

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Principles of Breakthrough

SERIES

DATE 11/13/2022

KEY SCRIPTURE Joshua 6:1-21

SYNOPSIS The Battle of Jericho gives us principles to overcome strongholds in our own lives.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ PRINCIPLES OF BREAKTHROUGH

I was considering preaching out of Joshua 6, but wasn't really sure until I heard Upfront and Practical with Paul this week. He talked about the Battle of Jericho and that was a confirming word for me.

Joshua 6:1-21 The Battle of Jericho

Last week we saw the miracle of Israel crossing the Jordan at flood season. Today, they are starting to actually take possession of the Promised Land. Up to this point, the Israelis had not faced war. They had overcome some tremendous obstacles but now they had to face an enemy that had the ability to fight back. And, this first enemy was a stronghold. In Deuteronomy 1:28 after the spies reported back, the people felt overwhelmed, saying "the enemy is too strong, the cities are too fortified, there are even giants in the land."

What are the strongholds in your life that prevent you from walking in all that Christ has for you? Sometimes the strongholds we face seem like too much as well – that recurring temptation that you keep falling for; that bad habit that you can't seem to shake; that rotten attitude that you continually struggle with. Those things can seem insurmountable.

Together, as a Church, the obstacles we face may seem overwhelming. There have been a lot of setbacks over the past few years. How will we overcome? How will we advance from here? God has made some impressive promises to OBC, but how in the world can those possibly be fulfilled?

At the outset, we can see that God does not typically use conventional wisdom to accomplish his purposes. The normal strategy against a stronghold city with walls so thick that homes are built into them would be to lay siege. You starve them out. You build ramps so your troops can go over the walls. You might bombard them with stones. But God's instructions were not conventional. He told them to march around the city once a day for 6 days and each day return to camp. And while you're marching just be quiet while the trumpeters play their horns. Great plan, God. Let's go around in circles!

Sometimes, when facing our strongholds in life, we feel like we are just going around in circles, too. It seems there's no headway; no forward progress. We're just spinning our wheels!

☞ The key is to listen to God's instructions. **Listen to the Lord**. Joshua 6:2: Joshua listened when God told him what to do. What is God saying to you? Whose voice do you listen to?

☞ **Don't listen to the enemy**. Don't even listen to your so-called friends that say you will never be victorious. Listen to the word of the Lord. It may seem all uphill; it may seem that victory is never coming, but don't look at the circumstances; **don't listen to the nay-sayers**. Listen to the Lord. Here's what he says:

Romans 8:37



we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

1 Corinthians 15:57

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If God says we are winners and the victory is coming, then we listen and trust him.

☞ **Look with Faith**

Joshua 6:2

Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.

This was actually a confirmation of what God had said previously in Deuteronomy 1:21. The original word was given a long time ago, but then was reaffirmed here for Joshua. That's the way God works. He makes a promise, then he reaffirms his promise, and he will fulfill his ☞ promise. So, we **trust him**.

2 Corinthians 5:7

We live by faith, not by sight.

Faith sees with the eyes of God. Doubt sees with the eyes of man.

☞ **Faith always sees the opportunities. Doubt always sees the obstacles.**

Faith brings a good report. Doubt brings a bad report.

Faith produces a positive outlook and peace. Doubt leads to a negative outlook and panic.

Don't let doubters destroy your devotion (even your brothers). And, if you tend to be a doubter, then you need to keep quiet. The people in Joshua's day were to be silent.

☞ **Silence the Flesh**

Joshua 6:10: Joshua told the people to be quiet! Not to say a peep! Why? Because he knew their history! A history of griping and complaining! We need to stop speaking doubt and unbelief into our situations! Don't get into dialogue with the enemy.

☞ **Watch what you say.** Eve had a conversation with the serpent and look what happened.

Every single thought that the devil plants into your mind needs to be cast down.

☞ Get **control over your thoughts!** 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. When you have thoughts that are not lining up to the Word of God, you need to cast those thoughts down with the Word of God!

Notice, it was okay for the trumpeters to play, but the people were to remain silent. Praising the Lord is always good, but griping, complaining, and doubting are not.

☞ **Seek the Lord**

Joshua 6:8-9: The ark of the covenant was given a central place in this story. The ark represents the presence of God. He must have a central place in our story as well. We must **welcome his**

☞ **presence and give our attention to him.** Last week, to cross the Jordan, the people were to watch for the ark and they were to follow as it led.



