be used by Joshua. He had not come to cooperate with Joshua. He had not come to aid Joshua.

How many Christians there are that feel that the Lord comes to their aid? He comes to cooperate. He comes to help. He doesn't, you know.

He doesn't. How many times people have cried and said, Oh, Lord, help me get victory over my disposition or over this habit, and they haven't had any help. Because, you see, the prayer is wrong, and God can only honor right prayers and proper prayers.

The Lord doesn't come to help you. The Lord came to do for you what you couldn't do. You see, if he helped you, then he'd have to share the glory with you.

And consequently, God is very jealous of his glory. And you deal properly with the problem in your life, the Jericho in your heart, or in your experience, you're going to do as Joshua did. You're going to fall before the Lord and say, Lord, I can't do it, and I need more than help.

Help isn't enough. You're going to have to do the delivering here or never be delivered. And you're going to have to do what I can't do.

And this we find Joshua doing. He has come to the end of himself. He's utterly incapable of solving the problem that Jericho presents.

And so he bows on his face before the angel or the captain of the host of the Lord, and he allows the captain to be captain. You heard me say, no, perhaps you didn't. Many of you didn't, at least.

But the first Wednesday that I was here, and I spoke that day using an illustration, which perhaps I've used since, but well, who's going to charge me with it? I want to give it to you, because it illustrates the point. But it was something that gripped me. I was editing some film from Nigeria, and missionaries, you know, I don't know, they're not very good photographers usually.

They're lovely people, but they're not very good photographers. You see, they say a motion picture camera, well, that means to keep the camera moving, instead of the subjects moving. And you get seasick watching it.

Well, at any rate, here was this camera bouncing around at the seashore there at Lagos in Nigeria, and it just got steady long enough to let me read what a fisherman had inscribed on the bow of his little boat. I knew what he had gone through. He'd been out fishing in the bay and harbor, and there wasn't a fish in the ocean.

Something had happened. They'd all gone to South America or over to Coney Island. There wasn't a fish in Africa's side of the Atlantic.

And his children were dependent upon the catch, and there wasn't any catch, and he'd starve, and his children would starve, and then he prayed. And the Lord brought fish. Well, this was wonderful.

And he went home with fish and told his children, but that wasn't enough. He'd be out fishing. The storm would come as it does, just seemingly off the horizon.

All of a sudden you're shining brightly and then all of a sudden you're engulfed in a torrential downpour and in a tropical hurricane. And his little boat would be like a chip going from the top to the sky down to the bottom, and he'd cry out, Lord, I'm drowned. And the Lord would hear and get him safely to shore.

And so he took all of these many experiences and in his English, I'm sure he had very limited English, he made one of the most profound statements I've ever seen outside of the Holy Scripture. Four words. The longest of the words has three letters, and yet it's the secret to victory in most of the problems you'll ever encounter.

Most of them will be solved by obedience to these four words with rough painting on the bow of a green boat at the Lagos Bay in Nigeria. I'll never forget them. I may forget them for a time, but God seeks to bring me back to them.

Here the words are. I wish I could emblazon them on your memory. Let God be God.

Let God be God in your life. You see, most of our problems arise from the fact we will not let God be God. We want to turn him into a celestial bellboy.

It fits right under here, you know. Faith is sort of the button and he comes up and salutes smartly and says, where to, sir? And God then picks up the bag of our ambitions and our prayers and he trots off and we give him a little quarter of a tip, you know, thanks God for helping me. We won't let God be God.

Oh, listen, I'm so glad that God never will consent to become an agent, or a means, or a technique. I want a God that's so aware of his worth as God that he's not going to turn out to be a little tool of my ambitions. I want a God that's going to insist upon being God.

Don't you? Don't you want a God that's worthy to be worshipped and obeyed and loved and adored and served? You don't want God to turn himself into a little tool for your ambitions, do you? No. And this Nigerian fisherman had caught the whole concept of Christianity and he put it in these four words, let God be God. That's what got Israel into all the trouble when they came up to Kadesh Barnea.

Joshua and Hur said we want God to be God and destroy these giants and turn them into the grasshoppers that they are. But the rest of them said, oh no, they're too strong for us. And these that refuse to let God be God wandered around for forty years and died and bleached their, bleached bones lay on the path as a testimony to what happens to people that will not allow God to be God.

