

The Ark of the Covenant: Around Jericho Part iii

by Roy Hession

Roy Hession's sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in God and His promises as exemplified in the story of Jericho's fall.

Duration: 53:54

Scripture: Exodus 3:5, Joshua 6:13, Joshua 6:20, Isaiah 64:4, Mark 11:24, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 2:14

Topics: "Ark Of The Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of cooperating with God's instructions, even when they seem feeble or unlikely to bring about victory. He uses the story of Joshua and the battle of Jericho as an example. The speaker highlights the significance of shouting and praising God in faith, even before seeing the walls of opposition come down. He also shares a personal anecdote about the power of prayer and waiting on God's timing. The sermon concludes with the reminder that leaders are servants before God and that Jesus is the ultimate captain of the hosts of the Lord.

Transcript

I want us to turn this morning to the next incident in the history of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the Earth. We're going to turn to Joshua chapter 6, verse 13. We've seen the Ark in the midst of Jordan, standing there till all the people had passed, to clean over Jordan, into Canaan.

And now they're in Canaan, and the real business begins. We're going to begin at chapter 6, verse 13. And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand.

And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, neither. But as captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said, What saith my lord under his servant? And the captain of the host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.

And Joshua did so. Now Jericho was straightly shut up, because of the children of Israel. None went out, and 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 Anna, 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 the ark, and seven priests shall bear before the ark, seven trumpets of ram's horn.

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 horns 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 rearward 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 any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day that I bid you shout.

Then shall ye shout. So the ark of the Lord compass the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them, and the rearward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did six days. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times.

Only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time. When the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, shout, for the Lord hath given you the city.

And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein to the Lord. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she is the messengers that we sent. And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass, and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord, and they shall come into the treasury of the Lord. So the people shouted, when the priests blew with the trumpets. And it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat.

So that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep, and ass with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she had, as she swore unto her.

And the young men that were spies, went in and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren. She really packed the house that night. She knew it was the only place of safety.

And all that she had, and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel, and they burnt the city with fire. And all that was therein, only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had.

And she dwelleth in Israel, even unto this day, because she hid the messages which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. What a story. What a history.

And so this morning, we come to the next incident. We've seen the Ark itself, being brought into the tabernacle of the glory of the Lord Philemon. And we've seen the Ark in Jordan, and the people passing on dry ground, and now we see the Ark of the Covenant encompassing Jericho, and accomplishing its thought.

But strangely, the emphasis of the story seems to me, not so much on the Ark itself by itself accomplishing the downfall of the city, but the emphasis seems to be on the faith of the people in the Ark, which was utterly necessary if the walls of Jericho were to fall down flat. Hebrews 11, the commentary there is, by faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after they'd encompassed the city seven days. The emphasis there in Hebrews is on by faith.

Yes, it was the Ark, or that which the Ark symbolized, but it was their faith in the Ark, or their faith in the One, whom the Ark represented, which accomplished it. And as you read the story, that is the emphasis, it wasn't just the Ark. The people had to do something, something pretty foolish it seemed, but they had to do it, without which the thing wouldn't have happened.

They had to believe, and more than that, they had to do a foolish thing, act in faith, and then God wrought on their behalf. And I believe that this passage has much to teach us about faith in Jesus, our Ark of the Covenant. Faith in him.

First we must see who he is, because it's very easy to have a Jesus who's little more than another Moses to you. The one who tells you what's right and what's wrong, blesses you when you do the right, but cannot but censure you when you do the wrong. And as you so often do the wrong, from that sort of Jesus, you don't get much more than censure.

But that isn't our Jesus. The law has come by Moses, condemned a lot of us. Grace and truth has come by Jesus Christ, and it's in that Jesus I trust.

For his grace and power are such, none can ever ask too much. Faith in grace, terribly important, and faith in his power. And this is what this story has to teach us.

All right then, the end of the story. The people have come over Jordan, and there right in their midst, stands this great imposing city of Jericho. It's a good climate down there, I've been there, favorite watering

place, and it was a great fortified city, with great walls all around it.

