

Remnant Life Church
May 8, 2016
Sunday School Stories Retold:
The Patience of Joshua
Joshua 6:1-17

Read – Joshua 6:1-17

- Background
 - Israel coming to the end of their time of wandering in the desert
 - Only one major obstacle remains before they begin the campaign to occupy the promised land
 - All of the men of military age who had come out of Egypt are dead as punishment for their disbelief (Num 13)
 - This new generation did not experience the power of God
 - + Only heard stories but not lived
 - + The Israelites had become a shell of their former selves
 - + Even the manna had probably become commonplace to them
 - (last week) the danger of the familiar

- Two very important events took place leading to Jericho
 1. Joshua 3 – the crossing of the Jordan on dry ground
 - + The first demonstration of God’s might since the golden calf (Ex 32)
 - + God wanted them to understand that nothing in the natural was too great for His power – they would need this faith soon
 - + The people of Jericho were afraid - before they even got to Jericho God was at work preparing the way (5:1)

 2. Joshua 5 - the circumcision of the men born outside of Egypt
 - This was the outward sign of a people who belonged to God (Gen 17 – the covenant with Abraham)
 - Unless they were circumcised they could not receive the blessing of the covenant (Gen 17:14)

- All the things of the past associated with Egypt were ending both without and within
 - God had taken the people out of Egypt
 - But it was their willingness to embrace the covenant again and make a personal commitment that meant Egypt could be fully taken out of them and their hearts
 - The final piece of their desert wanderings was also about to end
 - + Josh 5:10-12 – they celebrated Passover; they ate the food of the land; the very next day the manna stopped
 - + God was ready to take them to a new place
 - + Moving forward means that you must leave the old behind

- Jericho
 - One of the oldest cities of that day
 - Heavily fortified with walls that were wide enough for a chariot to ride along
 - Impossible to breach the walls – 30-35 ft. high on a crest
 - A representation and the very symbol of the strength of the Canaanite people and their gods
 - These were the same people and the same city that the spies had seen 40 years earlier

- Joshua's patience and obedience
 1. (5:13) Joshua is scouting out the city
 - He is preparing to do what he had always done and done very well
 2. The Commander of the Army of God appears to Him – Jesus
 - An angel would never have accepted worship from Joshua (Rev 22:8-9)
 - Only other time told to take off shoes was in God's direct presence (Gen 3:5)
 3. Joshua receives the "battle" plan (6:2-5)
 - These instructions from God went against every natural instinct and ability Joshua had
 - What was going through his mind as he is hearing this?
 - The capture of Jericho was central to Joshua's entire military strategy for entering the land of Canaan
 - The defeat of the city would have shown the superior power of God over the Canaanite gods and removed their greatest physical obstacle
 4. This not only required Joshua's obedience but the people's as well
 - "He wants us to do what?"
 - March in silence (6:10)
 - + Our words are of no value when compared to the words of God
 - + This was satan's first challenge and temptation – "Did God really say...?"
 - + Our words are often what prevents us from hearing God's
 5. It required their obedience from the beginning to the end (7:1)
 - Achan's sin of disobedience cost 36 men their lives
 - Loss of the credibility they had just achieved

- Three things were required of Joshua and they are still required of us today
 1. **Faith** – to believe God
 2. **Obedience** – even in the face of a natural impossibility
 3. **Surrender**
 - The third one was then and remains today the most difficult
 - It required that Joshua give up what he knew best
 - It required him putting aside what had always worked for him
 - God's instructions were brand new and nothing like they had done things in the past

- Until it was over I would think Joshua was fighting doubt the entire time
- Not so much that he did not obey

- Struggling with a time in your life is not a lack of faith it is what you do that demonstrates whether you believe in the power of God in your life
- Jesus had to comfort His disciples many times especially toward the end of His ministry
- Even the very last time they were together in the Upper Room

John 14: 1- 6 - Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."