

Joshua 5:13 - 6:5

“Three steps to victory”

I. Intro

II. Vs. 5: 13-15 Whose side am I on

III. Vs. 6: 1-5 Let's get this party started

I. Intro

The Lord had promised to be with Joshua just as He had been with Moses (1:5). As you read the bible you can note the different ways the Lord appeared to people you see that:

- To *Abraham the pilgrim*, the *Lord came as a traveler* to share in a friendly meal (Gen. 18:1-8).
- To *Jacob the schemer*, *He came as a wrestler* to pin him to the place of submission (32:24-32).
- To *Daniel and the three Hebrew men* they met *Him as their companion in the fiery furnace* (Dan. 3:25).
- And here with *Joshua the soldier* He met him as *the Captain of the Lord's armies*.

What we learn from these encounters is that God *always comes to us when we need Him and in*

the way we need Him. Warren Wiersbe said, “*In Christian ministry great public victories are*

won in private as leaders submit to the Lord and receive their directions from Him.” Chinese

Bible teacher, Watchman Nee wrote, “*Not until we take the place of a servant can He take His*

place as Lord.” Here we see a very powerful truth: Joshua was reminded that he was second in

command. In a meeting with a small group of missionaries in China, James Hudson Taylor,

founder of the China Inland Mission reminded them that there were *three ways to do God's*

work:

1. **To make the best plans we can and hope they succeed.**
2. **To make our own plans and ask God to bless them.**
3. **To ask God for His plans and then do what He tells us to do.**

Robert Murray McCheyne wrote; “It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy servant is a powerful weapon in the hand of God.”

II. Vs. 5: 13-15 Whose side am I on

Vs. 13 Joshua was gazing up at Jericho a sight that he and 11 other spies had seen 38 years earlier. It was this fortress that had caused 10 of his fellow spies to say in Numbers 13:31-33 *“We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.”* *“The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”*

Nothing had changed in those 38 years those walls were still just as dwarfing as they had been 38 years earlier, Jericho was still undefeated in those 38 years as no one had been able to breach their fortified city. The difference was this time in the midst of Joshua’s gazing he saw the Lord standing before him with his sword drawn. *When Joshua saw the situation out of control; at that very moment, the Lord came to take command and this truth caused Joshua to come under His control.*

Go ahead to the first verse of the 6th chapter as Joshua records that *“Jericho was securely shut up”*. Even though hearts were melting nonetheless they were still sealed up tight in their walled city. *Joshua and the Israelites had been:*

- *Delivered from the bondage of the world*
- *Baptized in the Spirit when they crossed the Jordan*
- *Cut away the flesh at Gilgal*
- *And celebrated the Joy of their relationship afresh at Passover*

But none of those truths changed their situation as there was still a wall, a fortress standing in their way, hindering them from going deeper into the land of promise. Can you relate to that?

You can go after the Lord, a fresh work of His Spirit in your life that has led you to cut away

your flesh, you have entered into a new sense of joy but there still is a wall, a barrier that seems to stand in front of you keeping you from going further. It may be your job or relationships with folks; maybe your spouse and you just can't see away around the obstacle. This section provides us with **three scenes that will directly relate to those walls coming down that hinder us from moving forward in our relationship with the Lord.**

Before we get into the first scene notice what Joshua does when he is by the walls of Jericho in verse 13 he, "**lifted his eyes and looked**"; in the N.I.V. it declares that Joshua "*looked up*". Joshua was standing right in front of these massive walls which were keeping he and the nation from going after the Lord and His promises and He doesn't **look down and kick the ground, he doesn't turn around**, instead he **LOOKS UP!** "*Oh pastor you don't realize what I'm facing, it's huge, it's massive and everything is "shut up and shut down" they won't let me in, I'm done for.*" **Friends don't look down, don't turn around LOOK UP!** Jesus said in Luke 21:28 "*When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*" And who is it that Joshua sees when he looks up? Well it is none other preincarnate Jesus.

The Lord will appear to us in the midst of the circumstances and surroundings we find ourselves in and in away that we can receive Him. Look up my friends and you will find Jesus waiting to minister to your needs.