It was the existence of such cities, like this, that had caused their fathers 40 years before, to panic, and refuse to enter, and prefer rather to go back to Egypt. Because of which attitude, God disciplined them, by not letting them go in, and imposing that 40 years of discipline, wandering in the desert. When those spies of old came back 40 years before, they said, the people are taller, and greater than we, and their cities are great, and walled up to heaven.

And I imagine one of the cities they saw was Jericho, walled up to heaven, utterly impregnable. And the mere sight of those cities, was enough to make them turn the tail. And that city is still there.

It hasn't changed, they've come over, but that city is still there. Now we've come over Jordan, some of us, in varying ways and degrees. We know what it is to see, find the power of the blood of Jesus, to bring us out of the wilderness, into a good land, and a new experience of Jesus.

The power of his blood, has been known. Or we may be yet to go through, well we're on the way, aren't we, bless your hearts. And right in our face, now we've come over, is our particular Jericho.

It'll be, it'll differ for everybody, it may be the situation at home, in the family, where Satan seemed to be entrenched, and blocking your spiritual progress. It may be the prospect that now you've come over Jordan, there are some things you may have to put right, in your life, some things that might have to be surrendered, some things you might have to put right with other people, and my that's a daunting prospect perhaps. There may be various things that you may have to put right, various personal besetments, that stand in the way, over which you need victory.

There may be all sorts of other difficulties, I can't begin to mention them, because they will vary with everybody, but you know, what your Jericho is. And I want to tell you, it was those sort of difficulties that have caused you in the past, to hesitate about going forward. It has been these sort of difficulties which we knew there, which have caused us to do what Israel did, turn back from our promised land.

Perhaps long ago, we've been in the wilderness ever since, it was nothing more than things like Jericho, which we felt we couldn't face. And now, although we have been met by the Lord, and we have come over Jordan into a new place with Jesus, those difficulties, those Jerichos are still there. And you and I are not going to get very far in this promised land, until we prove God's power to overcome and overthrow our personal Jerichos.

Now before the actual battle, if you can, yes, it wasn't much resistance actually, but we'll call it a battle. Before the battle, there are two previous important incidents that took place. In the previous chapter, or the chapter before the previous one, we are told of how Joshua, having come over Jordan, sent two spies into this great city.

They managed to get in when the doors were open, disguised as citizens of Jericho, to see how things were. And that night, they found hospitality in the house of Rahab. She wasn't a person of enviable reputation, and of course their approach to her was completely professional, they weren't there for any improper purposes, they were spies.

And maybe they thought, this is the sort of woman we can get to talk. And talk she did. And when at last she looked closely at them and realised they were not citizens of Jericho, and when it came to her, these were spies of that mighty army in camp outside, she did begin to talk.

And she said, I know the Lord has given you the land. Do you? Absolutely sir. And not only me, we all of us do.

You know the hearts of the whole city melts because of you. Ever since we heard that your God parted the Red Sea, we conceded defeat. Really? She said yes.

Everybody believes it. I certainly do. And they were surprised.

They, she seemed to believe more in the power of their God than they did themselves. It was the biggest encouragement. Actually that was God's purpose of letting the spies go, not for them to spy up the land, but to hear this mighty word of encouragement.

And they escaped back to Joshua saying, boys, we've got it in the bag. The Lord has delivered the city into our hearts. All they needed, that encouragement.

And before you tackle, or before you let the Lord tackle, before you exercise faith in him to do so, he invariably gives us some such incident, just to encourage faith. With Moody who said he looked through the Bible and he couldn't find that God could do anything anywhere with a discouraged man. And therefore God knows how gently to deal with our discouragement and to encourage faith in our hearts in him and expectancy.

Have you noticed that word in the first epistle of John? This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, something inside us. Faith is the victory that overcometh the world. And if you're buoyant in faith, you are victorious, even before you've met the foe.

And this is what God wanted to do for Israel. Their fathers had turned back through unbelief, and this time God is taking great pains to ignite and encourage faith. And that was the most encouraging visit they could have had.

As they heard what Rahab said, actually as a result of it she was justified by faith, says Paul. I expect to meet Rahab in heaven. And by the way, she's one of the predecessors.

