

The Two Voices of Jericho

by Teresa Conlon

The sermon 'The Two Voices of Jericho' teaches us that we must be led by God to confront our unbelief and trust Him, and that the promised land is where we finally believe God's Word to us.

Duration: 55:45

Scripture: Exodus 13:21, Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:9, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28-30, John 7:37-38, Romans 8:11

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Overcoming Unbelief"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of the Israelites being brought to the border of the promised land. They were shown the abundance and blessings that awaited them, but they also saw the formidable enemies that stood in their way. The speaker emphasizes the importance of faith and trust in God in order to enter into the promised land. He highlights the contrast between the promise of God and the unbelief that weighed heavily on the hearts of the Israelites. The sermon encourages listeners to rely on God's word and to overcome their doubts and fears in order to receive the blessings and inheritance that God has for them.

Transcript

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You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. This afternoon, I'd like to speak on a topic called The Two Voices at Jericho.

The Two Voices at Jericho. And if you would turn with me to Joshua Chapter 1, the first book. The first chapter in the book of Joshua, Joshua Chapter 1. I'm glad that we're studying the book of Joshua in Bible school because I really feel it's a very timely book for right now in the life of this church and in our lives.

Joshua Chapter 1. I'm going to pray. Father, I come to you in Jesus' name. Lord, I ask that you have your way.

Lord, your word has a purpose here today. That, Lord, you have specifically brought people here today. That you may speak.

That you may bring us into a light. Lord, that we may open our hearts to you. And, Lord, that you would change us.

God, we are such a needy people. Lord, I ask you now to just bring weight to your word. I ask you, Lord, to let it be understood.

Let it be lived. Let it, O God, be exalted above everything. For, Lord, there is such deliverance and light.

And, Lord, we learn to love you. We learn to know your heart. Lord, I pray it be a living word.

Holy Spirit, come and be our teacher. We thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

The book of Joshua talks and tells us about the defeat of Jericho. And Jericho is, the scripture tells us, through Joshua, an accursed city. Jericho is a city with a curse on it.

Because it represents a stronghold. It represents a fortress between the wilderness of sin and the promised land. It represents the last barrier, the last place that the children of Israel must come to.

It bars the way to the promised land. And because of what it does, that city, in a spiritual sense, has a lot of significance for you and I. And the Bible tells us that if you look at the history of the children of Israel and all that it took for them to get to the place where they had to face down that city of Jericho, all that they had to do is very much their story and their history is our story and our history in our journey of faith. The one that God takes us on so that we can learn to trust Him.

And the battles and the trials that they had to go through to get to Jericho are very significant. It occurred to me that the only way you get to Jericho is you have to be led there. We can't get to the place where we are confronted with a stronghold in our lives unless the Lord reveal it to us.

You see, unless the Lord reveals spiritual truth, unless the Lord Himself, in His light we see light, Scripture says. And there are things about us that we can't know and can't understand. There are things that are going on in the kingdom of God.

There are things that are going on in spiritual realms. We cannot understand with a natural human mind. They must be revealed to us by God.

And they must be made real to us in our spirit. That's where we start to understand and have a capacity to know God. That goes beyond our mind.

It goes beyond. It's deeper than our mind. It's our spiritual knower, if you will.

And Jericho represents to the children of Israel, they were finally, after 40 years wandering in the wilderness, they were finally getting to a place where finally they wanted to be led by God. Where finally they were willing to trust Him like they had never done before. And you would think that now that God has engaged a people's heart, that He would just lead them into the promised land.

No, He leads them to a stronghold. He leads them to a place that epitomizes unbelief. It epitomizes a stronghold that bars entry into the promised land.

But I feel that when you and I get to actually be led to our Jericho, we get to be led to a place that is a stronghold in our lives, that we only get there. You see, Joshua was led to Jericho by the Captain of the

Host, the Scripture says. That the Captain of the Host, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament, appeared to him.

And when Joshua said, whose side are you on? The Lord said, I'm not here to take sides, I'm here to take over. The Lord said, I'm going to lead this army, and because I'm going to lead it, I'm going to lead you to the last stronghold before you enter in my promised land. And it's a doomed place, because I'm leading the army.

But you can't get to Jericho until you've gone all the other places. Because once God is leading us to our stronghold, when the Lord is leading us to our stronghold, it's a doomed place, it's going to fall. And so when we get to our Jericho, we've had a history with God.