And when our Lord Jesus went into the little village of Nazareth where he'd grown up, spent years with the very people and they welcomed home, you know, placards, ticker tape, and all the rest that you'd expect to find in a little Semitic village there on an escarpment. Oh, they all came down to meet him and the dogs were there and the blind people and everybody and Jesus is coming home. And they parade in.

My, they're so happy to have him. The local boy makes good. They're all proud of him and they've heard what he did down there at Jericho and they've heard what he did at Canaan.

My, my, it's wonderful. The next day, he takes the Scripture on the Sabbath day and he reads, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He hath anointed me.

He hath sent me. And when he'd finished, he said, This day, this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears. And they said, this is heresy.

And they took him out and were going to gently crowd him off the escarpment and push him over so that they could stone him, but not throwing stones at him, throwing him on the stones. A subtle way to get it done without being guilty before the Roman governor. And they were going to throw him off the cliff because he had said he was God.

And as the Lord Jesus left, the blind man still groped in his blindness. And the deaf man was still doomed to go without hearing the mockingbird and the lark and sing. And the crippled man was still forced to crawl on hands and knees begging for a crust of bread.

And the lepers still lay rotting in his disease. Why? The Holy Ghost said he could do their no mighty works because of their unbelief. They wouldn't let God be God.

They wouldn't let him be God. I wonder what the Lord Jesus has wanted to do for you and hasn't because you haven't been willing to let him be God. I wonder what he's wanted to do for this church for the last 40 years since dear Dr. Simpson went to be with the Lord.

And he's been forbidden to do it because we wouldn't let God be God. One day we will face it. One day you'll give an account.

One day in the eyes of the infinite love of God, you're going to see what your life could have been if you had believed God. And I believe that's the reason why men will weep in heaven. When they get a glimpse of what God wanted their lives to be in comparison to what their lives were and see how God would have used them to bless a doomed, damn, dying world.

I think if it weren't for the love of God to wipe away our tears, we'd weep forever. Oh, the crime of refusing to let God be God. Joshua wouldn't commit it.

Joshua would not fall into this subtle trap. He recognized that this was the Lord, Jehovah, that had come to him as the captain of the host of the Lord. Now he was willing to turn the commandment over to Jehovah.

Completely. Turn it over. There was a situation that Joshua was facing.

I think it's verse one and two clearly show to us the wonder of God's ways. The wonder of God's ways. You see, Jericho defied both God and his servant Israel.

Jericho said we aren't going to bow before this mob, the motley crew that have come out of slavery in Egypt. Who are they to make us bend? Who are they to think they can conquer us? They have an abattering ram with them. They've got that tent out there, but what do we fear of tents? What have they got in there? Some secret weapon? We're not afraid of them.

We've got plenty of water and plenty of food. Let them come see what they can do. They defied both God and God's servant Israel.

Jericho had resolved that Israel would never be their masters. Notice that first verse. They were straightly shut up.

Did shut up, and was shut up. Or in other words, they shut the place up and they guarded it to see that nobody got in and no one got out and nothing happened to open it. They weren't going to take a chance.

They were obstinately defending their city. They had determined that they were not going to let anything come in to this city. You know what I see in this? I see a picture of every sinner's heart.

Yes, I do. I see a picture of every sinner's heart in Jericho. They've defended themselves.

They've put a wall up. They've gotten in behind it and they said, we will not have this man to rule over us. You know, men think they're friends of God, that they are.

All you need to do is bring some unfriendly doctrine and find out how all of their friendliness and their interest in God evaporates. They'll go to war with God at a drop of a doctrine that they don't like. And this is Jericho.

This is the sinner's heart. This is your unsaved loved one. This is you, when God began to encircle you with his love.

In Job, the fifteenth chapter, in the twenty-fifth verse we read, those that strengthen themselves against the Almighty. Oh, how many there are that do that. We have some that have just recently come to the Lord here in the church, through it, and their unsaved loved ones are like Jericho.

My, my, it's just, you don't realize it until you see it happening over again. Where they've got the walls up, and they're hiding behind the walls, and they've got guards on the wall, and it's just terrifying, the opposition that men will put up to God when God begins to work. But you see, whereas Jericho had resolved that Israel would never be its master, God had resolved that Israel would be its master.

And I'm so glad that God has resolved that his dear son the Lord Jesus Christ will become the master of certain sinners. I'm so glad that God had resolved that my heart was going to be conquered by the Son of God and laid siege to it until finally the battering rams of his love broke down the walls of my rebellion, and they fell before it. Oh, I'm so glad that God loved me even when I thought I hated him.

