

**HARRINGAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST
SUNDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2010.**

Victory over Jericho
Text: Joshua 6:1-27

Introduction:

Last week I spoke about the successful crossing of the Jordan opposite Jericho at the peak of its flood in spring.

It is therefore a natural progression that the first City they will come across to take over is Jericho. Do not forget that Joshua had sent two spies to Jericho to survey the city and they were hosted by Rahab the prostitute with whom they made a covenant that she and her family would be spared when the Israelites conquers the City.

The City of Jericho

Jericho is believed by many to be one of the oldest cities in the world, dated back to 7000BC. At the time of Joshua's invasion, it is believed that Jericho occupies between 7-8 acres of land with a double walls surrounding it, the outer is which takes about 30-35minutes to walk round.

It is located about 10mls from the north of the Dead Sea, 4.5mls from the west of the Jordan River and about 250 meters below the sea level. It is a major eastern king's trade route from the North to the south of the Middle Eastern area of the world. Because it is situated on the plains of the Jordan, it is rich in agricultural product and therefore serves as the fruit basket of Canaan.

Evidence of destruction of Jericho: This started about 1868 but proved abortive until Kathleen Kenyon a respected scholar in modern archaeology went to dig Jericho between 1952 and 1958. she carefully dug in measured squares while leaving an untouched strip between each section to allow the stratification to remain visible. Kenyon reported that Jericho had been deserted at the accepted Biblical date of the Conquest. Her result was confirmed in 1995 by radiocarbon tests which dated the destruction to 1562 BCE (plus/minus 38 years) with a certainty of 95%.

From this short account of Jericho that I have told you, you will wonder why this old city and the most fortified was the first to be conquered.

The Conquest of Jericho.

Today we will see that after crossing the Jordan, the battles just started and there is first the Jericho to conquer. This is to prove that these battles are never over until God says is over.

There are three important things to know from today's text as suggested by Warren Wiersbe.

1. Before the battle: know that you fight from victory, not just for victory 1-5.

Every Christian must be assured that whatever battle he/she faces is already won because Jesus Christ has won the battle against the devil and has disarmed him of the most potent weapon of death he holds.

He defeated our spiritual enemy (John 12:310; He defeated Satan over all earthly needs (matt 4:1-11, 12:22-29); on the Cross (Col 2:13-15); and in His resurrection (Eph 1:19-23).

They had the fear of God: The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Because they feared God, they trusted and obeyed him. There could be no other results than victory. I said last week that if we take God for whom and what He is like the people of Old took Him, we would have the same results. But our generation is contrast with theirs. They did not compromise with the enemy (Devil) we do today because we have subjected the interpretation of the Scripture to the mercy of public opinion and human rights because we want the society to approve us, hence we adopt its standards.

But if we know the God we are serving that he is a consuming fire, we would stick to Him no matter what situation because we know that we are more than conqueror through Him who loved us (Rom 8:28).

Our defiance to the world and total obedience to God puts fear of God into our society and will be forced to reckon with our God like the people of Jericho.

God's promise is reiterated in v2 'I have given Jericho into your hands'. He would never go back on His word but only victorious Christians are the ones who know God promises, the spend time with His word, they believe His promises and they reckon (to count as true in their lives) on them.

God instructs Joshua how he was to lead the people to fight the battle ahead of them and he carried out the instructions to the letters. R.T Kendall said that he believes all that is in the Bible so do I even to the commas.

J. Hudson Taylor said that there are three ways to serve God

- i. to make the best plans we can and hope they succeed
- ii. to make our own plans and ask God to bless them
- iii. to ask God for His plans and then do what He tells us to do.

I would suggest the third option and I encourage you to do same. My version of prayer is 'Lord' I want to do what you bless, not bless what I do'.

God's plan for Jericho seemed foolish but He uses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise and the weak things of the world to shame the strong (1Cor. 1:27-28).

There is something interesting about the layout of the procession, the front guards are armed, then the Priests with ram's horns. Then the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the rear guards. They are to march round the city once daily for six days and seven times on the seventh day and then a shout of victory. God Himself marched ahead of them as the commander of His army.

The number 7 is a unique number in Hebrews culture, it signifies completeness, fullness, rest and freedom. Seven priests, seven trumpets seven days and seven rounds of marching.

There are two kinds of trumpets, the silver one is used by the priest to tell people if something is happening and the ram's horns were used primarily for celebration. Therefore this battle is not only physical but spiritual.

