

SERMON: Our Walls Come Tumbling Down**GOOD Morning OIC AND WELCOME TO FATHER'S HOUSE**

In my last Message, **God's Game Changer – Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead**, I closed my Message with:

REJOICE AND GET TO WORK GIVING YOUR FAITH AWAY

The more a Christian gives his faith away, the more He receives from God by Holy Spirit to keep giving! Before Jesus returned to Heaven He wasted no time to get His troops to work, His soldiers in God's Army. They were rejoicing in His Resurrection. Jesus led them back to work for men's souls. Reading in **(Mark 16.14)** *Still later he appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating together. He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead.*

Likely the low classification of women in the Jewish Culture had some part in their not believing the women's message. These women saw the Two Angels, and heard their Word from God. Mary Magdalene even saw the Lord....yet the Apostle men refused to believe these fellow Believers. Jesus gave them no such excuse. For we read in **(Mark 16.14-16)** *He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead. 15 And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. 16 Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.*

The only joy greater than a Living Faith that "He is Risen,"...

is leading a lost sinner to believe it with you! He is Risen indeed!

This morning we return to the history of Joshua as he led God's people, the Israelites, into their Promised Land. This was the Land of Canaan. We will look at evidence from archaeology that confirms that "the walls came tumbling down!" Canaan was occupied by many warlike clans or nations. Each had its own king to rule and direct wars against neighboring nations. The King of Jericho commanded much fear and respect. His city was considered to be *invincible* in war. Now God shows His mighty power over anyone or any power resisting His will for His Chosen People. He would make Jericho, and its walls, crumble down before the Israelite Army.

THE FALL OF JERICHO – GOD'S PLAN FULFILLED

God's plan for Victory against Jericho is given in **(Joshua 6.3-5)** *3 You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days. 4 Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. 5 When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams' horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town.*”

DAY ONE is recorded in **(Joshua 6.8-11)**

8 After Joshua spoke to the people, the seven priests with the rams' horns started marching in the presence of the LORD, blowing the horns as they marched. And the Ark of the LORD's Covenant followed behind them. 9 Some of the armed men marched in front of the priests with the horns and some behind the Ark, with the priests continually blowing the horns. 10 “Do not shout; do not even talk,” Joshua commanded. “Not a single word from any of you until I tell you to shout. Then shout!” 11 So the Ark of the LORD was carried around the town once that day, and then everyone returned to spend the night in the camp.

AFTER SIX DAYS OF THE SAME MARCH- DAY SEVEN recorded in **(Joshua 6.15-19)** *15 On the seventh day the Israelites got up at dawn and marched around the town as they had done before. But this time they went around the town seven times. 16 The seventh time around, as the priests sounded the long blast on their horns, Joshua commanded the people, “Shout! For the LORD has given you the town! 17 Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies. 18 “Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. 19 Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the LORD and must be brought into his treasury.” 20 When the people heard the sound of the rams' horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites **charged straight into the town and captured it.** 21 They completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys.*

In **(Joshua 6.15)** we read: ***But this time they went around the town seven times.*** God was reminding His people that He as the Creator of all things rested on the Seventh Day after creating

everything in Heaven and on Earth. We read this in **(Genesis 2.2)** *On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work.* Now, you might say:” But Pastor Bruce, they have swords in their hands to battle and take the city of Jericho.” God's point was that He really is working to make this *impossible* Victory ...possible. His supernatural power to collapse the walls as the soldiers rested as an audience watches at a play at the Kabuki Theater or a movie. God did the work, the supernatural to create a Victory by destroying an invincible Wall.

GOD HATES SIN AND MUST DESTROY IT ALL

Reading **(Joshua 6.17)** : *Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies.*

There were many battles of conquest by the Israelites traveling to the Promised Land. God commanded the leader, Moses, and now Joshua, *everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the LORD.*

God saw the “big picture” of sin. He is above time. He sees the effect that sin will have many years into the future, as well as the present time. Sinful people in all the Earth had descended from Noah with many skilled writers and the tradition of story telling. Those generations who refused to hand down the *truth* known to them, created a people ignorant to the Holiness and Righteousness of God. Ignorance is no excuse with God. He has said in **(Romans 1.20)** *For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.* If we saw what God looked at, the sickening and disgusting perversions of these people, adults with children and with animals, we would not hesitate to use the sword in obedience to God's Command.

