**I HAVE DELIVERED JERICHO INTO YOUR HANDS**

September 8, 2019

Joshua 6:1-27

Key Verse 6:2 “Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men’.”

Our Christian life is compared to a battle. We are called to be Christian soldiers. How can we win personal victory in our spiritual battle as well as in our ministry? In today’s passage, we learn how God enabled his people to destroy the Jericho fortress. In this passage we learn about not only the victory of the Israelite soldiers, but also how to win personal victory in our lifetime as well as in our ministry. Do you want victory in Jesus? If you want victory in Jesus, say “Amen.” God wants us to be victorious for his glory. May God bless us to learn spiritual principles to become victorious children of God in the new academic year.

In the previous passage God commanded General Joshua to circumcise all his people again with sharp flint knives. What a spectacle it was to see all the men of Israel after having been circumcised, lying down here and there, groaning. All of them would have been killed if the Jericho army attacked them. It was a risky and dangerous command to obey. But they obeyed God’s command absolutely. Spiritually speaking, circumcision meant to have a right heart in the sight of God. And it was to have an identity of being God’s holy people. It was to remove sinful habits from their hearts. In this way God prepared their hearts to conquer the Jericho Fortress. Spiritual warfare is different from the military warfare. We have to prepare our hearts through repentance to win spiritual battle.

Look at verse 1. “Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.” I am sure the king of Jericho sent spies and saw that the Israelites were in pain from circumcision. But he did not attack because of fear. He did not want to take risks. He lost a golden opportunity to win the victory. He did so because he depended on the Jericho wall. The Jericho Fortress was invincible, impregnable and unconquerable. They say that its wall was 25 feet high and 20 feet thick. Rahab’s house was built on the wall. When the Israelites looked up at the Jericho fortress, they lost their spirit. How did God help Joshua in this critical time? Look at verse 2. “Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.’” The soldiers of Israel might have thought, “It is impossible to conquer the Jericho Fortress,” but the power of God’s thunderous promise subsided their fear and filled them with confidence in their hearts.

When we look at verse 2, it is God’s mighty promise. God had a plan to deliver Jericho into the hands of Israel army. God used the verb the past perfect “have delivered”. Even though Jericho was not conquered yet, it was already conquered like the past event to God. It was a matter of entering. In verse 2, the word “see” comes from the Hebrew word, meaning, “to envision something”: to see far beyond the physical realm of present reality to see something as it can, and will be. God’s call for Joshua to envision the fall of Jericho was based not upon Israel’s power and might, but upon God himself, as he declared to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hand…” Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Faith always sees the victory, but doubt always sees the obstacles. Jericho represents great obstacles which stand between us and spiritual goals we have set out to do, but which seem impossible to overcome. Do you see only obstacles? Then you are not looking at them by faith. We have to see our Jericho with the eyes of faith that they are already conquered. All we have to do is to go in and take possession of it.

In order for this promise to be fulfilled, there are certain conditions which they must follow. The Israelites must follow God’s battle plan exactly. They must depend on God, not on their own military strategy. Then, what was God’s command for the battle plan? Look at verses 3-5. “March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse, and the people will go up, every man straight in.” What a battle plan! It looked like a children’s soldier game. However, it was God’s battle plan. In awesome fear, General Joshua and the people of Israel first armed themselves with the word of God. They believed that although they had no military power, God would help them destroy the Jericho Fortress.

One’s entire life is like a war and one’s daily life is like a battle. The key point to win the spiritual battle is to follow God’s direction. God shows the way to win. Our spiritual battle must be fought in God’s way. In Exodus 17:8-16, the Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites. Moses sent Joshua to fight the Amalekites. But there was a strange thing in the battle. “As long as Moses held up his hands in prayer, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.” When Moses’ hands grew tired, Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady. Through Moses’ prayer, the Israelites overcame the Amalekite army. After defeating the Amalekites, Moses built an altar and called it “The Lord is my Banner.” (Exodus 17:15) Moses knew that the victory came from the Lord.

General Joshua called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it.” He ordered the people to “advance and march around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord.” Going around the city quietly one time a day didn’t look like destroying the fortress of Jericho. Now, what would your response be if I shared with you such a plan for our future? Some, if not all of you, would say sarcastically: “Yeah, right! Like it’s really going to happen?” But note that Joshua really was just the messenger. The words were from God himself. Joshua needed faith to believe what God had said. Faith is taking God at his word, and responding in obedience to him, knowing that God will lead you in paths of victory.

