

LESSONS OF FAITH FROM THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

TEXT: HEBREWS 11:30, 31

Introduction:

1. We have been in Hebrews 11 for a few weeks now. Last week we looked at the faith of Moses, and his parents (11:23-29).
2. Tonight we will consider the faith of Joshua, his successor, the man who had the privilege of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land (11:30).
3. In Exodus 24:13; 33:11; Numbers 11:28; and Joshua 1:1, Joshua is referred to as Moses' "minister" or his "servant."
4. In Numbers 27:18, we have an account of the ordination of Joshua to the office as the new leader of the Israelites. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him."
5. Like his mentor Moses, Joshua was a great man of faith. His faith was demonstrated back in Numbers 13, when Moses sent out twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan.
6. Numbers 13:32, 33 says that ten of the spies "brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."
7. But Caleb and Joshua said, "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey" (Numbers 14:7, 8).
8. There are many examples of faith in the life of Joshua, but the author of the epistle to the Hebrews chose just one -- the most famous one, the wonderful victory at Jericho (Heb. 11:30; cf. Joshua 6).

I. FAITH DOES THE IMPROBABLE

1. The LORD instructed the Israelites to "compass about" (encircle) the walls of Jericho once a day for seven days together, and then seven times the last day.
2. Furthermore, the LORD said that the priests should carry the ark when they compassed about the walls, and they should blow with trumpets made of rams' horns (Joshua 6:3, 4).

3. Joshua 6:5 says, "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."
4. These are very unusual military tactics! I do not think they teach this at West Point. But faith does the improbable.
5. This was a great trial of their faith. The method prescribed by God seemed very improbable to ensure their victory, but the LORD had already told Joshua in Joshua 6:2, "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour."
6. Undoubtedly the Canaanites would laugh and mock them as the Israelites marched around the city day after day.
7. The *Scofield Study Bible* says, "The central truth here is that spiritual victories are won by means and upon principles utterly foolish and inadequate in the view of human wisdom (I Corinthians 1:17-29; II Corinthians 10:3-5)."
8. Matthew Henry said, "But this was the way God commanded them to take, and he loves to do great things by small and contemptible means, that his own arm may be made bare."

II. FAITH DOES THE INCREDIBLE

1. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30). Just as God said they would.
2. The LORD said, "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" (Joshua 6:5).
3. Jericho was a the principal stronghold of the Canaanites, a frontier town that the Israelites were to conquer first because it was situated at the entrance way to the land of Canaan.
4. Matthew Henry said, "God was pleased in this extraordinary manner to slight and dismantle it, in order to magnify himself, to terrify the Canaanites, to strengthen the faith of the Israelites, and to exclude all boasting. God can and will in his own time and way cause all the powerful opposition that is made to his interest and glory to fall down, and the grace of faith is mighty through God for the pulling down of strong-holds."

III. FAITH SAVES THE UNREACHABLE (11:31)

1. One other believer is mentioned from the book of Joshua, and that is the harlot Rahab (11:31).
2. Among the great list of heroes of the faith, the Holy Spirit mentions the harlot Rahab, to show that God is no respecter of persons.
3. Rahab was a Gentile (a Canaanite) and she was a harlot.
4. Interestingly, she is also in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 1:5). This is a demonstration of the grace of God.
5. She was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). But God in His mercy and grace saved Rahab on the basis of her faith in the true God of Israel (cf. Joshua 2:11, 12).
6. Rahab was not saved because she hid the spies up on the roof of her house. She was saved the same way every believer is saved -- "by faith" (Heb. 11:31).
7. Hiding the spies was evidence of her faith (cf. James 2:25). Genuine faith results in good works, especially towards God's people.
8. Rahab asked the spies for a "true token," and they told her to hang her scarlet thread (cord) out her window (Joshua 2:12, 18).
9. Regarding the faith of Rahab the harlot, Matthew Henry said, "Faith will venture all hazards in the cause of God and his people; a true believer will sooner expose his own person than God's interest and people. A true believer is desirous, not only to be in covenant with God, but in communion with the people of God, and is willing to cast in his lot with them, and to fare as they fare."

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians have wondered -- if God intended to destroy the city of Jericho, why did he instruct Joshua and the Israelites to march around the city for seven days?
2. FB Meyer said, "As in this story so in grace, there must be cooperation between God and man. The walls of Jericho could fall down only by the exercise of divine power; but the children of Israel must needs encompass them. Only God can give a body as it hath pleased him to the seed corn; but man must plow and sow and reap and thresh and grind. Only the Son of God could multiply the loaves or raise the dead; but man must provide and distribute the broken bread, and roll the stone from the sepulcher door. Only God can remove the difficulties that stand in the way of an entirely consecrated and blessed life; but there are commands and duties which it is incumbent on us to fulfill. What are these? In some cases we are

withholding obedience that we should give at once. There are things which we ought to do, but which we are not doing. And there is equal danger in doing more than we should endeavoring to scale walls which we are told to encompass; shouting before the word of command has been uttered; making the circuit of the city oftener than the once each day prescribed by the divine ordering." (*Joshua: and the Land of Promise*)