Only since Jesus' Cross of suffering can such sins be washed clean. On Good Friday I was reminded of a unique worship song, “*This Blood Is For You.*” This was done by a Christian singer famous in America from 1980-1990. His stage name was Carman. His real name was Carmelo Domenic Licciardello. His most famous song about Jesus' Crucifixion is, *This Blood Is For You.* The refrain includes “**And this blood can save the soul.**” The words are mostly fictitious but bring to mind true events of Roman soldiers torturing Jesus: “**Violently they grabbed His arms as they tightly strapped each wrist, With the hellish looks that a strong armed soldier whip**

clenched in his fist, Laced with chips of bone they beat Him hard from His shoulders to His feet, It sliced right through His olive skin, Just like razors through a sheet.” Now Carman has taken “poetic license” for the Bible never has Jesus speaking words to a soldier at His whipping, such as **“This Blood is For You!”**. I believe this is more than acceptable! Carman has presented an emotional picture that glorifies our Lord Jesus and His forgiveness for those who murdered Him...even me and you! And we know that the Holy Spirit says *“‘This Blood Is For You’ every time that Jesus Christ crucified is preached.* And He will say so until the end of the age. For the Bible, as well as Carman's song, tells us of Jesus' words for Father God's forgiveness. These words are for all, even the most disgusting sinners on the Earth. In **(Luke 23.32-34)** we read:
32 Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. 33 When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

Carman's poetic license is in words that could have been spoken, and the Holy Spirit still speaks. The fictitious soldier who Carman pictures was blessed because he heard and feared the message. The real soldiers who gambled for Jesus' clothes missed it! The song says: **“Then surprisingly He {Jesus} turned His head though the words He used were few, the soldiers face turned pale when He said, “This Blood Is For You.”**

I believe that Carman was a gifted Christian who was concerned about immature and superficial Christianity. There are Christians who see a world where sin is not **that serious**, devils are only in **our imagination**, and the Cross is only **a pretty ornament** hanging around our necks! Now please understand that many Christians wear a silver or gold Cross showing their love of their Saviour. My children do too. I expect Carman did. I am pointing to what we communicate or preach by our apparel to the world of sinners.

If I read his theology correctly, I agree with Carman's goals of ministry in music! **(Luke 23.33)** **says:** *When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross.* Most of our songs use the word “Calvary” for the place of Jesus' Crucifixion. But this word is Latin for “skull.” It just sounds nicer. Now, we do not want to scare sinners away from the Gospel. Yet I was amazed to hear how the movie *“The Passion of Christ”* was very popular in Japan. This movie was very bloody and also accurate about Roman Crucifixion methods. So maybe we have

gone too far to “clean up” the Passion of Christ for sinners even here in Japan. Would we hang a model of an electric chair as on Death Row in prison; or a gallows for hanging around our neck? That is what *Calvary* was for our Jesus.

I think that the Bible shows us, in the conquest of Jericho, this seriousness in understanding just how detestable sin is to God. It cost Jesus His life! So we see in **(Joshua 6.17)** *Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the LORD*. Jesus was taken to a place of horror and death, *The Skull*. But there on the Cross, He delivered us from sin, death and the devil. We realize how before Jesus' Cross the only way to get rid of sin was to get rid of the sinner.

Therefore...We all with joy and great humility exclaim with the Apostle Paul what he wrote about the gift, Jesus, to the Church at Corinth. He said in (2 Corinthians 9.15) : *Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!*

NO SPOILS OF WAR IN GOD'S JUDGMENT

(Joshua 6.18-19) 18 *“Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. 19 Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the LORD and must be brought into his treasury.”* When God declared a town with its people as *devoted to destruction*, no material goods, can be taken as spoil for the soldiers. Precious metal items must be brought into God's treasury. God did not always do this. He, as Judge of all the Earth, made these decisions. Putting the spoils into God's treasury removed from men the claims for material as a prize for killing sinners under God's Judgment. It was God's righteous judgment, not the righteousness of the soldiers who killed them, that warranted death to sinners.

(Joshua 6.20-21) 20 *When the people heard the sound of the rams' horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites **charged straight into the town and captured it.** 21 They completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys.*

ARCHEOLOGY AND FAITH AT JERICHO

I was blessed as a young Born-again Christian to accept all the Bible as true. This was before my seminary training. That training strengthened my faith in God's Word. It also helped me see the freedom of using my scientific mind under, not over, the authority of the Bible. Even my sinful past science was something God uses for Jesus' glory. I believe that true scientists in their seeking Truth in nature, will hear Holy Spirit whispers toward Jesus and the Gospel.

