

GOD SAID, "SEE, I HAVE DELIVERED JERICHO INTO YOUR HANDS"

Joshua 6:1-27

Key Verse: 6:2

"Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men'."

In the previous passage we studied how God commanded his people to prepare for the war and how to destroy the invincible Jericho fortress. Commonly speaking, war preparation requires boot camp training and full-fledged army training to destroy the enemy. To our surprise, God commanded General Joshua to circumcise all his people again with sharp flint knives. What circumcision meant was well explained in the previous chapter. It was to cut off the foreskin of the child-producing organ around seven inches under the belly button. What a spectacle it was to see all the men of Israel after having been circumcised, lying down here and there, groaning. It was a very painful part because it was the center of the human body. Circumcision meant to have a right heart in the sight of God. And it was to have an identity of being his people. In this way God made the army of God. In today's passage, we learn how God enabled his people to destroy the Jericho fortress. In this passage we learn not only the victory of the Israelite soldiers, but also how to win personal victory in our lifetime. Do you want victory in Jesus? If you want victory in Jesus say "Amen." God wants us to be his victorious people. Whatever the reason, those who are defeated are not accepted.

First, God commanded General Joshua, "Go and get them" (1-5). At that time it was impossible for the Israelite army to destroy the Jericho Fortress. The Jericho Fortress was located to the west of the Israelite

camp, between the desert and the Promised Land. The Jericho Fortress was around ten miles square. The area between the desert and the Jericho fortress was well-fortified with all kinds of defense equipment, such as innumerable sharpened wooden logs slanting at a 40-degree angle toward the enemy. This log defense was all over the territory. In addition there were many barbed wires and fox holes from which they could attack the enemy. The Jericho fortress stood behind the defense obstacles. The fortress was built of granite stones, with many archery holes and hot water tanks and fire hoses to throw fiery brimstone on the invaders. It looked invincible.

But before conquering the Jericho Fortress, Israel could not advance into the Promised Land. Moreover, circumcision pain was lingering after the circumcision. When they looked up at the Jericho fortress they lost their spirit. At this time, the thunderous command of God Almighty came to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men." The soldiers of Israel might have thought, "It's impossible to conquer the Jericho Fortress," but the power and dignity of God's thunderous command subsided their fear and filled them with confidence in their hearts.

Then, what was God's command for the battle plan? It was as follows: "March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse, and the people will go up, every man straight in" (3-5).

What a battle plan! It looked like a children's soldier game. However, it was God's battle plan. In awesome fear, General Joshua and the people of Israel first armed themselves with the word of God. They believed that although they had no military power, God would help them destroy the Jericho Fortress. Here, when we carefully read several verses, we see that victory or defeat was determined when God's fear came upon the people in the Jericho Fortress. So they escaped into the fortress and shut up all the doors of the fortress (1). They had no strength in their fingers to adopt an attack strategy, they adopted a negative strategy, that is, "Wait until the fear in our hearts subsides." They did not have an aggressive strategy. Rather they were too fearful to prepare for war against the Israelites. What was worse, the soldiers of Jericho were very complacent and depended on the fortress. Let's see what was the result of the war.

One's entire life is like a war and one's daily life is like a battle. There are a minority of people who win the war and win battles throughout their lives. In view of history, the absolute majority of people in history lost the war and lost so many battles in their daily lives and became war prisoners. When we have the realization that life is war or a battle we are more wise than those who read two hundred books about war. Especially, those armies or people who only depend on their power and on their well-fortified fortresses are not guaranteed to win the war or the battle.

There is a good example about this. Before WWII, French people ruled and overruled the Vietnamese. As a result, Vietnamese people had to say, "Your honor" before speaking to any Frenchman, and they had to bow down before any French people. In this way, the Vietnamese natural resources