By the time we get to Jericho, there is something that we know we have not known before. Jericho is a fortress that never falls by human warfare. And Jericho is a place that, by the time we get there, we do not have a perfect track record of faith and trust and obedience.

We do not. By the time we get to Jericho, we have finally, in us, we have this cry for Him. There is now a willingness, a willingness and a thirst above all else, to be led by God and to obey Him and trust Him, because His Word is speaking that to us.

And we're finally saying, Lord, when You speak to me, that is the greatest power in heaven and earth. Your Word, when You speak to me, if I will hold that Word up and I will say, God, this is going to be my reality. If You speak to me from Your Word and I say, no matter what I feel or think, what I'm seeing or experiencing, Lord, You are greater than it all.

You are Lord of it all. That's why when You speak a word to me, this is, if I will cling to this, You are going to bring me through to a place of victory. You are going to bring me through to where I know I can have confidence in You.

When I understand Your Word, I understand Your heart. There is this greater depth in You. I love You more.

I have an understanding of how You work. You see, Jericho is finally a fortress of unbelief that is now being assaulted by a people of belief that are being led there by the Lord Jesus Christ. When we start to see Jericho on our horizon, we are confronting a stronghold in our lives, but we confront it with a decision.

We are now at the point where we say, Lord, in my life, whatever the trial, whatever the temptation, whatever the impossibility, I want to trust You. Whatever is now looming on my horizon, I want my reflex to be one of trust. And Jericho will forever symbolize a triumph for God.

It will symbolize that God can subdue His wayward people and bring them into a trust relationship where He can bring them into the promised land, where God can finally take us where He wants us to go. And it kind of begs the question, what is the promised land? And the promised land is simply the promised land where we finally believe God's Word to us. Where everything God has promised to us, they are ours by faith in Christ.

In the New Testament, Christ is our promised land. That everything that this book promises to a believer is ours in Christ. And so we enter there by faith.

It's finally this Word to us. We know it is ours because God has spoken it to us. And we are able to take this Word and set it above our fears and above our failures.

Where it becomes so precious because it's God to us. It is the living Word to us. So it rules our life.

Where God Himself, this is His Word to us, and He becomes so real, Jesus becomes so real to us. And the process of trust is one that the children of Israel had to go through. They had to be led there.

You think if we look at their history to this point, we realize that God brought them out of Egypt. And that's a type, as you know, of salvation. Being brought out of Egypt, being delivered from bondage of sin, from bondage of taskmasters, of a transfer of our life into God's hands.

And then they are led by Moses. And if you read the Bible, they are led out of Egypt right across the wilderness, right to the border of the Promised Land in short order. But beloved, have you ever been to the border of the Promised Land? Have you in your spiritual walk? Have you in your walk with Christ? Have you ever been brought right to the border where sitting in a message or something lights up in your spirit, there's a call for Him, and all of a sudden it seems like you're starting to get it.

It's Christ. And it's His righteousness. And He promises to deposit His life in us.

And it's His life He's asking us to live. And then He's asking us to live it by His strength. And we have no strength in ourselves.

And we say, Lord, if I call on You, Your life in me is going to spring up like a well of water. And when I need it, it's going to be full of life to me. And I'm going to draw on Your life.

And I can do this. And it's like we're standing right at the edge of a breakthrough. But the days go by and the weeks go by, and so little of that reality seems to be happening.

It's this spiritual reality stuck in our heads. Have you ever been to the border of the Promised Land? Looking in, and it looks so clear. And the children of Israel were brought to the border of the Promised Land, right there inherited everything that they could have in God if they would enter it by faith, if they would enter it through trust, if they would go in dependent on Him.

They were brought right to the border of it. And they saw when the spies went in, and they went in all through the land, and they were there 40 days. And they were looking at everything there was to see, and they came back.

You know the story. How big there was a land flowing with milk and honey. God's promise, the inheritance of a life in Him, and the land that He was giving them, was beyond their expectation.

And they came back and said, the grapes are so big. This is what this land can produce. But the enemies are bigger.

It's a land flowing of milk and honey, but I'm afraid that for us to conquer it, it's going to flow with our blood in order to get it. And you know the story, where God says, My word to you is I give you this land. But when they looked in, and they saw what was before them, and what would oppose them, they staggered at the promise.

And unbelief rooted in their heart as a nation. That unbelief, it was heavy in their heart, and the weight of sin, and His word was not greater than their unbelief. His word to them was not the reality.

