

Title: Overcoming the World

Text: Joshua 6: 1-20

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Brethren, we face the world as Joshua and the children of Israel faced Jericho. Jericho is a picture of this world. It was devoted to destruction by God.

Yet, God had an elect child in that city—Rahab the harlot—who God would deliver out, along with her family. Likewise, God has an elect remnant in this world—the family of God—who God shall deliver out of this world.

Christ our Head assembles his church and promises to give us the victory as he did Joshua and the children of Israel.

Joshua 6: 2: And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

But God's ways are not our ways. In the wisdom of God, God chose the foolishness of preaching to call out his lost sheep.

After promising Israel the victory, Christ sent them forth in a manner that typifies preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Joshua 6: 3: And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. 4: And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. 5: And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

They were to go forth carrying the Ark as seven priests blew trumpets made of ram's horns—it typifies Christ and him crucified preached by you and I who Christ has made priests unto God. We are to compass this world preaching the gospel just as they were to go around Jericho.

Isaiah 58: 1: Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions.

Jeremiah 6: 17: I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the Trumpet.

Joel 2: 10: Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain.

1 Corinthians 14: If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle.

The Ark pictures Christ who we preach. It was made of shittim wood—God's elect were men so Christ became a Man to fulfill the law and put away our sins. But the Ark was overlaid, within and without, with pure gold—Christ is God. Therefore, he accomplished eternal redemption for us. In the Ark was the law of the covenant—Christ said, "Thy law is within my heart." Christ fulfilled the law, the everlasting covenant of grace, for his people as our Head and Representative and Substitute. On top of the Ark was the mercy seat—Christ is our seat of mercy—Christ is the one in whom the sins of God's elect have been propitiated. He is our Propitiation. Justice is satisfied by Christ, God is just and the Justifier of all those he shall bring to believe on Christ.

The armed guard going before them and in rear-ward pictured Christ. We have seen how he promises to be with us always—to go before us and to be our reward.

Seven is the number of perfection—the number of us here in this body is a perfect number because Christ has “added to the church daily such as should be saved.” And we are sounding forth a perfect work finished by our perfect Redeemer, Christ Jesus.

They used rams horns as opposed to beautiful silver trumpets. It expresses both the “foolishness of preaching” as well as the “nothingness” of us who God uses to spread this gospel. Can’t you picture those in Jericho laughing those first few days, when they saw Israel marching around Jericho blowing those rams horns!

1 Corinthians 1: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Yet, eventually the sound of that trumpet did two things: it struck fear in the hearts of the enemy but it gave confidence and victory to the Lord’s people—that is what our gospel trumpet does.

2 Corinthians 2:16: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.

And there is another reason God chose the foolishness of preaching to call out his people.

Proposition: God uses the means of the gospel not only to call out his sheep but to teach us, who he has already called, to believe more upon Christ who shall give us this victory through faith in him.

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I. THE WAY IN WHICH SINNERS OVERCOME THIS WORLD IS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST WHICH IS PROVEN BY OBEYING CHRIST’S COMMANDS.

Christ said, “SEE, I have given Jericho into thine hand.” Salvation is the gift of God through Christ. Faith is the gift of God. 1. The only way to “see” that Christ had given Jericho into their hand was by faith, not by carnal sight. Jericho was one of the cities of which the spies said, “The cities were walled and very great” (Nu 13:28). To the carnal spies, who had no faith, they said there is no way, they are walled up to heaven (Deuteronomy 1:28). Now Christ tells them he has given them that city. They believed Christ. And to prove their faith Christ commanded them to take this city by marching around it and blowing a trumpet. True faith will be proven by trial.

Proving Faith

Crossing the Jordan required faith. But God did not work that miracle until after God proved they believed him. They proved they believed God by doing what Christ commanded: the priests took up the ark and stood in the brink of the river. Then Christ made the waters go back. But not until faith had been proven, not until they stood in the brink of the water. (Jos 3:8, 15-16)

So it was here at Jericho: the Captain of the Lord’s host declared he had given the city into their hand. But Christ did not simply make the walls fall. Christ did not make the kings and his men of valor to give up. Christ people would first have to go forth with the Ark, blowing the trumpets.

So it is with us brethren.

James 2:26: For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

But they are not the works the vainly religious world considers works. Christ only calls on his people to do what is an utter impossibility for us to do. We profess we believe on Christ because he has called us by his gospel. Our

faith is proven by preaching this same gospel to dead, walled-up, fortified sinners, using no other means—that is a work which proves faith to be genuine faith: no gimmicks, no scheming, no high-pressure tactics, no flesh-pleasing sales pitches. We simply preach the gospel, believing that Christ will give life where there is none, that Christ will make the walls fall down, that Christ will make his child willing to be delivered on God’s terms. This is one way, Christ proves that his child has been given true faith, by sending us forth to simply do as he commands, “Believe Christ and preach him!” And because the gospel is so vital to our brethren, continuing to support his gospel is the chief way we love our brethren.

The Preacher Proven

So Joshua proved he believed Christ, first of all, by preaching to his brethren what Christ commanded—**Joshua 6: 6: And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them,...** Joshua declared to his brethren exactly what Christ told him.

Picture that scene. The priests and the people are looking at this mighty fortress. Waiting for Joshua to tell them what kind of tactical surprise they will use: will we tunnel under the walls? Starve them out? Make a Trojan horse?

Joshua did not fear that the congregation would persecute him. Nor did he ask the priests and elders to give their opinions. Christ called Joshua to lead them. So Joshua led Christ’s people bowing to Christ, rather than by bowing to the opinions of his brethren.