Look at verses 8-9. The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the Lord went forward blowing the trumpets and the ark of the Lord’s covenant followed them. The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. But General Joshua had commanded the people, “Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!” The army of Israel under General Joshua’s command absolutely obeyed the command Joshua had given them. As General Joshua commanded, they advanced, softly stepping around the city of Jericho. And then the army of Israel returned to the camp and spent the night there. They won the victory in going around the city of Jericho in silence. Silence was their prayer. They acted as one man. The army of Israel’s obedience to their commander and controlling their mouths imply that they had already won the war. But on the seventh day they got up earlier and they circled the city seven times. What did Joshua and his army do after they circled around on the seventh day seven times? Look at verse 20. “When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.” God brought a great victory to Joshua and the people of Israel. Finally the Jericho fortress completely collapsed to the ground. We call this the Jericho Operation.

We can learn three spiritual lessons from the Jericho Operation. First, it was the work of obedience. The victory came when they obeyed God’s command through Joshua. Therefore we can say that victory came only from God. The ark of the Lord was leading the march. This means that God was leading the march. The Israelites were trusting God in their march. They believed that God was with them during their seven-day Jericho Operation. They believed that God had delivered the city of Jericho into their hands. They had faith in God. By faith they moved the mountain of the fortified city of Jericho. Obedience comes from faith in God. Their obedience brought a great victory to them. Hebrews 11:30 says, “By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.” When we obey God’s word, we can overcome our personal Jericho and will experience the power of God. We have prayed last 6 weeks through Joshua study that the walls of University of Toronto students may collapse and the gospel of Jesus Christ may conquer their hearts. Indeed the walls of hostility, walls of suspicion, and walls of indifference all collapsed, and God gave us great victory at Clubs Day.

Second, it was the work of patience. The Jericho Operation required a great patience to the people of Israel. It was not easy for them to march around the city seven days without doing anything. They wanted to attack the city right away. Seven days looked like seven long years to them. They wanted to rush to the city when they saw their enemies. But God told them to march around the city silently. They were tired of waiting game. One day passed and they waited. Two days passed and they waited. Six days passed and nothing happened but they continued their march. Seven days passed and they waited. God wanted them to wait for God’s time. When God’s time came, they shouted and the wall collapsed. God was putting fears to the people of Jericho during the seven-day march.

Waiting is an expression of faith. After waiting 10 years for a son in Canaan, Abraham became very impatient. So he did not wait for God but took a concubine Hagar and had a son Ishmael. It brought grief and tension in the household. So Ishmael is known as a son of impatience. We have to wait for God’s time when we teach the Bible. We need patience to wait for Bible students to grow slowly. Of course, we want our Bible students grow faster and become shepherds right away. But that’s not the way God works. This applies to our children. We want our children to become dream kids doing everything perfect. But children do not grow as their parents expected. There will be God’s time for them to grow and become mature servants of God. Until then we have to wait for them with much prayers.

Third, it was the work of coworking. The march consisted of three distinct groups--priests, music servants, and armed soldiers. It was not easy for them to walk along together for seven days. They had to march silently. But nobody acted selfishly. They acted as one man. They worked together very well. All of them played their own role faithfully. To the armed soldiers their actions looked very dangerous and foolish from the military point of view. But they did not complain to Joshua and they did not doubt God’s word. The music servants blew the trumpets all the time during the march. But they did not complain. The priests who took the ark did not complain. They all coworked well. When they were asked to shout, they all shouted loudly. Then the walls of Jericho collapsed. God’s way of working is beyond human reason. The secret of our successful spiritual life is to work together with others. We have to recognize the gifts of others and use them for the work of God.

Look at verse 25. “But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho- and she lives among the Israelites to this day.” Rahab’s house was on the walls of Jericho. When the walls of Jericho collapsed, only Rahab’s house was not destroyed. General Joshua commanded to protect Rahab the prostitute and her family three times in this passage (17,22,25). Rahab the prostitute was precious in the sight of God. Sinful human beings ignore such people after the victory. But after the victory, General Joshua wanted to spare Rahab the prostitute. Why? Because she sided with God’s people by faith. She became a blessed woman because of her faith. She became an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Also by faith she brought salvation to her family.

Jericho represents great obstacles which stand between us and spiritual goals we have set out to do, but which seem impossible to overcome, such as raising 12 disciples of Jesus, job problem, marriage problem, and financial problem. But God promised us in verse 2, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands…” I believe that God has delivered the University of Toronto into our hands this year. We need to obey God’s command and go there by faith and claim them as our own. May God be with you this year and give you many spiritual victories through your life of faith. May God bless our ministry when we obey God’s word and wait for his time and work together as one man.