Colossians 3:1-2 tells us to set our hearts and minds on things above. If we focus on the stronghold we face, we will be overwhelmed before we even begin to fight. But if we focus on the Lord, he will give us the victory. So, we focus on the Lord and we simply follow him.

☞ **Step out in Obedience**

It is likely that only the Lord and Joshua knew what was really going on. The rest of the Israelis only followed orders. They went on the word of Joshua, and Joshua is a type of Jesus Christ for ☞ the church of today. **He leads, we follow, no matter where or for how long.**

For six days the Israelis marched around that city and for all of their effort and energy spent, it seemed that nothing was happening. The city remained standing before them as strong as ever. 6 trips around the walls in the hot sun and dust, yet nothing changed except they got tired and wondered if God would really come through for them.

Then, on the seventh day, 6 more times around. A total of 12 trips around the wall and it was still there. How many times have you faced down that same temptation; that same enemy, and he is still there? Every day it was the same thing. I wonder if the army didn't feel like they were in a rut? I wonder if they questioned, "Is this all there is? What else? How many times are we going to have to go around again before God does something? I'm tired of this walking around in circles." But Joshua said, "No! Be quiet, keep on marching."

Does your life seem that way? "God, I have been this way so many times before. I need a change. I've failed this temptation; failed this test so many times. Please help me to overcome it." And all you hear is, "The Righteous shall walk by faith." Jesus says **just keep walking**. The ☞ victory will come in due time if you **don't give up**.

Walk in obedience and the day of victory will come. God's promises will be fulfilled. Earlier, we talked about silencing the flesh. Now, we will see that when the time is right, we lift up our voices in praise and victory.

☞ **Rally together** with a war cry. The purpose of a war cry was to stir up yourself and your compatriots all while intimidating the enemy. (*weight training*)

Joshua 6:16-17: Joshua finally says, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!"

I think for us, this can be a literal shout. It can be joyful song of praise. It can also be a testimony of God at work. Revelation 12:11 says, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." When I see and hear of God at work in people's ☞ lives it fires me up. How about you? **Your testimony is a war cry. It rallies the troops and repels the enemy.**

Joshua says to shout. I can imagine the army thinking, "What, we aren't going to attack? Are we just going to shout them to death?" But the command was to shout and shout they did – a song of praise, a shout of victory.



Psalms 47:5-6 NKJV

5 God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

☞ **When we testify and sing and shout the praises of the Lord, he rises up in victory.** In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat put singers at the front of the army, singing and shouting God's praises. Then God defeated the enemy. In 1 Samuel 17, after David defeated Goliath, the rest of the army surged forward with a shout and pursued the enemy.

Have you seen a breakthrough? Have you had a victory? Then sound the war cry. Share your story. Encourage the troops. Give the Lord glory.

In the Battle of Jericho, the army gave a shout and the walls fell! Since most of the defenders of the city were on that wall, it is likely that there were only few of them left after the wall fell. Most lay buried or dead in the rubble. Jericho was defeated without even so much as a single arrow or siege ramp from the army of Israel. Then all they had to do was go straight in.

☞ **Receive the Promise**

Joshua 6:20-21: they charged straight in and took the city. This was on 7th day, after 7 times around, with 7 Priests, 7 Trumpets, and 7 Blasts. The number 7 is predominant in this last day of walking around the city and the events leading up to the walls of Jericho falling down. 7 = divine perfection, fullness, completeness. That number seven means that God's plan for victory was complete.

☞ When God's plan is complete, **nothing can stop his promises from coming through.**

Is this your seventh time around? Will it be the next one? Like the Israelis, when the day comes that God tears down those walls that are keeping you from obtaining the promise, you will walk over them like they were not there.

God will give you the victory if you'll just keep listening, looking, seeking him and stepping out in faith. Rally yourself and the troops with your testimony and praises, and your wall will come tumbling down. You will receive the promise.

Do you want to turn your situation around? Do you want to see the walls of defeat, the walls of insufficiency, the walls of depression, doubt, and unbelief crumble in your life? Start praising God!

☞ **(start video now)** Shout with a voice of triumph & receive the promise! **The Lion & the Lamb**