Aren't you? Aren't you glad that God didn't run the first time you shook a stick at him? Aren't you glad that God didn't leave you the first time that you began to become rebellious toward him? I am. Oh, how glad I am that God laid siege to the sinner's heart. And God had resolved that it was going to happen this way.

And I'm so glad that there are people to whom we're going to be witnessing in the weeks and months that lie ahead that are enemies of God's. You know, when I find somebody that's really fighting, that's the most encouraging sign. Oh, it's encouraging.

When somebody gets right up there on the edge of the wall and they're ready to take you on in opposition to the things of God, rejoice and be exceeding glad. You say, oh, this is terrible. They're fighting.

Sure they are. But every city that's besieged is fighting. It's the city that's all gates are open and its guards are napping that I'm worried about.

Wesley was right. He said, as I mentioned this morning, he said to his young fellows they'd been writing in saying, Mr. Wesley, every time we preach people get mad at us and drive us out of town. He said, well, praise the Lord.

Three things have to happen when you preach. People either get mad or sad or glad, and be happy about any of them. It doesn't make any difference.

The only time you need to be afraid is when nothing happens. And so here we discover that when God begins to lay siege to the sinner's soul, then there's going to be opposition. Now, Jericho was defeated by the purpose and the promise of God.

Isn't it interesting? Look at that second verse. You see, God's promise is completed history. Did you know that? God's promise is history just written before it happened.

And notice the way he speaks. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and ye shall compass the city, and the walls shall fall down. It's all in the past tense with God.

It's already happened. It's completed history because God promised. Can you understand that this is what faith is? You know, it's not hard to believe if you know something's going to happen.

Anybody can do that. It's when you're uncertain that you haven't any question. I believe that there's an awful lot of trouble with people in this matter of faith, because they don't wait with God long enough to find out what God's going to do.

Someone asked me the other day, they said, you know, I was talking with a man that prayed for the sick, and he said something that startled me. He said that he told the person that they were going to be healed. Well, I said, if he knew it, there wasn't any reason for his not telling them.

It didn't help them. I said, if he didn't know it, then how could he pray? You see, faith is simply the confidence, knowing what God's going to do, and going ahead. It's when you don't know what he's going to do that it's so difficult.

Well, if you don't know what God's going to do, don't you think the thing to do is to pray until you find out? Oh, you know what we do? We're, oh, if we could see ourselves as God sees us, you know what we do? We don't take time enough to say, now Lord, is this your will? How do you want this done? Will it be to your glory? We rush in. Instead of praying around a thing and praying concerning it and waiting until we get the mind of the Lord and know what God's going to do, we say, dear Lord, if it be thy will. Well, that's not faith.

If you don't know the will of God, simply say, well, Lord, we know you're going to do your will, and the only thing we can say is be glorified as God and do your will. No use to pray for him. I think the word of God is the will of God.

And when God spoke to Joshua, Joshua knew the will of God. And if he knew the will of God and had the word of God for it, there was the grounds of faith. And this is exactly what's happened.

God's promise is completed history. It's already done. God said it.

Now, isn't it interesting that so many times God's method is absurd, as viewed by man? Can you imagine anything more ridiculous than for a preacher to say to a visiting prime minister of a big country, relatively big, go down to the Jordan River and duck yourself seven times and you'll be healed of leprosy? Now, if that isn't the ultimate in absurdity, I don't know where you'd find anything quite as ridiculous as this. You know why it doesn't seem ridiculous to you? Because you've read it so long, you just take it for granted. But to put yourself in the place of Naomi, and has a servant come out of the door and says, you go to the river and duck yourself seven times, and you'll be healed of leprosy.

Well, if that isn't absurd to you, I don't know what absurdity is. And all the way through, Peter says, Lord, we've got to pay some taxes. That's all right, Peter.

You go out and take a fish and throw it in, and the first fish you get will have a coin in its mouth, and you go pay both of our taxes, because you've got to pay them too, Peter. And the fish will have enough for both of us. Isn't that marvelous? Absurd, but marvelous.

Oh, I think God is glorious when he just shows us how little our human wisdom is. My, it's marvelous to realize that whereas God's method seems absurd, he has a very real reason for doing it. Do you know why? God is a jealous God, and he wants the glory to be where it belongs.