His word to them, I give you this land, was not what controlled them. That was not the controlling force in their life. Their unbelief was.

And you know the story. That God after delivering them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, led them through a wilderness, and in that place, they built a tabernacle, a mobile worship center, and the Bible says that when it was completed, the glory of God came down into that tabernacle, so that nobody could enter it. Moses, no one could enter it, and offer sacrifices there.

God said, I am with you. And the glory was such that they all fell on their face, and they knew that the only true God was in their midst. Their only true God delivered them.

The only true God now had a plan. He had an inheritance for them. And they alone of all the people on the earth were being gathered in His name and saying, You are mine, I am with you.

And the cloud by day would cover this tabernacle. And as long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, the children stayed put. But when the cloud lifted, they would go and they would follow the cloud.

And the Scripture says that night, fire came down in this tabernacle, and it became a light for them in the darkest night. They had light. No one else in the face of the earth had this kind of light in their night.

And the Scripture says that these people were brought with such an evidence that the only God of the universe was in their midst, that Jesus had called them by His name and was among them, and given them great and precious promises. But the Scripture says that there were a segment of them that could not believe God, that when they went into the inheritance, all they could see was how it could not be done. All they could see was something greater than their God, greater than His power, greater than His promises, greater than His Word.

And the Scripture says that the wrath of God came upon these unbelieving leadership and these unbelieving warriors. And the Scripture says that God says, not one, not one evil, doubting man, 20 years old and up, shall enter into My promised land. God's wrath and God's judgment fell on the unbelief that was found in Israel, and they were turned back, and the Scripture says, into the wilderness of sin.

And beloved, I believe that it's such a picture of a believer's heart. I believe that this whole story is a picture of a believer's heart. That Israel is a type of a heart of a believer who has a portion, there is a deep root of unbelief in the heart.

They love God, and they are named by His name on areas in their life. But there is another area that when God leads them into a place of impossibility, they back away. When God leads them to the inheritance, they can't see it for what it is, and they pull back.

And this root of unbelief God must judge. And the Scripture says that these men, these leaders, the warriors among them, they were turned back along with all the people and they died empty, wasted lives in the desert. Every one of them, to a man, fell in the sand and died there.

And it's a type that God, when we are in our wilderness, beloved, when we are in our wilderness, it is for a purpose. The wilderness is that stage in a believer's life, is a stage in a believer's heart that is between the

captivity that he was brought out of and the covenant he's being brought into. The wilderness is that journey where we're brought out of captivity and God says there's covenant promises that you enter by faith, but in between is that testing time where God says I'm going after that root of unbelief in your life and I'm going to do judgment on it.

And there's a purpose for the wilderness. And God's saying I haven't left you. I have not forsaken you.

You have a cloud of glory and you have light in your night, but we're not to stay there. You know, when we're in the wilderness, here's how we know we're still in the wilderness. The doubts are always springing up.

God, always the doubt and always the murmuring about provision. It's like, God, are You going to provide for me? And there can be brave declarations on Sunday, but when the bills come in or if I have to take a stand, it could mean my bread and butter. God, will You provide for me? And there's always the fear in the heart.

It's the overriding fear. God, if I follow You, are You going to provide for me? Will this religion suddenly have real feet and some reality to it? Because, beloved, we come to God and we give Him our heart, but God knows where the deep areas of unbelief still reside. And the children of Israel are always murmuring and complaining about provision.

I'm thirsty. I'm hungry. God, don't You see me? Why do I have to ask for water? God, don't You know we need water? Why do I have to ask for meat? Is all You have for us manna? And there's always the murmuring, and God says, yes, I am water to you, and out of a rock is going to flow water.

That's how I'll provide for you in a way you never thought, in a way you could never dream, in a way you'd never know about. Because the rock itself does not have water in it. But it's a symbol of the life in Christ Jesus.

It's a symbol of what Christ is in us. An ever-flowing water supply of living water that cleanses us and renews us. And they would cry for meat, and He would give them quail.

We're in the wilderness when we're still, still the greatest fear. And the cry is, God, will You provide for me? We are still in the wilderness when doubts and unbelief in God are causing us to doubt the direction in our lives. God, I can't submit every question to You.

I might have to go in a direction I don't want to go. I will ask Your direction on this, but there are certain areas in my heart that I'm just going to say I'm giving it to You, but God never gets control of it. And the children of Israel were always, where are You leading us, God? They were in the wilderness because the doubt would spring up.

