

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 Reflect on challenges you're currently facing: Are there any obstacles in your life that you feel are impossible at the moment?
- 2 Remember your moments of struggle: Have you ever experienced a time when you felt like giving up just before a breakthrough?
- 3 Reflect on your spiritual journey: How does faith influence your ability to face challenges and overcome obstacles?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!



SCAN QR

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.

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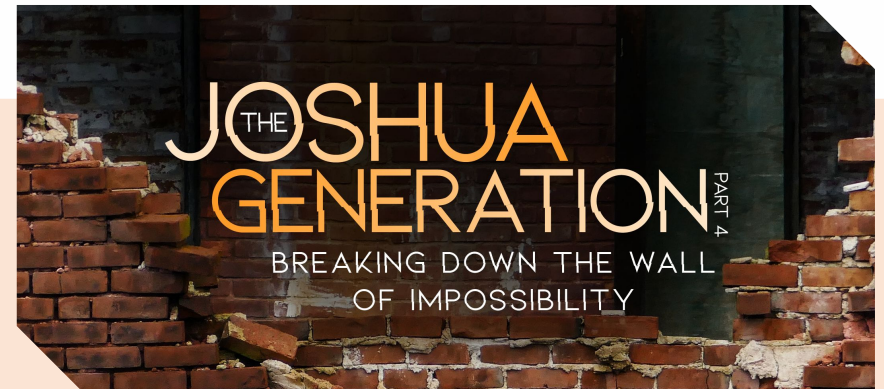
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SUNDAY WORD

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The breaking down of the Jericho Wall in the Book of Joshua is one of the most famous stories in the Bible. But there is one very important thing that we need to understand to understand the story. It was impossible to break down those walls. It's totally, absolutely, completely impossible. The Jericho wall stood between them and all that God had promised. Yet God's people won a great victory that day. How did it happen? Hebrews 11:30 answers with the first two words. "By faith."

In the Book of Joshua 5-6, we find five steps to a miracle. These steps show how God helps His people in every period. They are as relevant now as they were in Joshua's time.

1. Give up your need to always be in control.

Joshua 5:13-15 - "13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant? 15 The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so." (NIV)

Joshua's question seems like a natural question. "Whose side are you on?" We tend to think in terms of us versus them. Are you on my team or the other team? Are you for us or against us? We all like to think we are on the "right" team, but God doesn't join human teams. In this case, Joshua met the commander of the army of the Lord, probably the Lord Jesus Christ before He took on a human form in the New Testament.

Look at what Joshua does. He falls down and asks what the Lord wants to tell him. He doesn't ask, "How can we win?" or "Can you help us break the walls?" When you meet the Lord of the universe, you forget about human worries like that. This brings us to the key message of the book of Joshua: God's work must be done God's way to receive God's blessing.

Every Christian would agree with that, but when facing a crisis, we want to tell God how to answer our prayers. At some point, we must surrender to the Lord. I say “at some point” because surrendering doesn’t come easily to most of us.

There is a place for the sword and the spear, and there is a time when we must advance against the enemy. But first, we must learn this lesson: Proverbs 21:31 - “The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord (NIV).” We can make all the plans in the world, but if God doesn’t bless our efforts, it will come to nothing. We don’t need God on our side; we need to make sure we are on God’s side before the battle begins.

2. Face the Challenge

What was Jericho to Joshua and the people of God? A pagan city where people don’t believe in God. A city of strategic importance. A city of human impossibility. When we say that the people of Jericho don’t believe in God, that’s an understatement. The Canaanite religion included child sacrifice and gross sexual immorality. It could never coexist with the true worship of God. Deuteronomy 9:1 even mentions it: “Hear, Israel: You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities that have walls up to the sky (NIV).” The city must be confronted and completely defeated, or the Jews would never be safe.

In the past 140 years, archaeologists have learned a lot about the ancient city of Jericho by studying its ruins. They discovered that the city had two walls - one inside and one outside, both built on a slope. This setup made it nearly impossible for any enemy army to conquer the city. The road to the Promised Land ran through Jericho. And there is one word that seemed to hang above it. And that is “Impossible!”

3. Follow the Plan

At first glance, God’s instructions seem very strange or weird. Let’s break down what God said in Joshua 6:3-5. God told Joshua:

March around the town once a day for six days (v.3).

March with the ark of the covenant in the front (v. 4).

Put seven priests in front of the ark (v. 4).

On the seventh day, march around Jericho seven times (v. 5).

Have the priests blow rams’ horns as they march (v. 5).

On the seventh time around on the seventh day, have the people shout (v. 5).