Vs. 13c-15 Joshua had read in the Book of the Law; what Moses had said to the Lord after Israel had made the golden calf in Ex. 33:15, "*If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here*". **Joshua had no right to claim God for his cause but God had every right to claim Joshua for His. This was not Joshua's or Israel's war and God was not on any side but His own! God would not be following Joshua and the armies of Israel into battle instead they**

would be following the Lord into victory! God is not the “*party leader*” to any particular human point of view be that religious denominational or secularly political. Every father, mother, pastor, and Christian leader is second in command to the Lord Jesus Christ; and when we forget this fact, we start to move toward defeat and failure. Joshua was standing in “heathen territory”; yet because God was with him, he was standing on holy ground. *If we are obeying the will of God, no matter where He leads us, we are on holy ground. There’s no such thing as “secular” and “sacred,” “common” and “consecrated,” when you are in the Lord’s service.*

Here then is the first of my observation lesson as we read of Joshua’s question to the Lord, “*Are you for us or for our adversaries?*”? That sound a lot like us when we are facing an immovable wall of opposition, “*Whose side are you on?*”? Ah but look at the Lord’s response to the question, **NO!!!** NO? That response by the Lord is quite revealing as the Lord is telling Joshua, you’re asking the wrong question! *The wall isn’t going to come down by trying to get the Lord on our side but rather it is going to come down by making sure we are on His side.* So many times we reduce everything to those for us and those against us but the greater issue is to check our hearts and make sure that we are on His side. That is what Jesus said in Matthew 12:30 when He said, “*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*” When we are facing wall and barriers in our relationships with folks we make it an “us verses them” a good verse bad but as long as we keep it on that level the walls will stay up. Ah but when we start with making sure that we are on the side of the Lord rather than trying to convince Him to be on our side then the walls will begin to crumble. Joshua gets the “**NO, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have come.**” As his response is “*What does my Lord say to His servant?*” *Walls seem to always come down when we realize that it is not about trying to convince the Lord of our position but rather seek to submit to His!* We know that this

is a preincarnate manifestation of Jesus because we are told that Joshua fell on His face to worship Him and else where we know that angels would have forbid such an action by Joshua, further more the Lord tells him that where he is standing is holly ground.

III. Vs. 6: 1-5 Let's get this party started

Vs. 1 Jericho was not an exceptionally large city; but it was an important, formidable fortress city. The land of Canaan was divided up among a number of “*city states*,” each ruled by a king (12:9-24). These cities were not large; Ai, was smaller than Jericho (7:2-3), had about 12,000 people (8:25). Excavations of Jericho indicate that the city covered perhaps eight acres and was protected by two high parallel walls, which stood about fifteen feet apart and surrounded the city. According to Numbers 13:28 it was the sight of cities like Jericho that convinced ten of the Jewish spies 38 years earlier that Israel could never conquer the land. This is Joshua’s way of revealing the utter hopelessness of the situation. If Israel could defeat Jericho, they could defeat anything else that would face them in Canaan. We see the wisdom of God as Israel faces their most difficult opponent first. Obviously, it was something that God could have done without Israel’s help at all, but He wanted them to be a part of His work. The Christian life involves challenge and conflict whether we like it or not. Our enemies are constantly waging war against us and trying to keep us from claiming our inheritance in Jesus Christ.

Vs. 2 The tense of the verb here is “I ***HAVE given*** *Jericho into your hand*” in other words **the victory had already been won!** All Joshua and his people had to do was claim the promise and obey the Lord. Believing a promise is like accepting a check, but reckoning is like endorsing the check and cashing it. Jericho which had defeated them 38 years earlier stood as a barrier to Israel’s advancement into the presence and promises of the Lord. **How were they to conquer what they had failed to do so 38 years earlier?** In verse 2 we are told that the Lord told Joshua

that He had given the city into their hands and in Hebrews 11:30 we are told the means by which the Lord would bring this about as we are told that “**By faith** *the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.*” The plan for advancement beyond the walls was outlined by none other than the “*Commander of the army of the Lord*” and there was no room given for human schemes or military tactics nothing man could do except obey the Lord would bring the walls down. The walls of the world must come down before we can enjoy the riches of His grace in the land of promise. There is something I found very interesting with regards to these instructions given by the Lord; they went against what Moses had instructed on most every point:

