

=THE LIFE OF JOSHUA=

Lesson 4

Joshua and the Battle of Jericho

AIM: to teach my pupils that God's work can be accomplished and that victories and battles can be won if we use God's methods.

POINT OF CONTACT: Bring a piece of paper to class for each child, perhaps even some pencils. Have each child list as many Old Testament miracles as he can. (The crossing of the Red Sea, the crossing of the Jordan River, the ax head that swam, the fire that fell on Mount Carmel, the walls of Jericho, etc.) Then have some little prize to give to the one who lists the most. Allow them two minutes to write down their answers. A candy bar would be sufficient, or any little prize, to give to the one who lists the most miracles. For that matter, the prize could be omitted and applause could be given to the winner.

INTRODUCTION: Joshua has led the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. This does not mean, however, that all the battles have been fought. Actually, as was mentioned in last week's lesson, the crossing into the Promised Land only begins the battles. The first big battle is that of Jericho. Jericho is situated just across the Jordan River. It was the first battle and most natural battle that the Israelites had to fight. Jericho was a city of tremendous walls. There was actually a double wall around the city with dwelling places built between the two walls. It is said that guards walked on top of the walls and that even chariots with three horses abreast could be driven on top of the walls. It was to this well-fortified city the Jews came first. How could they win such a battle? This is the lesson for today.

- I. THERE IS NO BATTLE IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD. In Joshua 6:1a notice the words, "Now Jericho was straitly shut up." The citizens of Jericho had heard about the marvelous victories God had given the Israelites. Consequently, they shut up the city! None could go out, and none could go in. Humanly speaking, there was no way the Jews could win this battle. They did not have the ammunition, they did not have the warriors, and certainly they had no way to enter the city because of the fortification of the walls.

This would be a good time to read Revelation 3:8, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Revelation 3:7 says, "...he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."

Perhaps you are facing an insurmountable task. Remember, there is nothing impossible with God. There are several verses in the Bible that should be examined in connection with this:

1. Genesis 18:14a, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" God had told Abraham and Sarah that they were going to have a baby. It was difficult to believe. Sarah laughed. Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90. God asked the question: "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"
2. Numbers 11:23a, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's hand waxed short?" Moses and the people had complained to God that they wanted flesh to eat. God had said, "Okay, Moses, you will have flesh to eat. You will not only have it for one day, but for an entire month." Moses looked up to God and doubted that God could provide flesh for three and a half million people for a month out in the wilderness. The Lord said, "Is the LORD's hand waxed short?"
3. Jeremiah 32:17, "...there is nothing too hard for thee."
4. Mark 9:23, "...all things are possible to him that believeth."
5. Mark 10:27, "...for with God all things are possible."
6. Luke 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."
7. Matthew 28:18b, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Regardless of what the battle is, if it is in the will of God, and if it is done through God's methods, the victory can be ours!

- II. GOD'S METHODS MUST BE USED. Let us notice the method that God gave the Israelites.

1. They were to go around the city one time on each of the six days and seven times on the seventh day. Notice Joshua 6:3, 15.
2. Seven priests were to go before the ark with seven trumpets of rams' horns. See Joshua 6:4a.
3. The armed men went before the priests. Look at Joshua 6:9.
4. The people could say nothing during that time. See Joshua 6:10. Now get the picture: What armed men they had went before the priests. The priests (seven of them) followed, blowing trumpets. Then came the Ark of the Covenant. Then came all the Jews, just marching around the city. At the end of the 13th trip around the city, the people were to shout with a great shout, and the wall was to fall down. This it did! No doubt somebody said, "This is a crazy thing to do. This wall couldn't be blasted down." The truth is, they would have been right. Human methods could not have won the battle; human methods never can win the battle for God. God had told them what to do. In any battle that is to be won, we must use God's methods.

This is why many churches fail; they are trying to use man-made methods. This is why many preachers fail; they try man-made methods. This is why many Christians fail—they lean on man-made methods. If God gives the victory, He does it using His own methods.

III. JOSHUA LED THE PEOPLE IN A SEVEN-DAY JOB. This is very interesting because the victory for God must be won in the entire seven days. In other words, it is an every-day proposition. The battle can't be won just by going to church on Sunday. We must do every day what we do a lot of on Sunday. In other words, we study the Bible a lot on Sunday. To win the victory, we must study the Bible some every day. We pray a lot on Sunday. To win the victory, we must pray some every day. We witness a lot on Sunday. To win the victory, we must witness some every day. Every day should be a little miniature Sunday. To be sure, we have activities on the weekdays we do not have on Sunday; but if one wins the victory, he will not win it with one big blast once a week. He will have to play the trumpets all week. Victories are won with day-by-day battles, not spasmodic big pushes.