2. During the battle: know that you are victorious by faith 6-16, 20

Hebrews 11:30 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. NKJV

Nothing a Christian can do without faith, and with faith in God all things are possible.

Faith is not believing with evidence, God has demonstrated His power to His people from time to time and all they have seen are enough to make their faith in God unflinching.

God is never in a hurry, and His promises are as good as their fulfilment. He ordered the people to march daily without saying a word except the Trumpets sound. Marching for seven days is a test of endurance/patience, not opening their mouths is a test of self discipline or control. Christians too must understand that there are times we need to exercise restraint from speaking and need to endure, persevere and be patient in our walk with God and our daily lives. The Word of God says in Hebrews 6:12 'that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises'. NKJV

God is not a God of cutting corners, he is patient and His things lasts forever, so we must wait for Him, no matter how late we may think, it is the best of times.

The people and their leader's part was total obedience, God's part is to fight the battle and He did it hence victory comes easily to those who obey. If you obey, you labour less but the results are better because it's God that is at work for you.

There were two possibilities of the reaction of people in Jericho. They may mock the Israelites about what they were doing and second they may be frightened because they never saw anything like that. I suppose the latter would be the case because God has promised to put the fear of Israelites in their enemies' hearts.

The walls fell flat after the shout of victory after the seventh round of march and all the soldiers had to do was to rush in and take over the city as God commanded. But Rahab and her family were saved, despite her social status and moral standards, she brought her family to deliverance from annihilation and became an ancestress of our lord Jesus Christ.

No matter what your situation is, you are not beyond God's redemption all you need to do is to put your faith in God through Jesus Christ.

The Jericho to capture today are at work, home, in the family, in our neighbourhood and in our hearts, you can see it everywhere if the Spirit of God lives in you. They are really fortified and probably double walled as well. We will be victorious when we accept the challenge, trust God for victory and obey Him by doing what He commands.

Wiersbe quoted Phillips Brooks as saying that "pray not 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"

3. After Victory: remember to obey God and give Him glory 17-19,21-27

The time to be very alert is after victory because joy can easily lead people to do what is dangerous. Andrew Bonar says that "Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle"

There were four instructions given by Joshua

- i. Devote the City to God: since this is the first conquest in the land of Canaan, it serves as the first fruit hence it belongs to God and everything in it must go to the Lord's treasury.
- ii. Rescue Rahab and her family: when the walls fell, it appears that the one that housed Rahab's house stayed unbroken, hence the two spies went in and rescued Rahab and her family because of her faith in the God of Israel.

- iii. Destroy the people: This is a hard one, why killing the women and children? But God is the righteous judge, he knows the intention of people and He would not allow His people to be polluted by the wicked act of the people living in Canaan. God does not tolerate evil and when people's evil reaches measure He judges them. As it was then, so it is and will be at the end of age. Any rebellion against God is not taken lightly, he will bring justice against anyone and nation that is rebellious.
- iv. Burn the city: This is to put an end to idolatry and wickedness of the City. God is jealous and He will not condone serving other gods. This will be the case at the end of age when all gods and their worshippers and those who reject the good news of Jesus Christ will be defeated and only the people of God will be spared.

Conclusion:

Today the Harringay village gates are firmly shut and it appears that its walls are fortified against the good news of Jesus Christ by unbelief in God of heaven and earth, they believe in self efforts and many in other things that is created by them. Hence the statement 'don't talk to me about God anymore' ' we are not your type' 'all road leads to God' etc.

These walls need be broken down and if we trust God and obey Him, He will give us Harringay. He has done it before. Seven years ago He commanded us to prayer walk this area for seven days. On the last night the second biggest drug baron in UK and his syndicate were all arrested and jailed later on. He can and will do it again. Let us just wait on Him, trust and obey Him and do what he asks us to do and we will see the result.

What about the walls of Jericho in our own lives? The habits that have been firmly locked in our unconscious minds, the arrogance and pride to say sorry when you're wrong, the attitude of trusting own efforts, abilities and wisdom; no expectation of God's intervention in our situations; hearing ourselves rather than God etc.

These walls must be broken and burnt completely and start a new life of freedom in Christ Jesus.

To conquer the Jericho in Harringay and beyond and in our lives; to flatten the wall surrounding the unbelief of people and those in our lives need complete obedience and act according to His instruction.

May God help us.