What are we doing here? Isn't this long enough? How long do we have to walk in this sand? And there were always leaders full of rebellion, full of their own ways, not knowing the mind and heart of God, always saying, we need to go back to Egypt. We need to go back. We have to turn back.

There's no life for us here. This can't be God. This can't be God taking us to a wilderness and day after day having us here, calling us His people and forcing us to live in this wilderness.

Why? Always the desert. We know that we are in our wilderness when there is idolatry, that something else is always before our face in our moments of quiet. There's a longing.

There's something greater in our minds and in our hearts that our hearts go to and center on and focus on and long for and yearn for. That when our hearts at rest, our heart is not going to Christ. Our heart is being drawn and dominated by wanting something, of having something, of being something to the exclusion where God is much less part of our life.

We know we are in the wilderness when that murmuring of provision and direction and our thoughts are being dominated by another God. But beloved, I believe the Scripture tells us there came a time where the children of Israel as a group, where the desert, where the wilderness had accomplished its purpose, where when those men died in the wilderness was a symbol that God said, your heart now, I have purged it in My ways. I know what I'm doing.

The purpose of the desert has been accomplished. The purpose of the wilderness has gone deep into you. And there is now produced a cry for me that's saying, God, lead me.

It doesn't matter, but lead me. I'm ready now. No matter what, Your Word to me.

That's what I want to be, my meat and drink. Your Word to me. That's going to be my life.

God, I see where the wilderness takes me. I see what the wilderness does. I see that if I cling to my doubt and unbelief in Your name, I'm going to die in this place.

But God, I know You're about life. I know You've not left us and forsaken us in the wilderness. And God, I want the ability to trust You.

I'm going to start knowing that You will provide. I'm going to start knowing that You are directing my life. That my steps are ordered.

That, God, You have a plan and a purpose. I release my life and You lead me and I'll follow. That, God, I want above all things to obey You when this Word You begin to speak to me.

That, God, You're going to create in me the desire and the power to obey You. I'm going to trust You for that. God, I don't want to live in this wilderness anymore where I'm setting my... how I'm going to live my life before You.

I'll give it to You. And the wilderness produced a good thing because there was a people emerging. A new generation that were longing to be led into the promised land.

They were longing to be led. And the Scripture tells us that Joshua now is the leader of this new group. Of this people that have been dealt with.

The doubt and the unbelief. They see the fruit of it. And they know how deadly it is.

And they're saying, God, now Your Word is what will lead us. We want what You want for us. No matter what.

And so Joshua now, the new spokesman, it tells us in Joshua 1 that God speaks to Joshua and it says in verse 3, God says to Joshua, every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto

you as I said unto Moses. See, I've given this Word before and it was held as a light thing. You didn't believe it.

But now there's a people saying, no, anything you say, we want to cling to it now. If you say that you've given this land to us, and wherever our feet trod, that is our inheritance, God, we believe it. We're ready now.

We're going to exalt Your Word above our doubt, above our fear, above the impossibilities. If that's what you say, I'm out of the wilderness because I know that You're willing to lead me out. And so the Scripture says that in verse 5, that there shall not any man be able to stand before Thee all the days of Thy life.

God says, I'm going to put such an anointing on an obedient God-Spirit led people that there shall be no one able to withstand You all the days of Your life. What an incredible reward to obedience. What an incredible life is opening up now to a people who are being willing to risk it all and say, God, no matter, there is not one area of my life You cannot touch, that You cannot lead me in, that You cannot speak to me about.

And God says, when I have that kind of heart, there shall not be a man that will be able to stand before You, be able to curse You, be able to direct Your life away from me, to take You out of my hand. There shall not be a man, there shall not be a teacher, there shall be no one that will be able to rise up and take You away from my purpose for You, from an ever-increasing revelation of how much I love You, of it is my will to put my glory upon You and lead You into places of impossibility. He says, I will be with Thee.

He says, I will not fail Thee. He says, I will not forsake Thee. And these became life to Him.

These words became life to Joshua. And He became a voice to the people that they would finally listen to. Moses said the same words.

Moses had the same word from God. But it was not heard. It was not esteemed.

It was not clung to as life, more than bread to them. But now it was. Now they were ready.

They had gone through a wilderness and they saw where they were murmuring. And the death that it brought and the rebellion to Him only brought a wilderness. All the days of their life and they were ready to leave.

