

Lesson 41
The Triumph of Faith
Hebrews 11:30

Do you want to be a victorious Christian with a triumphant faith? You say, “Of course I do; every Christian wants that for his life.” Well, then if you want a triumphant faith, you must exercise real faith. It is not enough to talk about faith, but you must actually believe God if you are ever going to see Him supernaturally work for you. Faith is the key to a life of progressive victory in Christ. The Christian’s life, from beginning to end, must be a life of faith in a supernatural working God. Without faith, a Christian cannot progress in his spiritual life, no victories can be won, and no fruit can be manifested for God’s glory.

In the children of Israel and Joshua, their leader, we have the example of a triumphant faith as God brought down the walls of Jericho. However, this triumphant faith did not just happen automatically, but there were certain promises, precepts and principles that Israel had to obey before the walls came tumbling down. Hebrews 11:30 says, ***“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days.”***

Between Hebrews 11:29 and 11:30, there is a period of forty years. Israel, forty years before, saw God work a great victory for them at the Red Sea. Yet, after that, they spent forty years in the wilderness because of their unbelief. They wasted forty years in the wilderness griping, complaining and murmuring because they refused to exercise faith in their supernatural working God, and God judged them for their unbelief.

THE DARING OF FAITH - Joshua 3:17

“And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.” -- When a whole generation of unbelieving Israelites died in the wilderness and a new generation rose up, God began to move in the people and this new generation was ready to believe God and follow their leader, Joshua, into the promised land. To get into the Promised Land, they had to cross over the Jordan River and they did cross over by a miracle from God. The Jordan rolled back and the people went across on dry land.

We see, in the act of crossing the Jordan River, a real daring of faith on the part of Israel. There was a risk involved when they crossed the Jordan. The moment Israel crossed the Jordan, they burned all their bridges behind them. They were cut off from the security of the wilderness where they had no enemies. In the new land they had no houses to which they could retire and no fortress to which they could retreat. They were now in the enemies’ territory and victory or death were the only alternatives. By faith, they went forward not knowing how God was going to give them the land He had promised them but only believing that God would somehow give them victory over the Canaanites.

Unbelief is hesitant and timorous, but bold faith is confident and courageous. Faith takes risks

and dares something for the Lord. Faith ventures out where unbelief refuses to go. God rebukes our timidity and reserve but abundantly blesses any believer who dares to step out in faith. ***“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might”*** (Eph. 6:10).

It may be good to look before one takes a leap of faith, but many look so long they never leap at all.

William Carey, the father of modern missions said, “Ask great things of God; expect great things from God; undertake great things for God.”

THE DIRECTIONS OF FAITH - Joshua 6:1-5

“Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in.” -- The first major obstacle facing Israel after entering into the land was the godless and mighty walled city of Jericho. This was the enemy’s leading fortress, which they undoubtedly thought was quite invulnerable. When Israel came across the Jordan, all the gates were closed. The people were on the inside. The city was prepared to defend itself, men of war stood at their battle positions and supplies were gathered for a siege. This city, by all human standards, was impregnable.

This seemed to be a humanly impossible situation. Israel, by this time, had only a limited trained army. They had no machines of war, no artillery to batter down the walls, and no equipment to scale the walls.

“And the LORD said to Joshua, ‘See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors. And you shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city at once. You shall do so for six days. Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And it shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead.’” -- God did not tell Joshua and the sons of Israel to attack the city with carnal weapons of war, but to obey the commands of a supernatural working God. God gave some rather weird instructions for taking the city. The Israelites were to march around the city once each day for six days. On the seventh day the Israelites were to circle the city seven times. Accompanying the people were the priests, with the ark of the covenant. Upon the seventh journey around the city on the seventh day, the priests were to blow their trumpets, and all the people were to shout.

Whoever heard of a powerful fortress being completely destroyed in response to people walking around it and shouting at it? This is against all natural reasoning, but God’s ways are not our ways, and when He gives instructions He expects them to be kept whether we understand everything or not. Why? Because we are dealing with a supernatural working God who longs to have His people believe His promises, precepts and principles so He may work supernaturally for them.

We all have our Jerichos in life that seem impregnable to us, but faith laughs at such impossibilities, knowing that God is sovereign and only has to speak a word and these seemingly invulnerable circumstances come tumbling down.