She's in the family line of the Lord Jesus Christ. Did you know that? You look at the family tree of Jesus Christ. She married an Israelite and she was in that line from whom Christ came.

Then there was a second incident that took place just before. It was a big thing for Joshua. He was young in leadership and that city, he had to confess, look my is strong, how in the world were they going to overcome that city that stood in their way? Perhaps he went for a walk in the cool of the evening, really worried, really bothered, could one say biting his nails? I don't know.

Suddenly he saw a man standing in front of him in the field outside where he was walking, with his sword drawn. And immediately he was all jumpy, he said, are you for us or for our adversaries? Are you on our side or are you on their side? And the answer was neither. I'm not on your side and I'm not on their side, but you Joshua are on my side.

I've come as captain of the hosts of the Lord. Up to now Joshua you thought you were captain. You were wrong, I'm captain.

And you thought that your resources, many consisted in this army of yours which you are feeling is so inadequate. I'm captain and back of me are the hosts of Jehovah, infinitely stronger than your army. And

he realized this was none other than the appearance of Jehovah.

Actually Bible students think it was an appearance of Jesus himself, because there are these strange appearances in the Old Testament which are thought to be appearances of the eternal son, even before his incarnation on earth. And Joshua fell on his face before the Lord and said, what saith my Lord to his servant? This is how leadership, leaders are made. They're men like that.

They're in the place of servants before Jehovah, not in the place of leaders in his psyche. They've got a leader, they've met him. What a lovely title for the Lord Jesus, captain of the hosts of the Lord.

And you know he knows how to make himself known to you in that way, just when you need that sort of vision. When you were so worried, when you didn't know what to do, when you were really the captain of the situation as you thought and you felt inadequate, when your resources seemed to be so pathetically inadequate, and then Jesus comes. Are you on my side or your or their side Lord? You are neither.

You, you, you are on my side. I am captain, and not only captain of the situation, but of infinite hosts back of me, more than adequate with a thing that is making you despair. And we're to do what Joshua did, we're to virtually fall on our faces and continue that, and surrender up the captaincy which we thought was in our hands.

It's a wonderful, wonderful vision, and God delights to give it to us. Dear old Sturgeon had it once. He was so worried about all the many problems, such a huge work he was involved in, his health wasn't good, and he was riding in his carriage in Regent's Park with Mrs. Sturgeon by his side, when suddenly he gave a great laugh and he kicked his, his heels up in the air as he sat there.

He said, what's this? Oh she said, he said, I've been so worried. I was a fish in a pond as I thought, and I was really worried whether there was going to be enough water for me, and I've just realized I've been swimming in the Atlantic Ocean. It's the sort of vision he had.

And Jesus he saw was the captain, and that of the hosts of the Lord. And I think this is very important. Joshua falling on his face before the Lord.

Joshua had to fall on his face before the Lord, before the walls of Jericho fell down. That's much more important for us. You fall on your face before the Lord, you see where you've been the captain, where you've been assuming responsibility, walking by sight and not by faith.

Acknowledge it to be wrong and fall on your face before the Lord. God will see to those walls of Jericho. He knows how to make them fall if he can get us to fall before him.

And Joshua said, what says my Lord to his servant? Now what did he say? Well he said, take your shoes off, this is holy ground. They've got to realize we're dealing with a holy Lord that cannot tolerate sin. Well that's all right, we know what to do about sin now don't we? There's a fountain open for it.

All right then, bathe yourself of it. And then in chapter six, we hear what else the Lord said to him. In chapter, in chapter six verse two, chapter six verse two, And the Lord said unto Joshua, See I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty man of Balaam.

Not I will give it to you, I have, and the king, and the whole lot. I have given into thine hand. And you know the promises of grace for us are invariably given unto us in a past tense, as something in God's mind and

purpose already accomplished.

Certainly the promises of that mighty one who's behind our Jericho, Satan. And he tells you about that Jericho, and about the mighty one behind it. I have given into your hand Jericho, and the king thereof.

This great victory that's been won, has been won. And he tells it you so in a past tense. That great victory, for sin, and death, and woe, that needs no second fight, and leaves no second foe.

