

Title: Christ is our Captain

Text: Joshua 5: 13-15

Date: October 25 & October 27, 2013

Place: Friday Night Fellowship; SGBC, New Jersey

You and I who are chosen, redeemed and regenerated by our triune God, through Christ Jesus have been delivered from sin and death and enlisted in Christ's army. By his work of grace in our hearts he has made each of us spiritual men of war. Christ is our Captain. We are his foot soldiers.

Ours is a true holy war. The end purpose of this war is the conquering of all Christ's enemies. Those who are enemies in their minds by wicked works, who God has chosen and Christ has successfully redeemed by his blood, shall be quickened and given eternal life through faith in Christ. And those enemies who reject him, shall be made to bow and declare him Lord of lords and King and kings then cast out into eternal darkness forever. Every enemy shall be made his footstool.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Our charge is simply this: believe on Christ, love one another, and declare Christ's person and mighty works. Our one weapon in this warfare is the gospel of Christ and him crucified—through Christ our Captain this weapon is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds—by the gospel trumpet, Christ made Jericho's walls fall flat. We are to preach his gospel, baptize those he calls out and command them to do all things Christ has commanded us. That is our single charge.

This is a warfare unlike any other. Our enemies are not merely men but the wiles of the devil, principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places. And we, the soldiers, have absolutely no strength of ourselves for this warfare. Yet, it is certain that we shall be victorious. The reason victory is certain is our subject: it is because **Christ is Our Captain**

Joshua 5: 13: And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14: And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15: And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

I. FIRST, WE NEED TO BE WATCHFUL BECAUSE OUR ENEMY IS TOO MIGHTY FOR US—Joshua 5: 13: And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho;

After Christ made the whole camp obedient, circumcised them, made them partake of Christ our Passover, while his brethren were resting, Joshua, made his rounds in the night—watching. May God give us grace to be watchmen. Christ tells us to always be “watching.”

Christ's pastors are watchmen

Habakkuk 2: 1: I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. 2: And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. 3: For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Every saint is to be watching.

1 Thessalonians 5: 5: Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober...8:...putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Mark 14:38: Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

We need to be watchful because our enemy is great. Joshua drew near to Jericho. Jericho was the first city Joshua and his brethren would do battle against. Why? God had one elect child in that whole city, named Rahab. She must be delivered out.

Every chosen child of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ shall be called out of darkness into Christ's marvelous light—In Isaac SHALL thy seed BE CALLED. In the old world—he called out Noah. In Ur he called out Abraham. In Sodom—he called out Lot. In Jericho—he called out Rahab. God is not willing that any of his redeemed sheep shall perish but that all should to come repentance—therefore count that the longsuffering of our God is salvation.

But Jericho's walls were high and its gates were closed up tight to prevent attack from God's people—**Joshua 6: 1: Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.**

Be sure to get the picture: God's elect children who are not yet delivered are like Rahab, locked behind the gates of hell. The people of Jericho heard that the LORD delivered the children of Israel over Jordan but rather than seek mercy from God, they shut up their gates tight in an attempt to keep God out.

Dead sinners hear the gospel, but instead of seeking God's mercy, they shut up the gates of their ears and the gates of their heart. Satan and the hosts of hell surround them using family, friend and foe try to keep those gates shut. He speaks contrary to the gospel, speaks evil of Christ's preacher, turns them against his people, urges them to go to another church, the "synagogue of Satan"—which claims to be Christ's church. And the gates of hell are locked down tight like Jericho's were.

Picture Joshua astonished as he gazes up at those mighty walls and at those locked gates. How would they ever gain a victory over such a fortress? Brethren, our hearts ache for our sons and daughters, for our friends and loved ones. How shall you and I ever gain the victory?

Christ promises, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against [his church.] (Mt 16: 18) If Christ has just one of elect child held tight behind such gates, be assured, his church—with his gospel—shall prevail to penetrate those gates—for Christ said, 'All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.'--"to fill all in all!" "He shall not fail till he hath set judgment in the earth."