That's it. He wants the glory to be where it belongs. And so the directions came from the captain, and the captain was instructed to do it exactly the way God wanted it done, and this is what we read about it.

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, now listen, that no flesh should glory in his presence. This is the principle of the operation of God, that no flesh shall glory in his presence. My, how many times we do things that only we would think of doing, and then we say, look what the Lord did.

He doesn't do things that way. We try to blame him for our activities. Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful to just take time enough to find out what the Lord wants to do, and do it his way.

I believe this is what he's going to bring us to, because we're going to try everything else in the world, and kill ourselves trying, and finally we'll say, well, Lord, the only thing for us to do is to find out the way you want to do it, and when that happens, we're on the verge of blessing. This is the catastrophe in Protestantism. You know what's happened? For a hundred years, carnal men have been using natural means to try to do the work of God, and they've brought us down to the abyss, where it's so meaningless, and powerless, and fruitless, and here we are.

Carnal men have come to the word of God and said, what's inspired, and what isn't. Carnal men have brought us to the church of God and said, what's to be, and what isn't. Carnal men have brought us to the work of God and said, well, after all, you've got to do it by, you know, and we've gotten into a swamp from which there's no extrication, and it's come about because we've been unwilling to let the captain of the Lord of to do it.

But Joshua did. Joshua was unwilling to go in the way of the generation that sinned against God, and so he accepted God's method, absurd as it might be. Have you ever thought of the paradoxes? If you want to be master, become servant.

If you want to live, choose to die. If you want to climb, go down. If you want to be exalted, humble yourself.

If you want to be known, become unknown. Just a complete paradox. Everything that wise men say is necessary, God laughs at and says, it won't work that way.

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. If you save your life, you'll lose it, and if you lose your life, you'll save it. Now, God never gives us commandments that aren't clear.

They're always clear. God is very aware of the limitations of our intelligence, and so he doesn't give us impossible things. Very simple.

Always, everything. Oh, how many people misrepresent God. If I just knew the will of God, the implication is, here am I, devout, earnest, sincere, and there is God, obscure, mystical, hidden.

If I can't know what God wants, my friend, our problem is not knowing what to do, but our problem is not doing what we know. If you shall be willing to do the will of God, you shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God. God always gives clear commandments.

This commandment is associated with the covenant. Everything God promises is in a covenant. And here he says, if you'll do what I'll tell you to do, then I'll do what you need to have done.

And consequently, his purpose is to magnify his power, his purpose is to get his people to trust him and obey him and do it in such a way that no one will say they did it. I believe God is looking for a church today, and Christians today, that are willing to obey him to the place where they seem absurd in the eyes of a wise generation, in order that God can do something so wonderful that no man can get the credit for it. This makes me feel that we have much to learn here, but there's something else.

The ark that went on ahead, following the men of arms, and between the soldiers and the people, the ark speaks of Christ. And the ark was the center. And the ark speaks of him, for it though it was shrouded and covered, nevertheless it was, as you know, that place covered with the cherubim, the mercy seat, in which were the tables of stone and the manna, and the errands rod that budded.

And there were, in the ark thus, the emblems of Christ, and the ark stood for Christ, and it's in the very center, the place of prominence. And the consequence of it is, you see, that God the Father wants to glorify Christ. And everything that God ever leads you to do will be to the glory of Christ.

Now there'll be a lot of things you'll try to do for God that won't be to his glory. And you can well be sure of this, that what men do for their own praise is not of God's leading. When God leads, it's to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Glorify thou me! This is the end for all that God does. Now notice what he told them to do. First he said, you're going to compass the city.

And I want the men of war to go on, and then I want the ark to come, and then I want the people to follow. And you're going to have the seven priests go with seven trumpets ahead of the soldiers, and they're going to blow on the trumpets, and then the soldiers are going to march in their battalions, and then the ark, and then the people. And there are about three million of them, you know.

Imagine getting all the people in Manhattan Island is quite a company. And they're just going to march quietly and silently without anyone saying a word. Once a day.

Can you imagine what's happening upstairs there in Jericho on the walls? And here they see seven priests with trumpets coming, the soldiers, and then the ark, this box, it's covered. And then all the women, and all the children, and the old people, and the young people. What kind of, what rule, what book of rules on how to destroy cities and conquer people did they learn this in, you see? And here the guards stand and say, they're coming.

And they look, and they're coming all right. And they just march around, and the people up on the walls are hooting at them, and hollering at them, and throwing things down on them. This is no way, you'll never conquer us.

