
“TRUSTING AND OBEYING GOD AS A LIFESTYLE”

STUDY NOTES FOR CARE GROUPS JOSHUA 6

June 15, 2009

“YOU ARE BUT A POOR SOLDIER OF CHRIST IF YOU THINK YOU CAN OVERCOME WITHOUT FIGHTING, AND SUPPOSE YOU CAN HAVE THE CROWN WITHOUT CONFLICT.” John Chrysostom, preacher and martyr (347-407)

Background:

Jericho feared the Israelites so that they sought security behind their walls. They were shut in so that no one could go in or out of the city. This was typical of walled cities that were besieged, but Jericho was especially sure to do so because of their fear of Israel.

God then gave Joshua instructions for how they would defeat the city despite the wall. God began by saying that He had given Jericho with its king and powerful defenders all into Joshua's hand. The people did not, by their deeds or actions, either deserve or earn the defeat of the city. The Israelite men of war were commanded to march around Jericho once each day for six days. This, of course, would be a foolish way to capture a city, except for the fact that God said to do it. Hebrews 11:30 says the walls fell down by faith. The people were required to have enough trust in God to destroy the walls that they were willing to seek the victory according to His will. But this still required obedience.

This did require faith. But it also constituted a miraculous sign. Clearly such a means of causing a wall to fall is impossible by natural law. It could happen only by the supernatural power of God. As such, it would serve the purpose of all miracles. It would confirm the existence and power of God as the true God, and it would confirm to Israel and to the people of the land that Joshua was truly a leader sent from God. The people should then respect him and follow his commands.

As a matter of interest, note that in so marching, Israel must have done “work” on the Sabbath day. They marched once each day for six days then seven times on the seventh day. No matter what day of the week they began, they must have marched on the Sabbath. Of course, this was done by God's express command, so it was not a sin. But we can learn that God never intended the Sabbath to forbid all work of all kinds.

As you look at Joshua 6 discuss why so much detail was given to the conquest of Jericho as compared to other conquests in the land of Canaan, and what can we learn from this account that we can apply to our lives today.

A. The challenge of trusting and obeying. 1-5

Facing Challenges and Circumstances in life---remember as Christians you fight from victory not just for victory.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can a city be 'tightly shut' (6:1)? What is significant about Jericho in the battles to get the Promised Land?
2. Jericho can stand for all those things that we can't get victory over on our own but will eventually destroy us if we don't". Discuss.
3. With whom does the Lord share His plan for overcoming Jericho V 2? What are the alternatives? Why might He do this?
4. What are some authorities in your life that God has put there? Does God also deliberately speak to you through them? Discuss.

B. The command to trust and obey 6:6-19

Remember our victory in life as Christians is by faith. Hebrews 11:30 tells us "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about for seven days." And 1 John 5:4 says "And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith."

Discussion questions

1. Note the details of the plan that God had given to Joshua. How did these plans spur confidence in Joshua?
2. Would anyone else think of such plans? Why might God use these unusual plans to conquer Jericho?

3. It is obvious that God's plan for success are sometimes very different than what we would come up with. Only God knew the weakness of that city and people. In order for us to see God's special plans take effect in our lives, we need to be alert to God's prerogative of using 'different' kinds of plans. Are you concerned more about what people think of you or do you focus more on simple obedience?

C. The consequences of trusting and obeying. V. 20-27

After the victory we are to obey God's commands and give Him the victory.

Discussion questions

1. Name at least two evidences that show that Jericho really fell as stated in scriptures.
2. Why is the historicity of Jericho and its fallen walls so important?
3. What did Joshua do once he got commands from the Lord? What do you do? Go through verses 6-27 and list all the commands that Joshua gave to the people.
4. Why is it that distraction often leads to doubt? How does the instant command and obedience keep us from temptation?

Concluding thought.

"Success has everything to do with accomplishing God's will. For only by seeking and doing His will can we discover and fulfill our life's purpose. And only by doing His will can we bring glory to His Name and blessing to our lives." – source unknown