

Series: Facing the Giants

# WINNING THE WAR BEFORE THE BATTLE BEGINS

## JOSHUA 5:13-6:5

Text: Joshua 5:13-15

### ***Joshua 5:13-15***

*<sup>13</sup> 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? <sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> 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.*

Introduction:

Alvin C. York was an unlikely man to become the most famous soldier of World War One. York felt his Christian faith barred him from killing anyone, even in war. After being drafted, York went home on a ten day leave and considered the Scriptures a Christian captain had shared with him.

Finally, in a crisis of faith, God showed York he could obey God and defend the helpless in Europe at the same time. He wrote, "As I prayed there alone ... I knowed He was there. He understood I didn't want to be a fighter or a killing man ... He took pity on me and gave me the assurance I needed ... It was His will and that was enough for me."

Sargent York had to win the war in his own heart before he could fight the battles that lay ahead of him in the trenches of France.

Joshua faced an even greater battle than Alvin York. He had a giant called Jericho to face but Joshua first he had to win the war in his own heart.

There were two things that had to happen for Joshua to win that war before the battle began.

Note:

## **1. OBSERVATION (JOSHUA 5:13)**

### ***Joshua 5:13***

<sup>13</sup> *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?*

Notice:

### A. The Visible Battle

The first things Joshua observed was a visible battle that lay before him. The city of Jericho was a walled city.

Jericho was one of the cities that Moses had described earlier in Deuteronomy.

#### ***Deuteronomy 9:1***

<sup>1</sup> *Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, **cities great and fenced up to heaven,***

Jericho was a city that was surrounded and protected by two stone walls.

The first was 20 to 26 feet high and 6 feet wide.

The second was about 46 feet high and was wide enough for people to build houses upon.

Inside were well-armed and fiercely warlike people.

What Joshua saw with his eyes was indeed a giant of immense proportions.

Everyone has some kind of visible giant in their life.

It may be sickness, attitudes of the heart, people who will not change; family issues, or many other things.

Whatever that giant is for you it is real and stands right there in front of you.

Notice not only “The Visible Battle” but also:

### B. The Invisible War

As great as the visible giant of Jericho was it was not Joshua’s real problem.

It was the invisible war that he had to first fight in his own heart that was the real challenge.

Joshua needed to get a handle on several things to win that invisible war.

- First, he had to overcome the challenge of past failures.

Joshua brought to that moment all of his past experiences with him.

He must have remembered again the miserable failure of Numbers 14:6-10 when Israel had refused to follow him and Caleb into the Promised Land.

Joshua had to wait forty years to defeat his giant because of the failure of others.

Past failures must have haunted him as they faced their present giants.

Our failures in the past have to be given to God or they will cripple us in the present!

Paul gave us a formula for dealing with past failures in Philippians chapter three:

***Philippians 3:12-13***

*<sup>12</sup> Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

Note the formula:

- Realize that no one escapes failure of some kind (vs. 12) Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect
- Leave the past where it is – in the past (v.13) forgetting those things which are behind

- Focus on those things you can do something about (v.13) reaching forth

Joshua also had to overcome his own preconceived notions of how the battle should be fought. Joshua was not going to be able to fight this enemy with his own notions of how to fight. He would have to do things God's way.

### **Joshua 6:1-5**

*<sup>1</sup> Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.*

*<sup>2</sup> And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. <sup>3</sup> And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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.*

We need to remember:

**Proverbs 14:12**

*<sup>12</sup> There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

**Isaiah 55:8-9**

*<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. <sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

God probably has a very different way of handling the giants in your life than you would imagine on your own.

Along with past failures and preconceived notions, Joshua had to put aside his own personal attitudes.

Joshua could have developed a pretty bad attitude over the previous forty years of his life. He had done everything God told him to and still ended up with a bunch of complainers and doubters for forty years in the wilderness.

He needed to make sure his attitude was not affected by such experiences.

Paul again addresses four steps to remember when it comes to our attitude in Philippians 4:

### **Philippians 4:4-8**

<sup>4</sup> *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

<sup>5</sup> *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.* <sup>6</sup> *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* <sup>7</sup> *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* <sup>8</sup> *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

Note these four steps:

- Praise God (vs. 4-5)
- Pray and Tell God about everything in life (vs.6)
- Peace of God rule our hearts and minds (vs. 7)
- Practice thinking on the things of God (vs. 8)

Like Joshua, we all face visible giants. But also like Joshua, we face a daily war within our hearts. As we win the war over our past, our ideas, and our attitudes we become ready to fight the battles that lay before us.



