

Joshua Series #3
“Faith’s Object” — Joshua 5:13-6:5

I. INTRODUCTION

A. RR

1. Have faith in God
2. Even prayer that removes mountains is prayer that has first understood it is God’s will to move that mountain
3. Faith is not some movement of the imagination into reality
4. It is a determined trust in God

B. Today — Faith’s Proper Object

II. TEXT

A. 5:13-15

13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

14 So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

15 Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

1. They’ve crossed Jordan
 - a. great miracle
 - b. but out of frying pan and into fire
 - c. there in front of them is city of Jericho; a city with a rep.
2. Canaan’s eastern fortress
 - a. set to protect Canaan from attacks from the east
 - b. a formidable obstacle
 - c. had known at least 2 previous destructions,
 - d. so rebuilt to be impregnable
 - e. archaeologists have discovered . . .
 - 2 immense brick walls
 - outer wall 6’ thick by 30’ high
 - 15’ inside that, another wall, 12’ thick and also 30’ high

- inner city became too crowded, so started building homes in between walls
 - added tremendous strength to the wall; in effect, making it some 33' thick by 30' high
- f. there was no way over or through the walls of Jericho
3. Joshua knew taking Jericho was the key to taking the whole land
 4. But it seemed an impossible task
 5. So one day, he goes for a stroll
 - a. leaves the camp of Israel at Gilgal
 - b. makes his solitary way out of the camp
 - c. walks out on the plain that surrounds Jericho
 - d. [picture this] sits down on a rock and stares at the city
 - starts calculating how to take the city
 - wall too high for ladders
 - maybe grappling hooks and ropes
 - battering rams won't work
 - assailing the gates won't work
 - // too well fortified
 - // anyone who attacks it will get cut down
 - lay siege?
 - // too well supplied; well inside city
 - // they could outlast a siege
 6. As we'll see later in our study of Joshua, he was a brilliant military strategist
 7. But plain and simple, Jericho was too great a barrier for Israel to overcome
 8. So Joshua hangs his head in frustration
 9. But when he looks up again, he sees something that startles him
 - a. there before him stands a man —
 - b. with a drawn sword in his hand
 10. Joshua's challenge is immediate —
 - a. "Are you for us or against us?"
 - b. Joshua's one concern is Jericho
 - c. he is pre-occupied with battle and the immensity of the problem Jericho presents
 - d. his mind is running in terms of strategy and making plans for war
 - e. so when he is confronted with a stranger who is obviously ready for battle too, all Joshua wants to

- know is —
- f. “Whose side are you on — ours or Jericho’s?”
11. But Joshua jumps the gun here
 - a. I’m sure some of you caught it too
 - b. before he asks whose side this stranger is on —
 - c. wouldn’t it be wiser to ask who he is?
 12. Indeed, who is this stranger?
 - a. this is none other than Jesus Christ
 - b. He appeared at several points in the OT, and this is one of them
 - c. how do we know?
 - take a look at the evidence
 - Joshua falls at his feet and worships Him
 - Joshua calls him “Lord”
 - he tells Joshua to take his sandals off because it was holy ground: that means Joshua was in God’s presence
 - this is the same command given to Moses as he stood before God at the burning bush
 - an to clinch it, in ch. 6, He is called Jehovah
 - this man was none other than Jesus Christ
 - we call these appearances of Jesus in the OT “Christophanies”
 13. Notice his response to Joshua’s challenge
 - a. Joshua asked whose side he was on, Israel’s or Jericho’s
 - b. Jesus’ response is = “No!”
 - c. in other words, Jesus is saying, “Joshua, your question is all wrong.”
 - d. “It isn’t a case of whose side I’m on —
 - e. I am the Commander of the army of the LORD.
 - f. The question, Joshua, is whose side are YOU on?”
 14. He’s letting Joshua know who’s in charge
 - a. Joshua wasn’t the commander of the Lord
 - b. He was, and Joshua’s call was to obey Him
 15. When Joshua realized who it was, he fell on his face in worship
 16. Then he humbled himself and said, “What more does my Lord say to His servant?”
 17. Jesus then proceeded to give Joshua the battle plan for taking Jericho . . .

B. 6:1-5

- 6:1** Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.
- 2** And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.
- 3** "You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days.
- 4** "And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.
- 5** "It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."