Why do preachers not declare that sinners are dead in trespasses and in sins? Why do they preach moral fables instead of preaching Christ? Why do they bow and scrape before men? Paul said, “They constrain you to”—to morality, to law, to many wonderful works—“only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.” (Gal 6: 12) It is because they themselves do not believe Christ. They fear men rather than God.

Joshua believed Christ; Joshua was a man humbled before God. He proved it by preaching what Christ commanded, boldly leading those souls Christ entrusted to his care.

Brethren, when God’s preacher bows to Christ rather than men, obstinate men get mad and accuse him of not being humble. But that is true humility in a messenger of God. That is why Moses was called the meekness man on the earth.

Very few people believe that preaching the gospel is a work of faith. But to preach truth when men make it obvious they hate the gospel—when you continually get the stink eye, to continue consistent as you watch money walk away and numbers diminish, takes faith in Christ, sustained by Christ, to do so.

The Congregation Proven

It takes faith in each member of the congregation as well. And we see that here. Those to whom Joshua preached, believed Christ and they proved it the same way—by obeying the word delivered to them—**Joshua 6: 8: And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9: And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. 10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.**

They did not doubt Joshua got his word from Christ. They proved they believed because they did not object or offer their opinions. One didn’t complain about his task and desire the others job, didn’t doubt Christ’s ability to do as he said. They believed Christ and proved it by each doing what Christ commanded for them each to do, without a word, without murmuring, in reverence to God.

How do we know what God would have us to do in the cause of Christ? By what he has given us to do. When God wills for you to do more then he will open the door and give you more to do.

II. WE OVERCOME THIS WORLD BY PERSEVERING IN FAITH—Joshua 6: 11: So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about *it* once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. 12: And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13: And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets. 14: And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

Perseverance in our Commission

First of all, day-after-day they did not see one stone even loosened. It would be easy to say, “There’s not a stone falling to the ground. Joshua, let’s change our tactics.” Instead, they kept doing exactly what the Lord told them to do.

We declare the gospel. Time goes by. We see none added or worse we some leave. I am so thankful for you. Some churches would pressure their preacher to change doctrine. When we’ve hit a rough patch, now and then, you say to me, “Keep preaching what you’re preaching.” I can’t tell you how encouraging that is. It makes me know that God has worked grace in your heart. It makes me know my preaching is not in vain.

Our charge is not to make converts but to declare the glory of God in Christ Jesus. He says, “Preach...the preaching that I bid thee.” (Deut 4: 2) “Speak unto them, and tell them: whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear” (Eze 3:11).

Perseverance Together

Notice, each day they circled that city together. It would have been easy for one here, one there to say, “They won’t miss me today. I’ll think I’ll stay home.” Far from it, each step that each took together spoke to their brethren beside them. If this brother began to grow faint, the steps of that brother persevering beside him said, “Brother, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.”

Brethren, as we continue together, Christ uses each one of us to cheer each other’s heart and strengthen each other to persevere.

Ephesians 4: 16: From [Christ] the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

That is the wisdom of God in saving through the gospel. By putting brethren together with brethren in his body he edifies us using each other to do so.

Perseverance in Love

Another thing, it would have been easy for those bearing the ark to say, the trumpet blower doesn’t need us. Or the gaurd to say well, I’m not bearing the ark or blowing the trumpet, that’s most important, so they don’t need me today.

1 Corinthians 12: 15: If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16: And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17: If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing,

where were the smelling? 18: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him....27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Rather than coveting the other's gifts, the better way is to love one another and support each other in what God has given each to do. We do so by our presence together.

Perseverance in the Camp

Notice this, each day they went back to the camp. That took perseverance in faith because the enemy knew full well where they were. But in the camp they ate, they rested, they encouraged one another for the next day. Can't you hear them, "Just a few more days, fellows. It's almost the seventh day!" Christ never let the enemy touch them the whole the time they were in the camp.

Brethren, that's why we come here. We continue in the camp with each other. Feasting on the gospel ourselves. Being strengthened by Christ our Captain. Encouraging one another. Christ will not allow his child to be separated from him by the enemy.

Hebrews 10: 23: Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Notice the opposite of forsaking the assembling of ourselves is to exhort one another—that means assembling we exhort one another. This is the wisdom of God in putting his people together in a local body and sending us forth with the gospel. It is not only for the calling out of his sheep it is for our own edification by his grace and for the edification of our fellow brethren. Never, imagine that your presence with God's sheep is not needed. It most certainly is. It is God's will.

III. FAITH WHICH BELIEVES AND OBEYS CHRIST SHALL BEHOLD CHRIST PERFORM WHAT HE PROMISED—Joshua 6: 15: And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 16: And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city....20: So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

Brethren, Christ only calls us to do that which is impossible for us to do. Why? He does so not only to prove our faith but to prove to our faith that "with God all things are possible." (Mk 10: 27) The Lord said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mk 9: 23) Remember in Matthew 9: 28:..."the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29: Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened." He told Martha, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (Jn 11: 40)

Brethren, believing Christ, obeying him, persevering to the end in faith, depending upon him to sustain our faith and keep us, we shall see that with God all things are possible. We shall see his glory! What kind of things are possible? How will we see his glory?

Hebrews 11: 30: By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. 31: By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

And it is by faith that we, too, shall overcome this world.

1 John 5:4: For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

And by faithfully proclaiming his gospel, Christ will call out his sheep. And none shall be lost.

But Jericho and everything in it was destroyed. Sinner, believe on Christ. Unite with his people and persevere in faith with us by his grace. May God give you grace not to shut yourself up in this cursed Jericho.

May God give us grace to continue trusting in Christ, continuing loving our brethren and obeying Christ by preaching his gospel. What wisdom of God to save us this way!

Amen!