

## Joshua 6:6-27

### “Another Brick in the wall”

#### I. Intro

#### II. Vs. 6-16 The sound of silence

#### III. Vs. 17-27 Let the walls fall down

#### I. Intro

In Heb. 11:30 we are given the explanation to what was about to happen in Jericho that day as it says, “*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days*” and 1 John 5:4 reminds us that “*And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith*”. **Faith is not believing in spite of evidence**, for the people of Israel had been given one demonstration after another proving that God’s Word and God’s power can be trusted. **How could they do anything other than believe Him! Faith is believing in spite of the consequences!** What an encouragement the fall of Jericho is to trust the Lord’s promises and obey His instructions, no matter how impossible the situation may appear to be. We face obstacles with high walls that challenge us every day; ambition, pride or worldly pursuits. Only by faith can those walls come down and we advance towards the upward call in Christ. Phillips Brooks said, “**Do not pray for easy lives, pray to be better men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for power equal to your tasks.**”

#### II. Vs. 6-16 The sound of silence

Vs. 6-7 The plan of the first five verses was unveiled and all that remained was how the nation would respond to its execution. Joshua first spoke to the priests in verse 6 before he spoke to the people in verse 7 that’s a good word for those who are in leadership: God always moves those in leadership first.

As I mentioned last week I find it rather interesting that God had His people walk in circles around this fortress for six days an event, *(if they were anything like me)*, that would have had two consequences:

1. They would have pondered every possible human way of defeating the obstacle known to man and would have grown more frustrated and personally defeated with each lap around the walls.
2. I eventually would have come to the place where I realized that those walls weren't going to be removed by a work of human ingenuity. We all have some walls in our lives and time has proven to us that we can't **get around** them **go over** them, or **dig under** them. That is why some of have no doubt chosen to cover the walls with wall paper of some outdoor scenery but the truth is we know that behind the façade there is still a wall.

Jericho's walls were 40 feet high with the outer wall being at least 15 feet thick and an inner wall around 12 feet thick. Every time they walked around this city they saw the that scarlet cord hanging out of Rahab's window and she no doubt looked down and watched them marching around seeing that her redemption was just outside the window. Then each day they came back to Gilgal following the presence of the Lord around Jericho and there they would camp.

Historians do not debate the existence and demise of Jericho but they try to apply human logic to the walls collapse. There are those that wish to suggest that this was nothing more than an earthquake but the evidence would suggest otherwise. I watched a program on the History Channel that suggested that tis was not a miracle but rather science caused by sound waves created from the trumpets blast along with the shouts. Again this would require a miracle of the right combination of things perfectly suited for such a thing at a precise moment in time. But again Hebrews 11:30-31 tells the means by which those walls fell down saying, "**By faith the**

walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. *By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.*” Paul says in 2 Cor. 10:4 where he says, *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds”*.

In the third and fourth chapters of Joshua the Ark is mentioned 16 times at the crossing of the Jordan and here it is mentioned eight times as the walls of Jericho come crashing down. Take into consideration that the Ark is the visible manifestation of the presence of the Lord we can only come to one conclusion that **no matter whether you are in need of crossing over an obstacle that is keeping you from the presence and promises of the Lord or you have a wall or a barrier that is keeping you from move further into what God has for you the first thing you must have out in front of you is the presence of the Lord.** The priests could have waded all the way across the Jordan and they could have marched around the walls of Jericho for the rest of their lives with out the Ark of the presence of the Lord out in front and nothing would have happened. It is only when we:

- **Seek His presence**
- **Obey His plan**
- **That victory is certain**

Joshua tells the army their responsibility and according to Numbers 26 the census of the military there were over 600,000 men able to bear arms. There are several things that God seems to have accomplished with the way in which He orchestrated this attack:

1. The way in which He had them walk around the walls would have been **a test of their patience.** No doubt some of them were anxious and said, *“What a waste of time to devote an entire week to the taking of one city by walking around it once a day”*. In James 1:3-4

James say's, "*that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*"

2. Secondly, we notice that **they were to do so silently, which would have tested their self control and personal discipline**. Someone has well noted that we will not see walls come down until we learn to control our tongue. **God didn't want them talking, and complaining, He wanted them contemplating and praying**. This impact was no doubt felt by the inhabitants of Jericho as well as they witnessed two to three million people walking around their city quietly and in order with the only sound the sound of the joyous celebration of the ram's horn playing. Ps. 46:10 reminds us to "*Be still, and know that I am God*". And according Ecc. 3:7 in the believer's life there's "*a time to keep silence, and a time to speak*".

Vs. 8-14 I'm impressed by the lack of hesitation both from Joshua as well as from the priests and the people as clearly this was no ordinary way to see walls fall down. Based upon archeological evidence the dating of this incident was around 1450 BC with the walls indicating an outward fall instead of an inward fall. The circling of Israel once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day would have left them extremely vulnerable to attack from the inhabitants of Jericho and they had to do so when it didn't make much sense to continue. It is this reality that made the walls coming down all the more glorious as we discover that it is not our manipulation that over comes the massive circumstances but rather the Lord. It may take 6 weeks, 6 months or 6 years but rest assured those walls will fall outward. **It appears to me that my laps around the walls would have been considerably shorter the quicker had I came to the realization that they weren't going to come down via my strength but rather by the Lord's. God's bigger walls to knock down are not the barriers we face outwardly but rather the ones we face inwardly.**

I believe all of this was yet another witness to the Amorites of Jericho to repent and get their hearts right. You may recall that God had given them 400 years to repent, and then He gave them 40 years more where clearly they had become fainthearted. He gave them a few more days as they witnessed the crossing of the Jordan and circumcision at Gilgal and the celebration of the Passover meal. That was followed by six days of marching around their walls all of which had left them with hearts that melted but unfortunately refused to turn to the living God.