But God, you see, oh dear. Wouldn't it have been wonderful if they could have just yelled back? Oh my, can you imagine what kind of restraint this was on Israel? And God says, you can't open your mouth, you can't say a word. About kill us, most of the people, I expect if it were today, we'd all have nervous breakdowns, before we got around the city once.

No chance to answer back and tell your side of the story. And just walking, and then they go home. And the next day they come back.

And by the sixth day, I tell you, those people in Jericho, it was a haunting experience. And then the seventh day, much earlier, and they walk once, and they walk twice, and they walk three times, and this silent multitude of three million people, and the end touches, and they're just going continuously around the city. Not a sound.

Not a sound. And then Joshua said, I'll tell you when, and when I give the signal and blow the long blast on the trumpet, then shout. Someone said, my, three million people could knock the walls down just with the reverberation of their shawl.

No, no, Jericho. No, no. You know, that wasn't the shout of decibels of sound disintegrating concrete.

No, no. That was the shout of expectant faith rejoicing in victory, before it had seen it. And when that happened, it says, and it fell right down on itself.

And you know what happened to those walls? I used to think they fell out. They didn't fall out. You know what they did? They just sort of melted.

They just relaxed. They just fell down on themselves. They just weren't walls anymore.

They were just heaps of rubble. Just, just went down. Wasn't any problem for God.

God who can set a star in space and hold it there and keep it burning didn't have any trouble with a few feet of mud and bricks and so on. No, no. But the thing that amazes me about this thing is that Joshua didn't argue with the Lord.

It's a good thing God didn't have to have pass a committee that had been there all morning trying to prove how wrong God was in this way of doing things, you know. It just never could be done this way. Joshua was there, and Joshua was the servant of the Lord, and he didn't have to, he just was the one that God talked to and told about it.

And Joshua had no opinion to offer. He didn't argue. Someone was talking to me about a boy taking into his business.

He said, you know, the fellas never earned two dollars that belonged to him, except somebody helped him. And yet every time I tell him what to do, he's got three reasons why it should be done his way. I thought, well, there it is.

There it is. That's the human heart. That's the human spirit.

That's what we're made of. But Joshua had come over Jordan. He'd eaten the old corn of the land.

And so when God told him how to do it, he says, all right, Lord, that's the way. And then Joshua said, you keep quiet. He'd silenced the talk of others.

You know, more harm is done by talk. I remember during the war, we had ships, you know, sinking ships, and said loose talk caused this. Well, it's done more than sink ships.

Loose talk. And God was particularly careful that there should be no loose talk. And so he said, you keep silent.

Silent. When God's word speaks, it's said, it's finished, it's done. I believe the only Christian God can bless is the Christian that when he hears God speak has a thus saith the Lord, and he doesn't argue or debate or ask.

Many of you have heard God speak to your heart and tell you what to do, but then you begin to, well, should I or shouldn't I? Is this right or isn't it, shouldn't I? And you begin to consult with people about it, and dissipated your faith, and dissipated your confidence, and gotten down into a morass from which only the sovereign power of God can ever extricate yourself. Because God spoke, and if you do not come to recognize the voice of God in your life, it's very, very difficult to get your guidance. Now, when you know the will of God, don't debate it, don't discuss it, don't argue about it.

You know, and it's finished. And Joshua said to the people, this is what God's going to do, and you keep silent. And when they criticize you and mock you and scoff at you, insult you, ignore it.

This is what God wants. And Joshua was the one who signaled to the people when they were to shout, my, what a wise man this leader was. What a wise man he was.

Yeah, dear, how I'm sure, I'm sure there were a lot of people behind him that wondered if he was doing right, especially on the night of the sixth day, and the sixth time around on the seventh day, I think there were a lot of people that wondered, just the old way Naaman wondered. The time he came up, he'd been down the water six times, and I can see him shake his head and say, nothing will ever come of it. And the fellow on the bank says, Naaman, just once more, just once more.

And he goes down, and this is the time God was looking for, obedience and faith. And God met him. And this is what God's looking for with you, and this is what he found in Joshua.

Now the thing I want you to see is that this falling down of the walls has another picture. Beside the falling down of the walls of the sinner to the grace of God, as his truth and the brooding operation of the Holy Ghost pictured by the people is performed, this, these walls also speak of the enemy of our soul, Satan, that was entrenched there behind high walls. And the Lord Jesus Christ met the enemy on the divinely appointed terms.