It isn't I will, I have. And I want to tell you, if he says he has, then he has. Even before the things come to pass.

And you've got your faith, we've got to rise to it. And be like Abraham, who without being staggered, he looked at his own body, now dead, and the deadness of Sarah's womb. And gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had said, he was able also to perform.

You know, this is characteristic of our Jesus. This is how he sees things, he wants you to see them too. Again I say, he's not a bit bothered about that Jericho, nor is he a bit really bothered about the one who's taking advantage of the situation behind it, and you've got to deal with that one behind it.

And that's where Jesus excels. As we'll see in a moment. He's already met and mastered that one.

And he tells it to you in a past tense. And as you think of that Jericho, it might be located back home when you go back. He says, I'm not I, I will help you with it, I have given it into your hand.

The victory, I've already accomplished it for you. And then he went on to tell him a second thing, the means by which this was going to pass. Or shall I put it this way, the cooperation on their part with himself, by means of which, that promise was going to be implemented.

They were to pick up the ark, the priests were, laid on their shoulders on those days. There'd be seven priests before, going before, lowering with ram's horns. Then we might, there were armed men before those priests, and armed men behind.

And they would walk round and encompass that great city once, and then come back into camp. The next day they'll do it again. Six days, nothing more than that.

What in the world is that going to do, to bring down those walls? They said, that's what you've got to do. He didn't want them to do something rather stunning. Otherwise they might think it was a stunning thing they did that accomplished the victory.

And very often the cooperation needed on your part is very feeble, not in itself likely to do anything. But if God says that's what you've got to do, you do it. You'll see what sort of cooperation that is in a moment.

And then on the seventh day they went round seven times. And then at the seventh time there was an extra long blast on the ram's horns, and then, this is lovely, Joshua said, shout, for the Lord has given you the city. God said, I have given it to you, now appropriate that.

Shout, praise him that he has, and do it, when the walls are still standing. And the armed men on those walls are still there. Against hope, believe in hope, and don't only ask him to, but shout that he has.

And he did. Someone has said, was it Karl Barth, that God says to us, act as if I am, and you will find I am. And in that case the acting was shouting.

And God did the rest. The simple means that have to sometimes account their faith. Looking into it in more detail, may I point out the fact that this incident differed from the previous one.

That in the previous one, the Ark went alone into Jordan. There are to be two thousand cubits between it and them. Only then did they go into Jordan.

Not so here. The Ark is right in the midst. There's first of all armed men, and then seven priests with seven horns, blowing.

And then the Ark, and behind the Ark, the rear guard army. It was in the midst of them. And I believe that's meant to symbolize for us, that the Lord in the midst of us is mighty.

Not only Christ for us, but Christ amidst us. Mighty amidst us. And available to us as we are in all our weakness.

Christ, this mystery which is Christ in the midst of you, the hope of glory. I know most persons say Christ in you, but the margin has it amidst, in the midst of you, available to you. And it also means Christ in us too.

He's right in the midst of his people. Identified with them as they're identified with him, and he's actually in them. And the Lord in the midst of us is mighty, and we're going to prove that fact.

You're not mighty. Zechariah 3:17 says the Lord in the midst of us is mighty. He will save, and he'll do it in the midst of us and through us.

Well now what about this encompassing the city? With the Ark in the midst of them, seven days, and on the seventh day, seven times. I believe it was, it pictures for us, the very necessary asserting with regard to our Jericho, the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ already won. With regard to that Jericho, in prayer, in faith, in attitude.

Will you turn to Colossians 2, 14 and 15. Colossians 2, 14 and 15. Blotting out the handwriting of the ordinance that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Now this verse, verse 15. And as it reads the authorized version, having spoiled principalities of powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. I've looked at that word spoiled.

I know the revised standard version puts disarmed, but I found in my concordance that the other place in the Old Testament, where that Greek word is used, it is translated put off the old man. And I believe we must use that word here, and I think it means having put off from himself the principalities and powers. When the Satan had provoked Israel, the clamor for the crucifixion of the Son of God, and they put him on the cross, Satan and his principalities and powers thought they'd got him.