II. WE ARE SURE OF VICTORY BECAUSE WHERE CHRIST HAS ASSEMBLED HIS PEOPLE, CHRIST IS PRESENT—Joshua 5: 13: [Joshua] lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him;

This Man is a pre-incarnate appearance of the GodMan, Mediator, Christ Jesus. This man speaks in Joshua 6: 2: "And **the LORD said.**" This is Jehovah-God in the form of a Man—the GodMan. It is obvious from the way Joshua worshipped him and called him Lord and owned himself to be his servant—if this would have been an angel he would have told Joshua not to worship him as the angel said to John in the book of the Revelation. Again, it is obvious because the ground on which Christ stood was holy by his presence. And it is obvious by his title, the Captain of the Lord's host.

Our Lord Jesus promises he will be present where he has assembled his people just as he was with Joshua—not in bodily form as Joshua saw, but he is with us. His churches are described as the seven golden candlesticks and Christ is he,

Revelation 2: 1:..who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

When Christ sent forth his church to preach the gospel he said,

Matthew 28: 20:...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Christ in our midst was Paul's argument for how we ought to behave ourselves toward one another and in this world in Philippians.

Philippians 2: 12: Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Brethren, Christ is here! If we could see him standing here, would we be flippant and careless OR fearful and reverent? When faith beholds Christ's presence, he makes us fearful and reverent—Joshua fell at his feet and worshipped him.

Philippians 2: 14: Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

If we could see Christ standing here, would we murmur about our life? When faith beholds his presence, the holes in his hands, feet and side stops our complaining about our suffering—"is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?" If we could see him standing here, would we dispute with men as we teach the gospel OR would we defer to Christ? Would we dispute with fellow brethren? When faith sees the Master at hand we trust he is able to teach his child effectually and to make him stand.

Philippians 3: 15: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

If we could see Christ standing beside us in our day-to-day, would we be like the crooked world OR shine as lights? When faith beholds him at our right hand, his love constrains us.

Philippians 2: 16: Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

If we could see Christ with us, would we be fearful of the gates of hell OR would we **be bold** to hold forth the word of life? When faith beholds his presence, Christ is our boldness to speak boldly of him.

Go back to our text and notice this detail—**Joshua 5: 13:...behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand:** The word of God—the gospel we proclaim—is the only sword in this warfare.

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

But the power is not of us, the Power is of God, **of Christ with his sword drawn in his hand.**

Zechriah 4:6:...This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

We who believe, have experienced his power so we faint not to wait on that power. Paul said, "AS we have received mercy, we faint not;" (2 Cor 4: 1) How did Paul receive mercy?

2 Corinthians 4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So as he received mercy by that power so the same power made Paul

2 Corinthians 4: 1: faint not, 2: But...renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God....7: we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

The preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness to them that perish but it is the Power of God unto salvation unto us who are called—BECAUSE Christ is that Power to us who are called.

1 Corinthians 1:24:...unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Brethren, have you experienced the power of Christ with the sword in his hand? Then we know we shall be given the victory in this holy war—over our own sinful flesh and all our enemies—by the Lord Jesus Christ himself working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. So we must feed upon his word ourselves that we be strong for this warfare.

III. WE SHALL BE VICTORIOUS BECAUSE OF WHO CHRIST IS—v13: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.

How this was a relief to Joshua in so many ways—and a relief to us.

First, Christ is not for our adversaries but for YOU who are the Lord's host. Believer, pause and let this sink in—CHRIST is for YOU! Christ is present with you, Christ is for you, Christ is against your adversaries.

Romans 8:31: What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Secondly, Christ is come as Captain over the LORD's host. God has people that no man can number—a **host**. God our Father elected each member of that host unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. We are HIS—THE LORD'S HOST.