And the Scripture says in verse 6, Be strong and be of good courage. The word is, Be strong in the Lord. Be strong in the Lord and be of good courage.

Hallelujah. Once again, we're seeing the land of the free will always be the home of the brave. And be of good courage.

And then He says, only verse 7, Only be thou strong and very courageous. And verse 9, Have not I commanded thee? Have not I commanded thee? And these words began to have weight. This was not idle talk.

This was a people so desperate now, so thirsty, so willing to come out of the wilderness. And they could be led. And Joshua became a voice to them.

Joshua became a voice to them. And it was life to them. And they understood that God was not speaking idly to them.

That what He said He would do, this is exactly what their life would be as they followed Him. And a people were made willing to trust and believe Him. And then they were led to Jericho.

That's when they stood before that city of Jericho. That's when they were ready to see things they needed to see and understand some things they needed. They could never be brought to Jericho in their deep unbelief in their heart.

It never would have come down. And Joshua's voice to them. Joshua's voice to them.

This is how He led them with these kind of words. And this is what He was speaking to them. And people were hearing it.

And Joshua's voice became like the word of Christ. Joshua's word to them, a living word was like the word to us today. Joshua's word was like a godly life being lived out before them.

And the power that's in it. And their heart burned. And they wanted this.

And there was direction and light and life and glory in it. And it's like their spirit was turning in them. The water in them was moving.

And they were recognizing this was God once again so willing to lead them. And the Scripture says that under Joshua's leadership that they arose from the desert. And the Scripture says they crossed over the river Jordan carrying the Ark of the Covenant.

And when they stepped in the waters, the waters parted one more time. And they walked across dry land one more time. And when they got there, then God said, now we're going to have a circumcision.

Because all the children that had been born in the wilderness had not followed the commands of God. And the Bible says that God gave Joshua the command that all the males were to be circumcised. And the Scripture says that the reproach of Egypt was rolled off them.

The reproach of living in their flesh and leaning on their own understanding and crying out for their flesh and always murmuring about them and never understanding, never looking higher than their own flesh and their own needs, never looking up and seeing it's a God who knows all that, but has something so much higher and better for them. And the reproach of Egypt and living only with such a narrow focus in the world and living outside the vision of God was being cut away from them. Flesh was being cut away from them.

And a walk in the Spirit now. God, You lead us by Your Spirit. Beloved, I don't understand all what it is to walk in the Spirit, but I know that when you do that, the deeds of the flesh get put down, can't manifest, can't break through.

That we say, God, You've given us a Holy Spirit and You're taking the reproach of Egypt off me because Your Holy Spirit dwells in me and there is a power now that I draw from Your life in me. This is a walk in the Spirit. And Lord, I thank You that You give me power to recognize when it's flesh and when it's spirit if I ask You.

You will show me these kind of things. And now these people circumcised. That's when the Captain of the Host shows up.

He says, now you're a people I can lead. And I'm going to lead you to victory. And Joshua's voice was life to them.

But beloved, there's another voice. And that other voice, you have to hear me now, is from a woman who lives on the wall of Jericho. And her name is Rahab.

And Rahab, the Bible tells us, was a woman who when Joshua also, when he was going just before he entered the land to conquer it, he sent spies. He sent two spies. And the Bible tells us their story that these two spies entered the city of Jericho.

And this harlot Rahab that lives on the wall of Jericho recognizes them. And the Scripture tells us that she brings them into her house. And the Bible tells us in Joshua 2, verse 9, she says to these spies, I know that the Lord has given you the land and that your terror is fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you. And the Scripture goes on and she says, we hear how kings and great, great rulers were destroyed because your God was with you. And verse 11, as soon as we heard these things, our hearts did melt.

And neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you. For the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and earth beneath. And she says this to the spies.

And the Scripture tells us, they went back to Joshua and they said, you're not going to believe what they're saying. You are not going to believe. When we move as an army to enter the promised land and we stand before that one fortress, that one citadel that blocks us from our inheritance, the promised land, you would not believe what the inhabitants of that place are saying.

They tremble before us. They are so afraid of us. The terror of us has fallen on them.

And they're probably looking at each other. Us? The terror of us has fallen on us. But beloved, it's so amazing to me though that there's a woman somehow that God reached down into that stronghold.

A harlot. And began to reveal His heart and His mind to her. And the Scripture, she alone in her house is saved.

There was one person God could talk to in that fortress, in that city of unbelief. A woman named Rahab. And I see that she is living here in this place on the wall.