They thwarted the divine purpose. Satan is not omniscient. And I think it's quite a wrong interpretation, which I've sometimes heard, that when Satan offered Jesus, or the kings of the world, if he would fall down and worship him, it was to get him to avoid the cross, and thus wreck redemption.

Now, Satan doesn't know all that. He doesn't know too much about redemption. He just saw this one, who was a challenging him in his kingdom, and it was he who tried to circumvent the death, if that's the right

word, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you know there were three days of joy in hell after Jesus had said, it's finished. And the principalities and powers had been fastened on him. We've got him! Like the Philistines fastened on Samson, not knowing that in that dark hour, he paid the ransom price for the release of all Satan's captives, so much so that the third day God rose him from the dead.

The blood was an out, and out from the grave he arose, with a mighty triumph for his foes. And he put off from himself those principalities and powers, and in his resurrection they thought, they saw that what they thought was victory was defeat for them. He made a show of Satan and his principalities and powers, triumphing over them, in it, says the authorizer.

And the Revised Standard Version, in its margin, says, in it, that is the cross. And thus it was demonstrated in that which looked like that defeat. For Jesus Christ, the cross was actually victory.

By weakness and defeat, he won the mead and crown, trod all our foes beneath his feet. By being trodden down, he made our foes his foes. And in treading them down for himself, he's tread them down for us.

And there are other verses too that speak of the victory of the Lord Jesus over Satan, that by death he might destroy, bring to nothing him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And there are, but totem at hand, why on the lint there of mercy seeketh the blood, that speaks of the whole business of victory, over this great archenemy, who seeks to exploit us, and accuses and do many things, and who is at the back, the real power at the back of our jellucose, that depresses so much. And we are called to compass that city, with the answer to speak.

We are called to proclaim, and assert, to our hearts, and to anybody else, that Jesus is victor there. He has already defeated the one behind it, and to do so, without doubting. That's what I take it to mean.

Oh, mere praying isn't enough. Get a bit of asserting into it, brother. Get on the feet of faith.

See Jesus. See what he's done to the one who really is your enemy. And compass that city, whatever that is, and Lord, thank you, you've won the victory here.

You're going to manifest in your own way, but I'm believing it. I'm believing in the mighty power of thy blood, and of thy cross, and thy resurrection, whereby thou'st laid my enemy low. And I have been raised up, and seated together with thee in heavenly places, far above principalities and powers.

I believe we talk too much about the devil, and people being possessed, and so on. We're paying the devil a compliment. And the more you acknowledge him, the more you'll have to meet him.

If I want to see Jimmy Carter, and I was a friend of his, I'd just let him know I was available. I wouldn't go through a whole lot of officials. Great.

They're so to speak, under my feet, because they're under his feet. So it is. With Jesus.

Yes, compass that city. Do it in confidence in Jesus, who has already given you the city, already given the victory. But you see, what do you make of doing it for seven days in a row, and the last day, seven times? I think there are two reasons why this was God's way for them.

To make it quite clear it wasn't their compassing the city that was doing it. That it was going to be Jehovah's work. He did it so many times, and nothing happened.

And the Lord wants all the victory, all the glory. And that's the reason why sometimes all you do is so simple. All so simple.

You go to Pyrenees and get them. And you go out and confess that Jesus is Lord. What does that do? And nothing may happen immediately.

It's to show it's not this wonderful praying on your part. And I think it's quite good when a man thinks he's got a gift of something or other, and it doesn't work. A gift of casting out demons, or a gift of healing.

Very good when it doesn't work. Let's see that company in the city to be what it is. Nothing in itself.

And it's got to be clear that when things happen, it's Jehovah, and not us. And the second reason why I think they had to do this continual compassing was to test and to develop faith. Would they quit? Surely they're going to do more than that.

They went round the first day. Well we've done it now Josh, what do you do? What else will you do? Nothing. You can go and play tennis if you like.

But surely this is the biggest event of our life. You've done what's needed. Go on, relax.

Next day, and then come back again. Relax again. And to believe that this was the way, took some believing.