were stolen and they were greatly humiliated by the French people. During WWII France could not control Vietnam, but after WWII was over the French again came down and wanted to oppress the Vietnamese. This time was different. The Vietnamese were fully armed with patriotism by the influence of their leader, Ho Chi Minh, and indirectly, by Castro, who was a man of thought among weak nations. The French army established an air base on the flat plain of Dien Bien Phu. In the past the Vietnamese were subordinate. But this time they were strong soldiers. They were full of challenging spirit. And they were like aggressive lions toward the prey. Finally, they surrounded the French air base, which was established on Dien Bien Phu. The Vietnamese army forces were too weak to fight the French force. But the Vietnamese were armed with patriotism and with their motto, "Truth will win in the end." It is unbelievable that such feeble Vietnamese soldiers killed 70,000 French soldiers at Dien Bien Phu and won the great victory. So many wounded soldiers were allowed to go back to France. Here we learn that the Vietnamese's cause of victory was because they were armed with their motto, "Truth will win in the end." And their patriotism gave them a do or die spirit. The Vietnamese thought that French people were false because they invaded their country without any reason and squeezed them for a long time before WWII and then they came back again to do evil to their people. The entire nation firmly decided to defeat them with the motto, "Truth will win in the end." In this war, the unofficially five-star general Ho Chi Minh's leadership was indeed great. Because of his influence and leadership their people became strong and finally defeated the French and won the victory over French soldiers who were proud, so proud saying, "To the glory of France." This one illustration fully explains that money, power or size of the nation and size of the soldiers of a nation without

moral armament cannot win over weak soldiers of a nation with a clear reason why they are fighting. The French lost a war to Ho Chi Minh, who was 4'7" tall and weighed 109 pounds, and at that time was over 60 years old. Many believe that Ho Chi Minh is the man of the century.

Second, General Joshua went and got them (6-16). After hearing God's command, General Joshua called his people and commanded them to advance and fight and destroy them all. But General Joshua's command was not like General Patton's to his tank battalion. It was very quiet, similar to a Catholic Mass. General Joshua called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." He ordered the people to "Advance and march around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord." Going around the city quietly one time a day didn't look like destroying the fortress of Jericho. But the army of Israel had fully prepared themselves through circumcision. Their hearts were full of strength and a sense of victory (6-7). This was the strategy of paralyzing the enemies in fear.

General Joshua spoke to the people. Then, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the Lord went forward blowing the trumpets and the ark of the Lord's covenant followed them. The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. But General Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" The army of Israel under General Joshua's command absolutely obeyed the command Joshua had given them. They felt like the Jericho Fortress

looked too quiet. They also felt soldiers in the fortress had cut their stomachs and were bleeding and some had died. So it would have been easy for the army of Israel to shout the victory, and say many things, making many funny gestures, instead of marching silently. The other day, an American Shepherd wrote me a letter. It said, "At the Friday leaders' meeting, Korean missionary women talk or whisper all the way during the meeting. I have been annoyed by them. Please help to make them be quiet." Even at such a Friday leaders' meeting, when several women gather together they cannot control their mouths because God gave them mouths to speak. A woman thinks, "I will speak just one time." Then, after a few minutes many women forget not to speak and speak again and again. So the back side of the Friday meeting is not quiet because of many women's whispering and talking to each other. Our UBF women are very educated and well trained not to speak during the meeting, but they could not but speak to one another. Let's see about the Israelite army. As General Joshua commanded, they advanced, softly stepping around the city of Jericho. And then the army of Israel returned to the camp and spent the night there. I don't know whether they took a shower or not, but one thing is very clear, they won the victory in going around the city of Jericho in silence. One time an electrician came to our center. He grieved over his only son. In his anger he said, "He has diarrhea of the mouth." We didn't know what it meant at first. After a few minutes, we understood that his son only talked and never studied at home. Here we learn that one who controls his tongue is a saint. By the same token, the army of Israel was almost saintly. The army of Israel's obedience to their commander and controlling their mouths imply that they had already won the war.

General Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up

the ark of the Lord. The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the Lord and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them with the rhythm of the trumpet sound. In this way, once more they marched around the city and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. Practically speaking "they did this for six days" sounds just funny. They looked foolish and by contemporary words they were very stupid. Nobody can do this kind of circus-like war strategy, going around in silence. But according to today's passage, they were obeying God's command. They believed God was with them and God was on their side. Usually, those who obey God's word as it is look so funny. Dr. Joseph Chung's obedience to God's word looks very funny to many coworkers. One MD is very reasonable and pragmatic. Moreover, his obedience is habitual like habitual animals. He does not look funny, but he looks clever. It is good to be funny in the sight of man. Those who look funny to obey God's word are indeed victorious persons and at the same time, winners over themselves. But those who believe they are smart and obey God's word superficially, go nowhere except maybe to purgatory in the "Divine Comedy." In other words, their final destination is not sure, whether they go to the kingdom of God or to hell.