And there it was, seeming folly, that he opened his breast to the sword of hatred from Satan, and the Lord Jesus died. But do you know something? On the appointed day, he rose from the dead. And when Jesus Christ arose from the dead, the walls around Jericho fell flat.

And the devil has never been able to build him up since. He fulfilled the Father's purpose, and he provided a glorious deliverance. And I want you to know that however you may see the enemy strut, that there at Calvary and at the open tomb, he was defeated, and the walls have fallen down.

And every effort to build them has meant they've just continued to crumble, because there's no strength in the bricks and no holding in the mortar. They fell down. They fell down.

Now, salvation came to Rahab's house. You remember how that the covenant had been made with Rahab? Rahab had taken her place with the people. She'd gathered in her family.

She'd gathered in her friends. They were there in the house on the wall. And I'm sure if you'd have looked over Jericho, you'd have seen a phenomena.

You'd have seen a house settle down, and there wouldn't have been any injury, and they wouldn't have broken a picture on the table or a picture on the wall. I don't believe anything happened in Rahab's house, except it just was about twenty feet lower than it had been a little earlier. And everyone in it was perfectly safe.

And they went straight up, the two spies did, to Rahab's house, and they drew her out. Now you see a covenant had been made with Rahab that was not forgotten. If she would do, if she would do as the covenant said, she could be saved.

And the covenant was to put a red cord, the very cord by which he had let the spies down, in the window, and to keep it in the window, regardless of what her friends and neighbors said about it. For when they

conquered Jericho, they would come to the house that had the cord in the window, and the people inside would be saved. And I see in this the beautiful picture of redemption through the blood.

And a covenant was made, and that house, that heart, that has the red cord of the precious blood of Christ sprinkled over the lintel of the heart and mind and spirit, knows that there's a covenant been made in heaven, and God will keep it. And God kept his covenant with Rahab. She had believed and she had obeyed in obedience and faith, are twins that can never be separated.

How glad I am to say that when the Lord Jesus Christ conquered Satan, there were a lot of more in Jericho beside Rahab. There were sinners as vile as she, such as myself and you. And oh, how glad I am that the Lord Jesus knew that when he went to the cross and went to the tomb and rose from the dead, the walls would fall, and we could be delivered from so great a death.

But it was because he had to die that we could live. Then we see Rahab taken in and made a member of Israel. Her past is forgiven, her past is forgotten, and her future is in the glorious will of God.

And we find her as she marries Salmon and as she becomes the progenitor of the Lord Jesus Christ. My friend, you were just as vile and just as wicked and just as deserving of death as was Rahab. But because you have put the cord in the window, the precious blood of Christ, and fixed your faith on his finished work, you too can know forgiveness and pardon and eternal life, and you too can know the joy that comes from finding that God has a perfect plan for your life.

How wonderful. Just three things I say in three minutes. First, this Scripture teaches us that God would have his people work.

There is a place for you, a task. Everyone in Israel, the soldiers, the priests, and all the people were there. And God has many that he wants to deliver and many walls that he wants to fall down, many cities he wants to vanquish.

But every one of us have a part in it. And if we can begin to understand that we are no stronger than the obedience of the least member of the Church, we begin to get on grounds where God can bless us. If one person had shouted, if one person had replied, if one person had acted in the flesh, I believe something quite different would have happened in Jericho.

It was the body acting as a body under the control of the head that gave God the opportunity to glorify himself. And this is what I see as so imperative for the Church. What if one of the members had said, well, this is no way to conquer a city, and I'm going to next time take along my little hook and my rope, and I'm going over there, and oh, what tragedy would have resulted because of one man's disobedience, one man's sin.

We know what happened with Achan. In there he saw a Babylonish garment dedicated to evil spirits and a wedge of gold dedicated to evil spirits, and he secreted it, and he brought it home, and he put it in his tent. Who saw it? And Israel went up toward Ai, a little town, oh, so insignificant in comparison to the capital Jericho.

And they were put to flight and slain and fell. Joshua fell before the Lord. Do you recall what it was? He said, don't pray.

You have one in your camp that sinned. Because of the sin of one, the whole people of Israel suffered defeat. Because of the obedience of all, God was glorified and Israel had victory.