That God wasn't playing tricks on us. Oh, these are the moments. Oh, the testing of faith.

Listen, to change the metaphor. You can't score runs unless you're being bowled against. You can't walk in faith if immediately everything happens.

You've got to be deprived in some measure of faith, of sight, for faith to grow. I've been so helped over the years, especially in evangelistic work, especially when one has to go and take a campaign all on your own, and everyone's expecting much, and they don't know what a pathetic person the evangelist is. I love that verse in Isaiah 64, for he is a God that worketh for those that wait for him.

Wait in confidence. Wait without a shadow of a doubt. But they're going to wait.

And God gave me this little interpretation of that verse in Isaiah 64. Every moment of my waiting is a moment of my working, of his working. But, okay, well, see, I know, no doubt at all, faith is a substance of things, of course, and it can't become, be exercised apart from having to just assert and hold on, even when the walls are still.

But they had to do something more than compass it. The time came when Joshua said, don't do it before I tell you, shout, for the Lord hath given you the city. And this was the crucial thing for them.

That's it appropriate, and thank him for what he says has happened. He says it has, now you dare to say thank you, Lord. This really is an Old Testament illustration of that important verse with regard to prayer.

Mark 11, 25. Mark 11, 25, 24. Mark 11, 24.

What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them. Now, I don't know what the Revised Standard Version has, but the 1881 Revised Version, which I have in my Bible, makes it even more strong. When ye pray, believe that you have received them, well, you better thank him for them if you have.

But I haven't got them. And neither you will until you thank him you have. That's the way it is.

And you know, the time comes when you're going to give them liberty of spirit, and say to Christ, thank you for what you've done. I'm praising, I'm shouting, I'm thanking you, that you have gotten the victory over my foe, and it has been implemented. There was no sign of any wobbling in the walls, but they looked after the promise of God, and they shouted for the Lord had given them the city.

And there is a place, not only for asserting the victory of faith, and going on doing so in holy conference, not merely pleading, but when the Lord says, now you can go further, you can shout. And everything so much depends on that. Shouting, thanking God, you have given me the victory.

Now, I know it's a bit subjective at this point. Is God telling me to thank him he's answered my prayer? Or isn't he? And really only the Holy Spirit can show you. I can't give you any rules.

But all I would say this is, it's much better for you to do too much shouting than too little. You're much more likely to be near the truth, to do more praising for the answer to prayer than to do little. God loves the optimist.

The man is doing so because he's putting his faith in the Lord, and how that is a compliment to the Lord. And the Old Testament saints, they acted as if these things were fact before they became fact. And they only did become fact because they acted as if they were before they saw it.

We've really got to get into this ground, not this distant, dull pleading. Especially we see, we wrestle not against principalities and powers, not against human beings, but of power behind. And that's just the realm where Jesus has won the victory.

I only know, especially in certain spheres, it's, I've seen this work out, in the sphere of the preaching of the Word of God, you're going to go and preach as if God's Word is going to return to Him for you. As if the Gospel is not the power of God to salvation. As if the Holy Ghost is not the one sent down from heaven by whom we're to preach it.

And years ago, God taught a bunch of us, in my early years in the Young Life Campaign, this secret. Some of our prayers have been the most extraordinary prayers. Lord, thank you for the souls you have saved among us.

And they were! They were. In that case, a little simpler. Because in that work, we were hand-to-hand conflicts with Satan.

And that was where we knew Jesus had triumphed. But it works in other spheres too. God will have to teach it to you, interpret these things to you, don't try and let me put out a formula to you.

And if, having believed you've received and shouted that the city has been given you, and it doesn't immediately turn out that way, may I remind you, it is said of the saints of faith in Hebrews 11, these all died in faith, not having received the promises. God having provided some better thing for you. You aren't

the first one.

I say, nonetheless, you can do a lot. It's far better to do much praising and asserting and expecting and thanking Him, than too little. He loves you for it.

And it's only because of some better thing, maybe. So I was mistaken. You did it because you set your faith in Jesus.

You touch Him. Some better thing. But so often it is that very thing, this is the whole object of the exercise.