1. *They were to use priests yet we are told that priests were exempt from all military duty.*
2. *They were told to take the Ark into battle but else where we learn they were never to take the Ark into battle.*
3. *They were to blow seven rams horns but we are told in Numbers 10 that they were to blow two silver horns.*
4. *They were told to walk around Jericho seven times on the seventh day which would have been the Sabbath yet we know that according to the law they were forbidden to travel on the Sabbath.*
5. *Finally, they were told to engage on battle on the Sabbath yet we know that the law forbids such a thing.*

How are we to understand this seeming contradiction, in light of the fact that Joshua was there during the time in which Moses wrote down the law? The answer may lie in a prophecy in Zech. 14:3 where we are told that “*Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*” **This is a word about a future time when the Lord Jesus will fight in the battle of Armageddon but just when did Jesus fight before?** We never see Him draw a sword never deliver a blow in the gospels. Yet when we consider that prophetic word in light of this passage in makes sense as the Lord Jesus was the Commander of the army of the Lord. So then Jesus was in the midst of them and His word was above the law. That brings us to the 2nd scene instructing us on how walls come down. **Based upon verse three they were to**

walk around Jericho one time each day for six days then on the seventh day they were to walk around in seven times. Doesn't that sound a bit familiar? Have you ever felt like the Lord has you going around in circles? Think of those soldiers as they walked around each day for six days then seven times on the seventh day and nothing changed; the walls didn't shrink; white flags didn't start waving from the inhabitants of Jericho. All that happened in those seven days was they had no doubt mentally exhausted every human means to breach those walls. I think God allows us to go in circles so that we can come to the end of ourselves and realize that the only way to see the walls come down won't be through our ingenuity but by the hand of the Lord. Before we see the Lord knock down the walls in our lives we are going to have to stop trying to do so in our own strength. Don't give up, LOOK UP, and give in!

Vs. 4-5 Had there been military council given I'm certain that no officer would have given this advise instead it would have involved siege ramps and lots of time and effort. From a human stand point nothing could have been more useless then a regular march around the city and blowing of horns. The preparation for the walls to come down was nothing more than a shout of victory prior to them falling down. Francis A. Schaeffer commented, "Joshua did not take the city merely by a clever, human military tactic", the strategy was the Lord's. No situation is too great for the Lord to handle, and no problem is too much for Him to solve. God always knows what He will do. Our responsibility is to wait for Him to tell us all that we need to know and then obey it.

God's instructions were that the armed men march around Jericho once a day for six days, followed by seven priests each blowing a trumpet. The priests carrying the ark of the Lord would come next, and the rear guard would complete the procession. The only noise permitted was the sound of the trumpets. On the seventh day the procession would march around the city

seven times, the priests would give a long blast on the trumpets, and then the marchers would all shout. God would then cause the walls to fall down flat so that the soldiers could easily enter the city. In biblical numerology the number seven represents completeness or perfection. The Hebrew word translated “seven” (*shevah*) comes from a root that means “to be full, to be satisfied.” **It spoke of God’s ability to finish whatever He started.**

The Jews used two different kinds of trumpets, those made of silver and those made of ram’s horns. The silver trumpets were used especially by the priests to signal the camp when something important was happening. The ram’s horns were used primarily for celebrations. The Hebrew word for “trumpet” is *shofar*; but the Hebrew word for “ram’s horn,” it is *jobel*, which is the root of the word *jubilee*. **As such we see that the Lord had them blow the rams horn of celebration instead of the silver trumpet to get their attention. Israel was not declaring war on Jericho, instead they were announcing the celebration of the arrival of Israel in their new land.** They were living like victors, not victims.

They were shouting with a great shout **before the walls fell down not after they did. Before the challenge; that fought FROM victory, not FOR victory.** They were to shout with a voice expectant triumph faith. They didn’t walk into victory **after the fact** the Lord was telling them to walk into victory **before the fact** by faith. **So here you have three things the Lord would call us to remember to dismantle our walls:**

- **The question isn’t whose side the Lord is on; the question is, are we on the side of the Lord.**
- **We must come to the place where we are at the end of ourselves, done with trying to scale over, dig under or go around our walls.**
- **We need to celebrate the victory of the Lord before the walls fall down not just after they do.**