All the great missionary efforts have been accomplished by God through the faith of obedient Christians. Paganism crumbled under the faithful ministry of the Apostles and the early Christians. The Papacy of Rome was shaken to its very foundations by the faithful preaching of the Reformers. Heathenism began to crack under the dedicated missionaries of the nineteenth century. Why did they experience great success? Because they read God's directions in the Bible and believed God to do the impossible, and God rewarded their faith with soul-winning fruit. Why is it in our day that we are seeing the forces of Satan advancing and not retreating? Why is it that there is so little soul-winning power among people who call themselves Christian? Is it because God's arm is shortened and He cannot save? God forbid! Is it because the Bible is obsolete and no longer meets the needs of people in the twentieth century? Perish the thought! Is it because God in His sovereignty does not wish to save people? No, never! What then is the problem? I believe that the Holy Spirit has been grieved by true Christians and consequently God withholds His power. Why is the Spirit grieved? Christians refuse to obey the Bible. They do not evangelize and live holy lives as the Bible tells them to do. We will never experience New Testament Christianity until we live by New Testament principles and use New Testament methods. We must cast ourselves upon God who works supernaturally and trust Him to work for us. **"... 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts"** (Zach. 4:6). We must learn to do God's work in God's prescribed way, and then we shall receive God's blessing from heaven.

THE DISCIPLINE OF FAITH – Joshua 6:6-15

"So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.' Then he said to the people, 'Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD.'" -- The people had been given the directions of how to overthrow the city, but it was not enough to know the facts. They had to discipline themselves to obey the directions God had given them. By faith they had to put into practice what God had taught them. The Israelites had to "Go forward, and march around the city."

Faith is believing God and going forward. It is better to go forward and make mistakes than to never go forward at all.

"And it was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets. But Joshua commanded the people saying, 'You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, "Shout!" Then you shall shout!'" -- The children of Israel had to carry out all the detailed instruction to the letter or God would not bring down the walls of Jericho. The people had to keep quiet for seven days. They could not utter a sound. Why? These Israelites had been notorious

complainers and gripers for forty years in the wilderness and always murmured in times of crisis. God wanted these people to learn that God works apart from all human wisdom and scheming. Furthermore, when two million people keep silent, this had to have a psychological impact upon the people of Jericho.

“So he had the ark of the LORD taken around the city, circling it once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp. Now Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. And the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them, and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while they continued to blow the trumpets. Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so six days. Then it came about on the seventh day that they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times, only on that day they marched around the city seven times.” -- The Israelites continued to discipline themselves and do what God had commanded them. They walked around the city once a day for six days. Can you imagine that scene? There were hundreds of Canaanites standing on the wall and watching from towers, jeering, mocking and ridiculing the Israelites. They thought the Israelites to be childish, crazy and surely stupid. On the seventh day, Israel went around the wall seven times. Mind you, there was not so much as even a peep from the people of Israel. Then, in a moment of time, Joshua gave an order and the trumpets blew and people shouted and the walls came tumbling down.

Many of the things that we do as Christians seem foolish to the world because it understands nothing about a supernatural working God.

THE DURABILITY OF FAITH - Joshua 6:20

“So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and it came about, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet that the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.”

If Israel had not explicitly obeyed God’s commands, there never would have been a miracle. Without faith, the walls of Jericho would never have fallen.

While God rewarded Israel’s faith, it was not until they had gone around Jericho thirteen times that the power of God was displayed. Their patience of faith was rewarded. Suppose on the third or fourth day they would have quit. The whole thing would have failed. But they knew that God had a plan and would achieve the impossible, so they waited patiently on God. ***“Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him ...”*** (Psalm 37:7).

CONCLUSION

Saved

Do you, Christian, want to be a man or woman of faith? If you do, then you must believe the

promises, precepts and principles of the Word of God and put them into practice. You must get God's directions, dare to venture out in faith and discipline yourself to put them into action. You will never be a man or woman of faith until you exercise faith in a supernatural working God, and this faith, in turn, results in patient endurance. Do you want to see God win souls through you? Then begin to be a faithful witness for Christ and anticipate that God is going to use you! Do you want a holy life? Then begin to read your Bible and seriously keep the commandments of Christ! Do you want to be a man or woman of prayer? Then begin to pray and believe that God will work supernaturally for you. ***"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you"*** (Mark 11:24). You cannot triumph over your Jerichos until you trust the supernatural working God. You must humble yourself, cast away all carnal, fleshy reasoning and anticipate that God will work for you. ***"... for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculation and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, ..."*** (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Unsaved

For you without Christ, I want to remind you that the people of Jericho were destroyed because they refused to repent and believe in the one, true God of Israel. They had six days to repent but they refused to bow to God. God is longsuffering towards men, waiting for them to turn to Jesus Christ. If you do not change your mind about Christ, God's Son, and accept Him as your personal Lord and Savior, you shall perish in your sins. Trust Christ before it is too late. Come to Christ, trusting God to work a supernatural salvation in you!