



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Joshua 5:13 – 6:27

KEY POINT: God uses hard things for the good and growth of those who step out in faith.

FOR LEADERS

- **Attendance!:** We're asking ALL of our Communities to take attendance on Emergence Connect this season. Please be sure to make a note of who attended your group this week, and input that on your weekly event in EConnect! If you need any assistance with this we're happy to help!

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Communities Video:** Watch this week's community extras video!
- [2] Icebreaker:** What's your favorite worship song we sing together as a Church?
- [3] Opener:** What was one takeaway you had from the sermon this week?

FOR US OR OUR ADVERSARIES?

Ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 5:13-15.

When confronted by the man with his sword drawn, who reveals himself to be the commander of the army of the LORD, Joshua asks him, essentially, "Whose side are you on?"

- [1]** Do you find the commander's answer surprising? What do you think his response reveals to us about God?
- [2]** Given the Commander's response, do you think it's wrong to claim that God is "for us?" Why or why not?
- [3]** Have you ever experienced people attempting to rally God to their own side of a conflict?
- [4]** How can we keep ourselves in check to guard against always presuming that God is on our side?

COMING INTO OUR OWN FAITH

Ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 6:1-7.

- [5]** Note that the Lord's words in verse 2 are in past tense - "See, *I have given* Jericho into your hand"? Do you think this is significant? Why do you think the Lord spoke this way?
- [6]** What do you think the purpose was for this elaborate ritual? Why didn't the Israelites simply attack the city?

Ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 6:8-21.

In the sermon, Ryan said, "When it comes to faith, you're not the victim of anyone." By this, he means that we are all responsible for our own belief or unbelief, rather than a produce or "victim" of the environment around us. He went on to explain how this generation of the Israelites had an extreme trust in God, as opposed to the unbelief their parents' had in the wilderness. They did "just as Joshua had commanded the people" (6:8).



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- [7]** How do you personally relate to this in your own walk of faith? Were your parents believers or unbelievers? Explain.
- [8]** As children, we tend to simply go along with whatever our parents believe or don't believe. At what point in life did your faith (or perhaps your unbelief) become your own, and not just your parents'?
- [9]** Have you ever been tempted to blame other people (e.g., parents, mentors, churches) for your own lack of faithfulness? Explain.
- [10]** Take note of how much this text devotes to describing the people's preparation and obedience vs the amount of space actually dedicated to the battle. What do you think we can learn from this?

DESTROYING STRONGHOLDS

Ask for a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 10:1-6.

- [11]** What do you think it means to “wage war according to the flesh”?
- [12]** What are the “strongholds” Paul is talking about in verse 4?
- [13]** What are some “arguments” or “lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God” that you’ve personally had to face?
- [14]** Practically, how are we supposed to “wage war” against these strongholds?

WALLED UP AND WELCOMED

Ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 6:22-27.

The story of Jericho is an account of both incredible judgment and incredible grace. There is a contrast here between the acceptance of Rahab, on the one hand, and the people walled up behind their stronghold in the city of Jericho. Ryan noted how Matthew 1:5 records Rahab as the wife of Salmon and the father of Boaz (from the story of Ruth), placing her into the lineage of Jesus. This is an incredible picture of God’s welcoming, redeeming love, wherein a prostitute who is not even an Israelite becomes so integrated into the people of God that her own family line eventually produces the Messiah.

- [15]** When has your life looked like the inhabitants of Jericho, stubbornly hiding behind strongholds? What were (or are?) those strongholds, and what does it look like for you, practically to walk out of your own walled city and into God’s favor and mercy?

PRAYER

- [1]** Pray that you would take seriously both the justice and love of God.
- [2]** Pray that the Lord would reveal strongholds in your own life.