And she is a voice, beloved, that is now... I want you to get a picture of this now. As you and I rise up under the voice of Joshua, under the voice of Jesus Christ, under the voice of His Word, and we are hearing, march forward. I'm leading you.

I'm taking you to your inheritance. I'm going to bring you to a place where your reflex is going to be to trust me first and think about everything else second. I'm going to bring you to a place where my Word to you is going to be meat and drink.

And we sit under this kind of preaching and it's reaching our hearts and our hearts are burning. I want you to know at the same time there is going to be another voice going on in our heart. And it's going to be the voice of Rahab, one who lives on the wall.

Because when these spies came to her and she began to tell them what God was telling them to her, her voice is so much like the reason and will that speaks in our hearts at night. When you and I make this determination, God, I want to follow you with all my heart, there is going to be another voice. And it's going to sound like Rahab's voice.

And it's going to say, God, I know all these things are true. But I live on the wall that you are committed to destroying. You see, when she received the spies, she received these messengers, she received their message.

And she was agreeing with the God of Israel that the wall that Jericho had to be demolished, that it had to come down. She was receiving them so she could send them out another way so that the king of Jericho would not see them. And when they would leave, they would come back to her, but as a destroying army.

The next time she saw them, she would be looking down from her house on the wall knowing that they were committing to destroying everything she understood, everything that was her security, everything that she knew about. And yet, she was agreeing with them. Beloved, there is two voices going on in our heart if we want to walk with God.

There will be the voice of Joshua. There will be the voice of Christ. It will be this word.

But there will be the voice of Rahab that will say, God, yes, it's all true. But God, I have to agree with you and you are committed to destroying strongholds in me, everything I've built my life on, everything I've built my security on, and I've got to agree with you. Can you hear the two voices? Have you heard the two voices? And say, God, with all my heart I want this.

But God, if I follow You with all my heart, something's going to be destroyed and You're asking me to agree with it. God, You know the strongholds in our hearts. You know what has to come down.

And I can't see it except You reveal it to me. And when You reveal it to me, then You want me to stretch out my hand and say, Thy will be done. Bring down the wall I live on.

Bring down my security. You know, it's one thing for Joshua and that army to come in against us. Another thing for Rahab to be in agreement when she lives on the wall.

But the Scripture says that she sends the spies out knowing that the next time she says, by doing that I release you to do whatever you have to do. There would be times, beloved, of an unbelievable pressure and confusion in this woman's life. The Bible says in Joshua 6, you don't have to turn there, but it says that Jericho was straightly shut up because of the children of Israel.

None went out. And none came in. Six days.

And you can feel what it must have lived to be. Live on a wall and a place. And everybody in that place, it's a doomed city.

And everybody in their hearts knows it's a city of destruction. And yet, she's the only one God can speak to, so it tells me that these people are so busy reassuring one another this is not really a city of

destruction. This is not really a place that God's judgment and wrath are going to come upon.

There's got to be a place of living in denial that we're not going to be judged. But beloved, you've got to know in that place there's got to be such terror and pain and confusion, and she was called to live in the middle of it. And there had to have been times of such a cry, God, have I done the right thing? Have I done the right thing? Am I doing the right thing? God, I give you everything that's closest and dear to me.

Touch it. Touch whatever you have to have. But there will be a Rahab moment that it's going to mean the destruction of all I know.

Where I live. What my security is. And there has got to come a time, beloved, for us to enter the promised land that we say, God, my steps are ordered by you.

And the enemy will come with everything he has and say, you've taken matters into your own hands. You're the one making the decision. You're not being led in this.

And we have to keep coming back because, beloved, this is when the word becomes meat and drink to us. When we have to say, God, whatever you have to destroy in me for that stronghold to come down, for me to start seeing things that I must see in order to enter the promised land. Every barrier to the promised land, you're in your great mercy.

You say that you will bring it down. And, beloved, we've got to get to the point. That's the best news we have.

Not what's being destroyed. Not what we're giving up. But, God, You are so far me and when this comes down, I get to move in with that mighty army into the promised land.

And so this city is shut up and no one in and no one out. And she's been shown that she lives in a stronghold that God has committed to destroying. And I can feel the panic.

And I can feel the confusion in her. But when this word, when these people, when she sent those spies out, she said, when you leave, when I send you out to do what you have to do, remember me. Remember my family.

Remember my father. Remember my sisters. Remember all those closest to me.