God the Father entrusted his host to Christ our Captain to save us—**“as captain of the host of the LORD is Christ now come.”** Christ came, took our flesh and took our place as the holy one under the law—fulfilling it and establishing it in perfect obedience for each elect child. Christ came, took our sins and took our place under the fierce anger of divine justice—justifying us from all our sins by his death.

Now, Christ has come, filled us with his Spirit making us one with him. He is our Head, we his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all. This is a great mystery, but we are members of body of his flesh and of his bones.

Hebrews 2: 10: For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the CAPTAIN of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11: For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

So now he is come in our presence to finish the Father's will. And what is that will?

John 6: 39: And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Brethren, has our Captain failed in any one of these works he has already wrought for us? Neither shall he fail to keep us. Other sheep he has that are lost. Neither shall he fail to use his people to herald his gospel and call them out.

Another reason, this was such a relief to Joshua is because Joshua did not have the burden of being the Captain over this army. The government was not on Joshua's shoulders, it was on the shoulders of Joshua's Captain—Christ Jesus. The same word translated “captain” is translated “prince” in Isaiah 9: 6.

Isaiah 9:6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Brethren, how thankful I am for this! You and I are called to be witnesses of Christ. But no man is the captain—Christ only. The government is not on my shoulder or yours—it on Christ's shoulder. You don't need a man to counsel you—Christ is the only Counselor—go to him. You don't need a man to stand between you and God—you have Christ the Mediator and access to his throne of grace personally—go to him. John was given a vision of Christ as Captain which shows us why we shall be victorious with Christ our Captain.

Revelations 19: 11: And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12: His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13: And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14: And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15: And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16: And he hath on his vesture and on his high a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Now, let me end by asking you this: what will a sinner do, when Christ our Captain enters his heart and makes his presence known within?

Illustration: Art, you were in the military. When the commanding officer entered your presence what did you do?

IV. WE SHALL BE VICTORIOUS BECAUSE CHRIST PREVAILS IN THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE—Joshua 5: 14: And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship.

God chose to save through the preaching of the gospel so that “no flesh should glory in his presence”. When Christ our Captain makes his presence known—his power humbles his child to fall on our face and cease glorying in ourselves. Likewise, God chose to save through this one weapon that in his presence “those who glory shall glory only in the Lord.” When Christ makes his presence known his child does just that.

This is why the gospel is our only weapon in this warfare, why we preach Christ and him crucified, why we do not craft our words, why we do not turn to other means. This is why we also preach Christ to reprove, exhort, and rebuke. This is why we do not lord over men and be masters over men to discipline them but instead preach Christ and him crucified.

Because when Christ makes his presence known he makes his child willing to obey—**Joshua 5: 14:...and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?**

Illustration: Art, the commanding officer tells you to clean your gun and shine your belt buckle. A gun seems important so you clean your gun. But your belt buckle doesn't seem all that important so you don't bother to shine it. What will the commanding officer say? Why? It is not a matter of what seems more important or

less important. Nor does it matter of what we think. It is that he is the commanding officer and he commanded it.

So every word Christ our Captain commands is important—not because we deem it as major or minor, simply because our Commander-in-chief commands it.

1 John 3:23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

Mark 16: 15: And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

But when he makes his presence known, he makes his child obey his commands—**Joshua 5: 15 And the captain of the LORD’S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.**

This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said,

1 Corinthians 2: 5: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, **but in the power of God.**

Application:

- Believe on Christ—Christ is salvation.
- Love your brethren—as Christ loved you.
- Preach Christ and him crucified.
- Do all in the strength of Christ. He is our only Strength, the Captain of our salvation.

Ephesians 6: 10: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...14: Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, [Christ] and having on the breastplate of righteousness; [Christ] 15: And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; [Christ] 16: Above all, taking the shield of faith,[Christ] wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17: And take the helmet of salvation, [Christ] and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: [Christ] 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

We shall be victorious because Christ is our Captain and he is in our midst.

Amen!