IV. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, ONE DAY OF THE SEVEN ON WHICH THEY DID MORE THAN ON THE OTHER DAYS. God has given us one day a week that is to be given wholly unto Him. In their time it was the seventh day. In our time it is the first day of the week because it was on that day the Lord raised from the dead.

(Teacher, it might be wise here for us to dwell a bit on the importance of proper observance of the Lord's Day. Now, the Sabbaths were nailed to the cross, but God has given us Sunday as a day of service to Him, a day of assembling with God's people, etc. Though we should not legally teach it as such, it would be a healthy thing for our pupils to get the idea there is something special about Sunday. It certainly should be the most spiritual day of the week for us. Though it perhaps would not be a sin to do certain things, I think it is a good habit for Christians to get the idea Sunday is a special day and should not be spent with as much levity, amusement, etc. as perhaps other days.)

To say the least, there was one day when the battle was fought harder. This was not, however, at the expense of the other days.

V. THE GLORY OF GOD WAS OUT IN FRONT. Oh, to be sure, the priests preceded the ark. The great host of the people followed the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was that piece of furniture over which rested the Shekinah Glory and which followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. In other words, the victory cannot be won unless we stay in the will of God and follow His leadership. Notice Joshua 6:11.

(Teacher, talk here for a while about the importance of God having a plan for every life and every pupil finding God's plan. Talk about the will of God. Victories cannot be won for God unless we are in His will. This is very vital to a Christian.)

The battle that followed the battle of Jericho was lost, although it was a much smaller battle. This was the battle of Ai. It is interesting; the Jews lost this battle. It was simply because they did not take the Ark of the Covenant first. In other words, they did not follow the glory of God. A little battle fought outside the will of God can be lost, whereas a big battle fought inside the will of God can be won.

Ask the pupils how many know the will of God for their lives. Talk about God's will for a while and the different things that God can lead them to do. Too little is said about the will of God. It is the safest place to be, and it is the happiest place to be. It is also the most productive place to be.

- VI. THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD NOT GET ATTACHED TO WORLDLY THINGS. See Joshua 6:17, 18. To win battles for God, the Christian must not become too infatuated with the things of the world. Jericho was an accursed city. The people were to take nothing! God did not want the people trusting the riches of Jericho instead of the leadership of the Heavenly Father. It is a dangerous thing when God's people get too attached to things on earth.
- VII. THE MONEY OF JERICHO WAS TO BE GIVEN TO GOD AND TO THE TREASURY OF THE LORD. Notice Joshua 6:19. All of the wealth from this first city in the Promised Land belonged to God. (Teacher, spend some time talking about tithing and the giving of our earthly possessions to God. This present world is our Jericho. It is an accursed world. We are not to become too infatuated with it, nor are we to treasure its silver and gold. We are to use our possessions for the glory of God. Talk about tithing here for a while. Then go beyond that; explain to the pupils that all we have belongs to God and that we should certainly not become attached to temporal things but rather, spiritual things.)
- VIII. THE PEOPLE FOLLOWED JOSHUA AND HIS LEADERSHIP. Here again is one of the great secrets of success. God gave the leader; the people followed the leader. He was not perfect, to be sure, but he was God's man. Victory came when he got his orders from God, and the people followed. It is vital that we teach our young people to be followers. We hear much talk today about "go to college and get an education so you can rise to a place of leadership." If everybody does that, there will be no one for leaders to lead. Someone needs to go to college to learn how to follow. Teach the pupils obedience, respect for authority, respect for the law, proper followship. These are so vital and so necessary to any organization.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the walls of Jericho.
2. How many priests blew the trumpets?
3. Give the order of the people as they walked around Jericho.
4. How many times did they walk around the city on each of the first six days?
5. How many times did they walk around the city on the seventh day?
6. How much talking did they do during this time?
7. What hovered over the Ark of the Covenant?
8. Name the battle that the Jews lost.
9. Why did they lose this battle?
10. What was to go into the Lord's treasury from Jericho?
11. How much could the people keep for themselves?
12. What river had the Jews just crossed?
13. What is the most important thing and the greatest thing in life that a Christian can do?
14. What were the people supposed to do after they had marched around the city 13 times?