Remember all those I have an influence in. Remember me. And she said, deal kindly with me.

And they said, we will. They said, our life for yours. And we will deal kindly and truly with you.

And you gather everyone to your house. We will not be responsible for anybody else found outside your walls. But if you will gather all those that you are petitioning us for and you gather them in your house, then we will deal kindly with you truly.

And they will not be destroyed. And beloved, that's when this pressure, when all of a sudden everybody are in that fortress where she's alone and she's feeling so alone. Where she's got to go back to the word that was spoken to them and it's saying, God, the lies of the enemy just tell me this is of my own making or telling me I'm going to be destroyed.

Or telling me... You know, beloved, think about it. The Bible tells us that the king of Jericho, they find out she has dealings with these spies. And you can tell that the whole community would know something's up when the scripture says she drops a red cord down her window.

That's the sign. I live here. Save all those in here.

They've got to know something's up. But the Lord protected her. In that hostile place, in that hostile environment where she finally put a cord out and said, I'm identifying with them out there.

And you could tell everybody in their panic and in their fear would want to destroy her, but God kept her. God protected her. She was taking everything she had on the word given her that we will deal kindly with you and your family will be delivered.

But beloved, the greatest battle in her had to have been when she realized, though, that she was a harlot asking for all this. A harlot asking mercy from this God. And beloved, I think about us.

You know, a harlot represents those that have attached herself to other loves. A harlot represents when the hands of the world have been all over her and she feels anything but holy. Anything but chosen.

Anything but special. But somehow the word came to her. God chose her to speak to her.

And God brought light into her soul. And she was a woman of understanding. It didn't matter what the world called her, but she had a word.

And she understood her times. And she was able to put the cord out and say, I'm identifying with the people of God. And beloved, I believe when they, you know, the taunt, you are a harlot, you think you're going to be saved? You're a harlot, you think that this holy God is going to save you and yours? Why should he listen to you? But I thank God in these desperate times, when we live in a hostile environment, when all around us people just want to live in denial and they don't want to deal with the times, even though God is sending sign after sign and messenger after messenger of the times we live in.

We are a people that in spite of all our failures, in spite of our other loves, in spite of being shaped by the world, we have received a word from God. And we are saying, God, let them call me a harlot. Let them say it, but they're going to say it one too many times.

Because I believe what happened to her is the realization, yes, I am a harlot, which means that there is nothing of life for me in this city of destruction. It hardened her and her purpose is separate from them. They called her that one too many times.

And she realized this stronghold of unbelief has turned me into a woman I don't want to be anymore. The strongholds that are in our lives have turned us into people we don't want to be anymore. And the God, the Most High, hears that cry.

And He honors it. And He brings a word. And He says, now you put your life on it.

You wrap your life around it. I will deal kindly with you. I will see you through.

Hallelujah. And that's what she did. She saw that city, Jericho, for what it was.

And yes, there was, beloved, in this place, when God takes us to our Jericho, where God says there are going to be some things I have to destroy. Things that go so dear to you and I. Things that we've not wanted Him to touch before. Places we didn't want to be led before.

We felt that if God would take us anywhere, touch anything but this thing, we didn't know who we are without it. We don't know where we would be led if we gave it up. We know everything in our flesh would fight against us, and yet there is a greater voice, the voice of Christ and His Word, like Joshua calling to us.

And yet God will give us the same heart as Rahab, that says in the dark hours, when we're alone, we will be like she is. And we will be given strength to say, come God, against it. Come against my strongholds.

I'm fearful, I'm afraid. But God, all I've got now left is your word to me. You will deal kindly with me.

And you will save my house. And beloved, it's enough. That God bring us to a place where we're stripped right down.

Where we say, go after the strongholds of unbelief. Go after the strongholds of what I grip, good or bad. But it's preventing me from entering into your promised land for me.

Take it down. And when Rahab did that, the Bible says in Joshua, you know the story. But we should turn there in Joshua 6. Joshua and the army, on the seventh day, marched seven times around the city of Jericho.

And then the scripture says, 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 has 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 her house. Because she hid the messengers that we sent. Beloved, have we hid the messengers, the message of God in our hearts.

Have we hid it? And that's what's going to hold us. Have we hid it in our hearts? That God can strip everything away from us. And then it is enough.

And then God breaks us through. Because He demolishes the strongholds. He demolishes the wall.