Vs. 15-16 This work had to include the Sabbath which suggests to us early on within 40 years of the laws with regards to the Sabbath that the people viewed Sabbath keeping differently than later generations do today as clearly they viewed it as did the Lord of the Sabbath Jesus said in Mark 2:27-28 *“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”* After six days of silence they were told at the appropriate time to shout for the *“Lord has given you the city”*. This shout was in recognition that God was now giving them what He had promised and He was doing so in His power not their own. It was God’s power demonstrated through man’s silence!

### **III. Vs. 17-27 Let the walls fall down**

Vs. 17-19 According to Deut. 20:14 the soldiers shared the spoils of war but not at Jericho; for everything there belonged to the Lord and was put into His treasury. No Israelite was to appropriate anything for themselves all was either dedicated to the Lord or burned as being worthless. Thus the city and everything in it was dedicated to the Lord for His purpose and plan.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> verse we are told by Joshua that *“the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.”* Based upon Joshua 2:15 Rahab’s house was part of the wall, so **the most dangerous place to be for the rest of the city was the**

**safest place to be for Rahab and her family.** When the walls fell outwardly her part of the wall stayed intact with the scarlet cord still hanging from the window. That cord was an outward sign of an inward reality as it should her trust in the Lord's word for her. It was a sign of her obedience. That reminds us of baptism as baptism doesn't save us, it is an outward sign of an inward reality that we have been saved by trusting in God's Word, Jesus.

There is a warning given by the Lord through Joshua and that was twofold:

- A. First, in verse 18 the lord says, "*And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.*" This warning is clearly to the people of Israel not to go after the things that caused the destruction of Jericho. This is a word for us not to chase after the things that has destroyed lives in the world.
- B. Second, verses 26-27 was a warning to a yet future generation not to rebuild this destroyed city as it was to be a constant reminder of those who resist God's grace until their own destruction. Joshua assures the safety of Rahab while also warning the people not to take up the idolatry of the inhabitants of Jericho, who's residents were so wicked that in verse 26 a prophetic word is issued that it will cost the person's family if they attempt to rebuild the walls that incased such wickedness. The people destroyed far more of their own people over the 100's of years then God did in judging the city when the walls fell. All the valuables belonged to God not the Israelites and in establishing this we see that Jericho became the first fruits of the inheritance for the nation.

Vs. 20-21 God gave the reason for such complete destruction of Jericho in Deut. 18:9-14

Where we read "*When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you*

*anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.”* For well over 400 years God have given them opportunity to turn from sin, through knowledge of His judgment upon the Egyptians and the showing of His power in the Red Sea. Through the testimony of one of their own Rahab and the witness of the crossing of the Jordan and the march around their city. And though their hearts melted what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:19 stands as truth *“this is the condemnation that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”* God who is all knowing, who search’s the thoughts and intents of the heart knew that there was not a person in that city save Rahab and her family that would ever no matter how much revelation and opportunity ever turn from their wickedness and in fact they would only cause more to suffer under the life they so willing lived. So we see that Israel took what God had given by obeying what the Lord told them to do. Our responsibility in the equation of faith as we simply step out and trust in what God has promised He would do.

Vs. 22-25 When the walls of the city fell down, it appears that the section of the wall that held Rahab’s house didn’t fall down! It wasn’t necessary for the spies to look for a window with a red cord hanging from it because the only house that was left standing was her house. God saved and protected Rahab because of her faith and she led her family to trust in Jehovah so they were also saved. Their faith brought them into the nation of Israel and Rahab would marry Salmon and

became an ancestress of King David and of the Messiah! **There isn't a wall or fortress of man that can protect a harden heart from God's presence and no destruction that He can not deliver one from that will trust Him!** G. Campbell Morgan said, *"God is perpetually at war with sin, that is the whole explanation of the extermination of the Canaanites."* In Psalm 106:34-39 we are told that Israel *"did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them, but they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds."* Because the Jews didn't fully obey this commandment in later years they were themselves judged. To quote Campbell Morgan again: *"Thank God that He will not make peace with sin in my heart! I bless His name for the thunder of His authority, and for the profound conviction that He is fierce and furious in His anger against sin, wherever it manifests itself."* The Lord will not share my life if there are rival gods in my heart. He will not permit me to compromise with the enemy. The Lord spoke through Moses in Deut. 4:24 saying, *"For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."* God's love burns for every soul and those that step into will not be harmed as Daniels three friends found out but those who refuse will find more than hearts that melt! Rahab and her family were willing to do what the rest of the residents of Jericho weren't willing to do even though their hearts were melting at the pending judgment and that is repent and turn from their sin to trusting in the living God whom they knew about. **Rahab's salvation wasn't based upon knowledge but obedience and their disobedience was not based upon ignorance but rather willfulness.** Joshua wrote in the time frame of the incidents as he tells us Rahab was still alive and dwelling with the Israelites

and she by the way was no 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizen but an object of God's grace and was fully grafted in under the banner of God's love and grace.

Vs. 26-27 There is a curious post script to this warning not to rebuild Jericho in 1 Kings 16:34 where we are told of Hiel of Bethel who was living in the time of Ahab rebuilt Jericho but he did so as prophesize with "*its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Lord, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.*" God knocked down the walls and He warned the nation not to set up those walls again or it would cost you your children. There are to many Christian's who could testify of the truth of this as they watched the Lord knock down the walls in their lives only to go back to those same things and rebuild them but at the price of their children and grand children. If the Lord has knocked down a wall in your life don't go back into that city and rebuild it.