1. Joshua had gone out that day to make HIS plans of attack
2. But the taking of Jericho was not to be by brilliant military strategy
3. Israel's first victory was to be one of complete trust in God
4. Let's face it, marching around a city 7 times has nothing at all to do with conquering it
5. But it was what God told them to do
6. And the reason why was so that they would realize HE was the source of their victory - not their military prowess
7. But the whole thing began with Joshua meeting this man on the plains of Jericho

8. There is a great lesson of faith in all this for us
9. The lesson we learn is the proper object of faith
10. If Jesus had not met Joshua, Joshua would have devised some plan of attack
 - a. and then he would have prayed and asked God to bless his plans
 - b. the armies of Israel would have gone into battle and probably won
 - c. but it would have seemed that the victory was all theirs
 - d. all the glory would go to the fighting men and

- e. Joshua's great leadership and that is not at all what God intended for Israel to learn at Jericho
 - f. Jericho was ordained by God to teach His people about what it means to walk in faith
 - g. if Israel had followed Joshua's plan they would have learned nothing - not one thing, about faith
11. What Israel learned, and what you and I learn about faith from Jericho is this . . .
- a. faith's object is not our own plans, desires, dreams, hopes, and aspirations
 - b. faith's true object is nothing less than God Himself
 - c. faith is not projecting our plans and desires on God
 - d. it's a patient waiting for God to reveal His will and then stepping out in prompt obedience to it
 - e. I say it again = Faith's true object is God!

C. Fellowship

1. Many years ago, a friend gave me a little book that changed my life
2. My walk with the Lord had always been a struggle
 - a. just seemed to be a lot of loose ends to life
 - b. I seemed to just be missing some central truth that made the Christian life come together
 - c. that little book brought it all together for me
 - d. it was called, *God: Fellowship or Frustration* by Randy Morich
 - e. the author shared how the whole goal of life is fellowship with God
 - f. and since that is the supreme goal of life, and because God is sovereign over creation, everything that happens in our lives is purposed by God to deepen our fellowship and intimacy with Him
 - g. he shared how when we are in a trial, the first reaction is to try to get out of it as fast as we can, any way we can
 - h. the problem is this; if we simply have it in our minds to get out of a trial, then we never learn the lesson of fellowship with God He allowed the trial into our lives to teach us

- i. so, we're just going to find ourselves back in the same trial later
 - j. because God is relentless in conforming us to the image of Christ and drawing us closer to Himself
- 3. I'm going to share a great secret with you
 - a. this is better than any of those personality dynamic programs you see late at night on infomercials
 - b. and this morning, we running a special
 - c. what I'm going to share with you doesn't cost \$49.95 plus shipping and handling
 - d. what I have to share with you is free because the price has already been paid
- 4. The secret is this = rather than looking for the quickest and easiest way out of a trial, look to God, and wait till He reveals Himself
- 5. He is always the best way out of trouble
- 6. When we are trapped in trouble, perplexed by a problem, caught in the teeth of a trial, the tendency is to, like Joshua, say to God, "Whose side are you on anyway?"
- 7. God says, "No! Whose side are YOU on? Your own, or mine? Will you live by your own desires or by mine?"
- 8. Look at the way God told Israel to take Jericho
 - a. they were to put the ark of the covenant, which was the symbol of God's presence, right in the middle of the army
 - God was to be in the very center of their lives
 - they were to walk with Him
 - b. then they were to walk around the city for seven days
 - though it appeared as though nothing was happening, they were to be faithful to walk around the city
 - even so, we must wait patiently on God
 - walking with Him even when we don't see what He's doing
 - c. the only sound they were to make was the sound of the priests blowing their trumpets
 - the trumpets were usually used to call the people to worship
 - that is what they were doing as they strode around the city, silently worshipping the

Lord

- d. they people were not to speak at all
 - they were to be silent before the Lord
 - not telling him what to do
 - but waiting for Him to reveal Himself
- e. then on the last day and the last trip round the city, they all shouted together
 - what was this but a joyous cry of victory
 - even before their physical eyes saw the walls fall
 - the eye of faith saw it

D. False Vs. True Faith

1. Many people think faith is merely an exercise of the mind
 - a. a person projects their desires into the realm of the imagination, concentrates,
 - b. and by sheer will power, brings that thing into reality
2. In fact, there is a false view of faith being taught in many churches today that says we are to have faith in our faith
3. faith is made out to be a spiritual force that exists independently of God,
4. This teaching says that God is bound by faith,
 - a. just as you and I are bound by the law of gravity
 - b. so, they say, God is bound by the law of faith
5. God is reduced to the role of a cosmic bellhop who jumps to do the bidding of whoever rings the bell of faith
6. This teaching, so prevalent today, would rewrite the story of Joshua and Jericho
 - a. Joshua would go out, sit down, and visualize the walls falling down
 - b. then he would demand that God help them
 - c. but that is not the way it happened
 - d. and that is not the way of faith
7. Joshua came to realize his plans and understanding were insufficient —
8. And that God had a better way — a way in which He would get all the glory and Israel would get all the blessing
9. The way was faith in God

III. CONCLUSION

A. Your Jericho

1. What Jericho lies before you?

2. What trial, trouble, problem, or challenge do you find yourself facing?
3. Don't merely seek the way out
4. Seek God!
 - a. wait patiently for His revelation
 - b. Faith's object is Him