He demolishes everything that is against Him and against us. We don't even know it. It comes down.

And then, beloved, you know the story. I don't know how God saved her. I don't know how they got it.

She lived on the wall. Whether they went down the rope first or the wall came in and they found them and brought them all out. All I know is that the scripture tells us that the accursed city, the place of deep unbelief, the place of a stronghold was demolished and the promised land lay before them.

The children of God. And the scripture says that harlot, that unbeliever, that woman that dwelt on a wall was taken into the conquering armies of Israel as they flowed into the promised land. She became one of them.

And she did not just become one of them. She was given a position of honor. The Bible says she married into a very prominent family.

And she became of the lineage of David, which became of the lineage of Jesus Christ. That this harlot, this harlot, this unbeliever, the way the world would judge, God should not talk to you and you should not be believing Him. This harlot, this kind of woman, grabbed and entwined her life around a word when she had nothing else.

She found that it was more than enough because the scripture says that she is now in the Hebrews 11 hall of fame. That when they mention the great ones, the Abrahams and the Davids, they also mention Rahab the harlot. Hallelujah.

So my beloved, when we, you know, in this journey, you may be in the wilderness and still the questions of provision and direction and all that still may be the issue with you. Do not despair because God is with you. But God may be taking you now and He leads you to your Jericho, to your stronghold.

And the only thing that gets us through is when we take His word and put it above everything else. Let it become life to us. Will you stand with me? The altar call today is just this one line.

This altar is open for anyone that would honestly say, I will not deal lightly with the response of my heart to want to draw back. I will not deal lightly with a heart that wants to draw back. Jericho is real.

We truly live on the walls of our strongholds more than we know. God in His mercy, God in His mercy takes His avenging army to that place so it may fall. That we truly may have a trust in Him that every promise He says to us by faith in Christ, we receive it.

And we exalt it higher than our circumstance. It becomes life to us. And you're right on the verge of this word truly becoming life to you greater than any other reality you know.

But beloved, our life on the wall, something is going to have to be destroyed. And we need a willingness. And for some, there's a drawing back from that.

Because you have enough of God to know that He will do that. And today, those that are saying, God, I want You to deal with the drawing back of my heart. I want You to deal with it.

I won't take it lightly. Those are saying, Lord, I've dealt so lightly with Your word. So lightly.

Not understanding the consequences when I do that. God, I want grace that I could truly say this word is my life. If you're here today and you feel like you're approaching your Jericho, you're approaching one of the hardest things in your life.

It may be surrendering a relationship. It's giving Him something that you know has been blocking you. It may not even be sin.

It's just something that you felt that you wanted. It's become the idol to you. It's become the struggle to you.

And yet you know that God so many times has led you to this place. And you backed away because you're like I am. In your strength we're failures.

We cannot. But know today, beloved, that we are being led to this place. Only the captain of the host takes us to Jericho.

Because Jericho is a doomed city. Jericho is a doomed city. When we are made willing, when we are a willing people, everything falls before the power of God.

So we've come today. If you've come willing to give Him that stronghold, I tell you something, now we've come to rejoice. Because it's a doomed city.

We have to be led there. We could not go there in our flesh. We won't go there in our flesh.

But if we're offering something, the Lord of hosts come, He leads us and thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph. That's Jesus Christ. So we've come today.

This morning the altar call was put all the sins, everything that keeps you from God, put in a basket and give it to Him. And we can do that this afternoon. Everything that we know, we put in a basket, we're offering, we're saying, God take it and burn it.

I give it to you. But beloved, we've got to do it with a thanksgiving because we have to know like we know that the captain of the host leads us to this stronghold to come down. He never loses a battle.

Never not once. And so we come rejoicing today. If we are being made willing, we come rejoicing.

It's coming down. That's our God. That's our God.

And He has not forsaken us in the wilderness. He's just made us sick of sand. So we've come to offer a prayer of thanksgiving.

God receives it. And God destroys it. So would you raise your hands with me when you pray with me.

Lord Jesus, I give you my stronghold. And I thank you that you demolish it. Thank you.

The promised land is before me. And you're going to lead me into that. Help me to take your word and to make it meet to me and drink to me.

Let it be my life. Let it rule my mind. Let it grip my heart.

Let it direct my feet. Shape my life by your word. By your word.

Thank you, Jesus. You are the victorious captain. And my stronghold is demolished because your word says it and I believe it.

In Jesus' name. Amen and amen. Hallelujah.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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