Now I want you to know that you are important in the will of God. How long God will be patient with anyone, standing in the way of the victory of the body, I don't know. But I know that there are certain rights in the body, and I know that there comes a time when the body's concern to be what God wants it to be is of such an oppressing nature that God did even as he did to Achan.

He said it can't go on any longer. He'll have to be dealt with after the day. And my heart's cry tonight is that you may realize that you have a part in God's work and that this body, this Israel of God, is no more effective than you are obedient.

Then God would have his people wait six days, six trips around the city. One surely should have been enough. Seven times around on the seventh day.

Oh, what a waste of time. Why can't we get on with it? Why, why, why? Oh, listen, dear heart. God is going to teach us to wait until God's time comes.

Wait, I say, on the Lord. Again, I say, wait on the Lord. My, you know, there's only one time for us, and that's the impatience of now.

And everything is now. I remember as a little boy when my father brought me home a pair of pajamas and he got home at three in the afternoon. I had them on and was in bed at 3.30. I couldn't wait.

I couldn't wait. And this is the way with God's people. We can't wait for God to do it his way to his glory and his own plan and purpose.

We're going to have to wait and get everything ready and prepared. And when the Lord's time comes, then the shout will rise and the walls will fall and God will be glorified. And I've set my heart on it.

And I'm not, don't you get me over there, Jericho's walls, with a toothpick trying to take the mortar out between the stones. I'm not going to do it. God's going to break the walls down if they ever come.

I'll spend the rest of my life walking around the city, but I'm not going to go over and pick with a toothpick any longer. I did fourteen years of that. Nearly killed me.

Wore my fingers down to the first knuckle. I'm through with that. If God can't do it, it'll never be done.

If God isn't bigger than his needs, if God isn't bigger than his church, if God isn't able for his task, then we're going to just die there. And they'll say, blessed are the dead that died in the Lord, because we're not going to meet him. We're going to go God's way.

God's way. Then the next thing we need, God would have his people win. He'll have them work, he'll have them wait, and he'll surely have them win.

If you'll find out what God wants to do, and the manner in which he's going to do it, and you'll wait on God's time, you'll win. You know, if you're right, you can always afford to wait. It's when you're wrong that you have to get all excited and all fustered.

If you're right, you can wait. They didn't have any worry. They knew that they were doing it the right way.

Let all these wise acres on the wall laugh at them. God told them how to do it. It's in God's hands.

That's all they need. You be in God's way, doing God's work for God's glory. It'll come.

It'll come. And this we must understand. Whether it be in your own personal life, whether it be in all of your ministry or a church, it's always the same.

There's that obedience of faith, that waiting in confidence, and then there's winning for the glory of Christ. Well, may this encourage your heart. God has so much to teach us and show us and so much blessing to bring to us.

Let's stand for prayer. Now there's been something in all this for everyone. If you're here without Christ, then the doom of Jericho is certain and your doom is equally certain.

If you're here like Achan with unconfessed sin in your life, the wisest thing to do is to break and bend before God. Your friends know it and God knows it and you know it. You might as well deal and let God meet you.

If you're here with your life all confused by your own plans, tonight's the time to let God help you and deliver you and extricate you from your own pit of your own digging. I don't know what your need is. If God's spoken to your heart and you want prayer, and while the others slip out the door to the street, you slip into Wilson Chapel and we'll come and talk with you and pray with you.

We're here to help you. Perhaps there are some of you that would like to be baptized. There will be baptism in service on May 22nd.

And if you'd like to follow the Lord in believers' baptism, you might speak to me tonight that we might make arrangements. Now you mind God. You know what God's saying to your heart.

I'll come to Wilson Chapel in a little while and if you're there we'll be so glad to talk with you and pray with you. Now Father, we have the Word, we have the testimony, we have the truth concerning those who are willing to let thee be God. Let thee be God in their life and do things thy way.

Lord, everyone here has certain issues, problems, temptations, testings, opportunities. Might they just let God be God? Do it thy way. Find out what thy way is and then to obey thee and let thee be glorified in their hearts and in their lives.

So we pray for this people and we pray for ourselves as a church that there might come a time when we're so under the control of the head and not an aching anywhere about that thou canst bless and mighty will be the victories to the glory of Christ. And so we just give ourselves to thee, to the Word, to the truth, and we ask that these meditations these months past may prove to have borne eternal fruit to the glory of Christ in the heart and in the life of this people. May thy grace and mercy and peace be in abide with each of us now and until Jesus comes again.

Amen.

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