When the people shout, the walls will come down (v. 5).

When the walls come down, enter the city and conquer it (v. 5).

And then, Joshua added a few refining details to the plan: Joshua instructed the people to:

1. Be silent as they marched around the city (Joshua 6:10).

2. Put soldiers in front of the priests and behind the ark (v.13).

3. Have the priests blow the ram’s horn (the shofar) continually (v.13).

At this point, the people of God face a clear choice. They can either try to take the city by doing what God said, or they can come up with their own plan and fail badly. It’s all to their credit that they did what God asked them to do. For six days they marched one time around the city and then returned to their camp. On the seventh day, at the end of the seventh time around the city, the priests sounded a long blast, and the people shouted as loud as they could. So, here’s the whole plan: Marching. Blowing horns. Shouting. From a human perspective, the “Joshua Plan” doesn’t seem very promising: Marching + Trumpets + Shouting? How exactly will that break the walls down?

4. Remember the Promise

What gave the people any hope of taking Jericho? They only had to remember the promise of God. We get two hints of this in the story. First, God said He was going to give them the city. That’s what God said to Joshua before He gave him the plan: Joshua 6:2 - “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.”

God says to Joshua, “I have delivered...” Notice the past tense. There is power in knowing that God has already delivered you from the situation that you find yourself in. When God gets involved, it’s as good as done. That’s what gave Joshua the confidence to follow God’s plan. He knew God had guaranteed victory. All he had to do was obey what God told him to do.

Second, God put Himself in the middle of the battle plan. By placing the ark of the covenant in front of the people, God was saying, “I’m going to lead this march.” Even though the people of Jericho didn’t realize it, they were already defeated before the walls fell. They lost the battle when God got involved. Let’s rethink that situation one more time: March + Trumpets + Shouting + God = The walls came tumbling down! God made all the difference! Those high walls couldn’t keep God out. The same God who made those stones could easily knock them down.

5. Never Give Up

Why did they march around the walls for six days straight? And why march seven times on the seventh day? Couldn’t the walls have fallen on the first, third, or fifth day? Yes, they could have fallen at any time God wanted. So why all the marching? The reason is clear. This is how God usually works. God could have just said, “Sit back and let me do it.” But God’s normal plan is to use people to accomplish His purposes. So even though God made the walls fall, the people still had to march, shout, and when the walls fell, they still had to fight and take the city, going from door to door.

Let’s take note that the Lord gave the instructions to Joshua personally, and not to the people. That means the people only learned about the plan one day at a time. All Joshua told them on Day 1 was, “March around the city and keep your mouth shut.” There must have been some confused Jews after the first day. I imagine them saying, “General, what’s the plan?” And Joshua said, “Tomorrow we’re going to do it again.” In this case, faith meant marching in total silence around the city day after day.

Partial obedience is never enough. What if the Jews had stopped marching after the first day? Or the fourth day? Or the sixth day? Or on the fifth time around on the seventh day? The walls would not have fallen because the miracle would not have happened. Here is the truth: There is no substitute for obedience to God. Even when things don’t happen as fast or exactly how we want them to, we shouldn’t choose a different path just because we think God isn’t acting the way we expect.

Victory only came and the walls fell when the people obeyed God completely. Joshua 6:20 - “When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city.” (NIV)

Whenever you start to do anything for the Lord, it won’t be as easy as you think. It’s understandable why we expect too much. When we work for God, we aim higher. We read the Bible, ask for advice from godly people, pray for help, and believe God is pleased with our efforts. But progress is slow. What we thought would take weeks might take months, and sometimes even years. Our excitement fades, we feel stuck, people start doubting, and we start doubting too.

Why does it have to be this way? Couldn’t God make it easier? Well, sometimes He does, but oftentimes, He lets us struggle so we learn to trust Him more. Sooner or later, we all face something we think we can’t do. The bad news is, it is impossible. But the good news is that God loves to start with things that seem impossible.

When God wants to do something big, He starts with something very small. When He wants to do the miraculous, He starts with the impossible. We’d rather start big and go from there. But not so with our Heavenly Father. He starts with the impossible and then turns it into reality.

For all of us who are praying for a miracle, things may be running through our minds that tell us “I have to have steadfast trust in God and His plans. Or I have to carry through with God’s instructions. Or take the life application of patience.” But maybe, what God is saying right now is, “But how about the walls and fortifications you have built around yourself?” Sometimes we build such big, strong walls. Sometimes our walls are to stop us from getting hurt, blocking out friends, family, or God. And what this story tells us is no matter how big the walls are, God can get through them, He can conquer the things that hold us prisoner.