The Israelites marched around the city one time a day for six days. Then, those in Jericho were paralyzed by the power of God and the "silence strategy" of Israel. They could not move their mouths and so many had diarrhea. So their bodies were completely drained. On the seventh day the Israelites got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. For the last six day's time they had only circled around one time a day. But on the seventh day they got up earlier and they circled the

city seven times. It was the strategy of victory without fighting. For the last six days the fear inside the fortress grew and grew until they could not eat or drink. In this situation, the army of Israel circled around on the seventh day seven times. Now the wall of Jericho began to wobble. In this story we are reminded of General Patton. He was leading the Third army in a sweep that began in southern France. News came that the 101st Airborne with some 70,000 American soldiers were trapped by the German army in Bastogne. The weather was bitterly cold and it was snowing. There were around twelve generals to fight with the German tank battalions. But no general wanted to fight the German tanks. They said that it was impossible. But General Patton volunteered that he would fight. He ordered the chaplain to pray for good weather. On the way he had to be a policeman for a traffic jam caused by tanks and muddy weather, even though he was already a three-star general. Actually, General Patton's tank battalion did not have enough supplies, so on the way, they had to stop because they could not move. The German tanks were coming. One of his lieutenants began to fire all the fire power in the tanks. By God's help, the lieutenant's last resort smashed all the German tank forces. The eastern sky beamed the light. General Patton commanded, "Advance." In this way, Patton's tank forces smashed the German tank battalion, rescued the trapped American army and captured an important place. Likewise, the army of Israel finished circling around the fortress of Jericho seven times. The Jericho Fortress was even more wobbly. Finally the Jericho fortress completely collapsed to the ground. On the other hand, the soldiers of Israel were empowered by the Spirit of God. The victory came when they obeyed God's command through Joshua. Therefore we can say that victory came only from God.

Third, Joshua's two warnings (17-27). The first warning was to spare Rahab the prostitute and all who were with her in her house, because she hid the spies. Here we see the attitude of God's army. General Joshua kept the promise as he had heard from the two spies to spare Rahab the prostitute and her family. The army of God should keep the promise. Many young men come to America as missionaries by God's calling. At the beginning they pray that God will establish America as a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation. Ten months later they gradually worry about life security and they don't read the Bible which is the word of life. Instead, they begin to memorize computer languages. Soon they make a reasonable amount of money. When they came first, they gave tithes to God according to their promise to God. When they make a good deal of money they reduce the tithe little by little until they forget about the concept of tithing. This is not the way the people of God should do. They must remember the promise they made to God as missionaries. Otherwise they cannot win the victory over their entire lives. And their descendants will be under the bitter defeat and will pant for life.

The second warning was not to take any devoted things when they invaded Jericho. Here, "devoted things," means spoils of war or some expensive material that the enemy possesses. But these are dedicated to God primarily because God gave them victory. Not only should the army of Israel not take the devoted things at the fall of Jericho, they should not take any devoted things while living in the Promised Land in the future.

Why did Joshua give this kind of warning to the Israelites and to us? When we are poor and desperate, we are eager to get God's blessings so we obey God's command which is written in the Ten Commandments. We

never take anything that belongs to God. But when we are blessed by God we value the good things of the world more than God's command. In this way, we become idol worshipers. We should not be like garbage collectors in the junk car yard. We must be clear that we keep our promise to God which we made. Then he will bless us forever. We must remember why Joshua warned them not to get God's things, that is devoted things, to take for themselves.

As we studied, on the seventh day the army of Israel circled around seven times. When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted. At the sound of the trumpet when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. They devoted the city to the Lord God Almighty and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it--men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys (20-21). Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord's house (19).

General Joshua commanded to protect Rahab the prostitute and her family three times in this passage (17,22,25). Rahab the prostitute was precious in the sight of God. But human beings can ignore such people after the victory. Even after the victory, General Joshua wanted to spare Rahab the prostitute. It is important to honor a woman of God in the midst of war.

At last Joshua pronounced this solemn oath, "Cursed before the Lord is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho"(26). The people of Israel in the desert knew how precious an oasis was and how fertile

the land of Jericho was. There were many people of Israel who wanted to rebuild something there. But Joshua wanted to destroy completely and never build anything according to God's command.

We are God's soldiers; some, generals, some, lieutenant generals. We are very precious people in the sight of God. Therefore, we must think of ourselves that we are soldiers of God's army. If we forget that we must render victory to God, we render defeat to God. May God bless us when we render victory to God in the daily battle and frequent wars as God's people.