Notice not only the “Observation” but also:

## **2. OPENNESS (JOSHUA 5:13-15)**

### ***Joshua 5:13-15***

*<sup>13</sup> 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? <sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> 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.*

Note:

### A. Openness to the Person of God

Joshua needed to be open to the Person of God.

He needed to see God rather than his giant or problem.

Joshua needed to get a proper perspective of the battle.

He was seeing things from his own viewpoint.

All he could think to ask was, “are you for us or for our adversaries? (v.13b).

**Joshua 5:13**

*<sup>13</sup> 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?*

We can learn much from this.

We spend too much time talking about our problems and not nearly enough time looking to our solution.

Joshua needed to get his mind of his adversaries and onto the Commander of the Army of the Lord (v.14).

**Joshua 5:14**

*<sup>14</sup> 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?*

This Commander is an appearance of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

There are four reasons this had to be Christ:

- Because this Captain spoke the exact same words God spoke to Moses in Exodus 3:5

### **Exodus 3:5**

<sup>5</sup> And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes

- Because He allowed Himself to be worshiped.

Angels will not allow themselves to be worshiped (see Revelation 22:8-9).

### **Revelation 22:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> *And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.* <sup>9</sup> *Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

- Because He is identified as the Lord (6:2)

### **Joshua 6:2**

<sup>2</sup> *And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.*

- Because we can only see God in the Person of Jesus Christ.

### **John 1:18**

<sup>18</sup> *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

- Christ is the Captain of God's army and the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10).

### **Hebrews 2:10**

<sup>10</sup> *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.*

- He has promised that He will be with us always (Matthew 28:20).

### **Matthew 28:20**

<sup>20</sup> *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

- He has promised that He would not leave us like orphans but would be with us (John 14:18).

### **John 14:18**

<sup>18</sup> *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

Revelation 1 through 3 tells us that Christ walks among His churches.

The greatest need for facing the challenges of life is an awareness of the reality of God's presence in our lives!

It is our daily and growing awareness of the presence of Christ that prevents us from giving up and moves us on toward the goal God has for us (2 Corinthians 3:17-4:1).

### **2 Corinthians 3:17-4:1**

*<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. <sup>18</sup> But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. <sup>1</sup> Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;*

Not only must there be "Openness to the Person of God" but also

#### B. Openness to the Plans of God

Once we are open to the person of God we are ready to be open to the plans of God.

Joshua was not ready to hear the plan of God until he had submitted to the person of God.

After coming face to face with Christ his natural response was to obey with his whole heart.

What is God's plan for your life?

It may be very different from His plan for my life.

If we remain focused on the person of God His plans will become obvious naturally.

Give all of your past failures, preconceived ideas and personal attitudes toward God.

He is calling you to be open to His person and His plan.

Close:

What are some of the lessons that we learn from this story?

1. There is a vast difference between God's way and the way of man.

***Isaiah 55:13***

<sup>13</sup> *Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*

We must have faith that God is who He says He is, and will do what He says He will do.

2. The power of God is supernatural beyond our comprehension.

**Psalm 18:13-15**

*<sup>13</sup> The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.*

*<sup>14</sup> Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. <sup>15</sup> Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*

**Daniel 4:35**

*<sup>35</sup> And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

**Job 38:4-6**

*<sup>4</sup> Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. <sup>5</sup> Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? <sup>6</sup> Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;*

The walls of Jericho fell and they fell instantly. The walls collapsed by the sheer power of God.

3. There is a connection between the grace of God and our faith and obedience to Him

**Hebrews 11:30**

<sup>30</sup> *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*

Although their faith had frequently failed in the past, in this instance the children of Israel believed and trusted God and His promises.

4. God always keeps His promises

**Joshua 6:2**

<sup>2</sup> *And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.*

**Joshua 6:20**

<sup>20</sup> *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.*

The walls of Jericho fell because God said they would. God's promises to us today are just as certain.

They are exceedingly great and wonderfully precious.



## 5. Faith without works is dead

### **James 2:26**

<sup>26</sup> *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

It is not enough to say, "I believe God," and then live in an ungodly manner. If we truly believe God, our desire is to obey God. Our faith is put to work. We make every effort to do exactly what God says and keep His commandments. Joshua and the Israelites carried out the commands of God and conquered Jericho. God gave them victory over an enemy that was trying to keep them out of the Promised Land. So it is with us today: if we have true faith, we are compelled to obey God, and God gives us victory over the enemies that we face throughout life. Obedience is the clear evidence of faith. Our faith is the evidence to others that we truly believe in Him.