Last week, a brother came up to me, he said, when you took that Ted campaign years ago in Nottingham, did you stay in the house of Tom Hughes? Yes, I said, I remember I did. Well, he said, Tom tells a priceless story about you. He often chuckles over it.

He said, someone came to the house to ask to see you. And they said, I'm afraid you can't, he's having his quiet time. And I was in the room above, but it didn't sound pretty quiet.

All sorts of exclamations were going on from that room. Apparently, he told me to hear you walking around the room. He said, I suppose that was in your striving days.

Well, I said, I tell you, I did do a lot of striving to get the big tip. I learned a lot of praying. Every campaign was a crisis for me.

I was in despair at which end corner, I cried and cried. Yes, there were some striving, but not always so, brother. My most exuberant times in prayer were in faith.

When I was doing some shouting, for the Lord had given me the city I'd been through in despair, then I'd seen Jesus, the captain of the house of the Lord. I followed in his feet. He'd given me the promise.

And I shouted. I don't suppose I literally did, though, of course, sometimes it might have been a bit loud. I don't know, because I don't pray.

I can't pray quietly. And now I'm a little more respectable. I murmur my prayers.

But I tell you, the battle was so fierce. And I was in such despair when I'd gotten the victory, when I saw Jesus. Well, I did praise the Lord.

And you know, those old walls came down right, left, and center. But the real battle was not in the tent preaching. It was in the bedroom.

Well, may God make the application to you and your circumstances which is appropriate. Now, that bit of Christian work isn't the only Jericho, but it is for some of us. Wouldn't it be lovely if some man preaches the word, or some woman goes back strong in faith, expecting to win, as that hymn says, without a blow? Although it's going to be without a blow, I want to tell you, it's not going to be without this sort of faith in one degree or another.

Because there's the art which declares it's been done long ago, and it applies to this current situation. Just two more thoughts. First, every man went up straight before him, into that city.

And did they do real business? You almost catch your breath. Men, women, children, ox and ass, without exception, save in the case of Rahab and her family, they were put to the edge of the sword. The whole

Canaan trembled at the mighty presence of the God of Israel.

And if they hadn't fully exploited what God had given them, the rest of the nations wouldn't have seen how great was their God. And there's some situations which God delivers into our hand. We've not only got to enter in and praise when the city, the walls fall down flat.

Certain situations you need to exploit, especially when there are moral issues involved. And be absolutely uncompromising and ruthless with yourself, with all the things that have happened. Put it all out.

Break that thing off, whatever it may be. Exploit to the fullest victory. Make no terms with that enemy, and don't do what Achan did.

Take the glory for yourself. The other thought is this. It rather looked at first sight as if there was Jericho right in front of them, it was.

And they couldn't go further into the, into Canaan until Jericho had fallen to them. And I imagine that really was the situation. But I can conceive it possible for them to have found a way to bypass Jericho and go on to something else.

Two dear sisters of the Lord were away from one another and they wrote. And they wrote both about the same thing. One said, both said in fact, God has convicted me that I haven't been spending time in prayer as I should.

And the one said, as a result I'm getting up an hour earlier every day, without that conviction. The other said, the Lord has shown me I've been neglecting the place of prayer, and I've repented, and I'm wrestling about it. You see, Isaiah 35 says, in returning and rest you shall be saved.

Not in returning and resolving. You're back on the old ground again, deeply repentant, and rest in the Lord to work it out. And so, it may be your first thing to do, is not to make promises about what you're going to do about that Jericho.

If there's a Jericho you've neglected to be confident in Jesus about, and you've quit the ground of faith, repent of it. Don't make too many resolutions. Promises are made to be broken, even in the Christian life.

He knows how to put into you what he wants out of you when you've repented. And the real thing comes as a result of his working in your heart. But it is important to see if there are, if there is a Jericho, that you've skirted round.

You know, when we talk about, take messages like this, we've got to trust the Holy Spirit to make his individual application to each one, for our circumstances, our situations differ. But the principles we've seen of the Ark of the Covenant, and the need of our faith in him to come to the city, Jesus does it all. But not without this extraordinary, simple cooperation on our part.

Amen.

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