Joshua and the Battle of Jericho may be the Bible event most discussed and debated by archaeologists. Another probably is Noah and the Flood. Christian scientists like Dr. Bryant Wood are only possible due to the influence of Saint Augustine. Aurelius Augustine was the **bishop of Hippo** (now Annaba, Algeria) from 396 to 430 A.D. His famous quote, “**All truth is God's truth**” changed history. His Christlike life, and solid Bible Theology, led future Christians to move into scientific pursuits. This freedom in true science produced theories that led to space travel and huge mercy to mankind via medical research and Christian archaeologists like Dr. Wood.

There is a study shown on YouTube study in the Expedition Bible Series with Dr. Bryant Wood, a Christian archaeologist. He declares his faith in the Bible account as true even if the investigation of Jericho disagrees. His new book on “ancient Pottery” makes sense when we find that styles of pottery can be used to date a buried city like Jericho. Even as today, styles change over time. Dr. Wood summarizes the three recognized quality excavations of Jericho:

1907 the German Team - Seller & Watzinger

1930 John Garstang

1950 Kathleen Kenyon

Dr. Wood reveals that only one of these three, Kathleen Kenyon, rejected the Biblical Text. She did “bad science” by making her conclusion of something she did not find that she expected. That was pottery from Cyprus. Good science evaluates what you find and see. Dr. Wood further showed Kenyon's error, as the other archaeologists found copies, or generic versions, of the pottery current in Syria in 1406BC. This is the date Bible scholars place on Joshua's Victory against Jericho. As a former scientist I agree with Dr. Wood that making a conclusion on something you do not see, find, or measure is “bad science.”

Furthermore, the details Dr. Wood showed at Jericho which are still visible even today, are of a wall collapsing straight down upon itself. The red brick wall crumbled like a cupcake, then the broken brick pieces spread outward and formed a ramp. This ramp allowed ease of entrance for the

Israelite soldiers. This is seen in the best Older Testament translation, *The Septuagint*, in **(Joshua 6.20/ TSGA-KJ21)** *And the priests sounded with the trumpets; and when the people heard the trumpets, all the people shouted at once with loud and strong shout, and all the wall fell round about, and all the people **went up into the city**:....* The ramp effect that the archaeologists saw at Jericho is why the Bible says *the people **went up into the city***. **(Note Dr. Wood's diagram on the overhead.)** The Israelites had to go up to enter the city as there was a retaining wall at the foot of the big red brick wall. So, in this case God has allowed “true science” by truth seekers, to corroborate with or to confirm the Bible. Just as St. Augustine said: “All truth is God's Truth.”

(Joshua 6.21-23) *21 They completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys. 22 Meanwhile, Joshua said to the two spies, “Keep your promise. Go to the prostitute’s house and bring her out, along with all her family.” 23 The men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and all the other relatives who were with her. They moved her whole family to a safe place near the camp of Israel.*

We see in the Older Testament of the Bible a rule, that the only way to get rid of sin was to get rid of the sinner. This was before Jesus' Cross. But we see here that Joshua reminded the soldiers to keep their promise to Rahab, the prostitute. This is actually keeping a Promise of God. For we read poetry by Balaam, the prophet. He was looking down from a mountain top upon the multitude of Israelites traveling towards Canaan. This is in **(Numbers 24.8-9)**

God brought them out of Egypt;
for them he is as strong as a wild ox.
He devours all the nations that oppose him,
breaking their bones in pieces,
shooting them with arrows.
9 Like a lion, Israel crouches and lies down;
like a lioness, who dares to arouse her?
Blessed is everyone who blesses you, O Israel,
and cursed is everyone who curses you.”

Rahab was clearly one who blessed Israel as she showed her faith their God, the only true God. He spared her life and she lived for Him. She even became a part of the Messiah Jesus' Family tree or lineage.

FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

The generations who refused to hand down the *truth* known to them, created a people ignorant to the Holiness and Righteousness of God. Ignorance is no excuse with God. The LORD knows how our hearts wander from His love and instructions. The strong reminder of this is given in the Older Testament after the Israelites saw God give the Ten Commandments as Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. We read this in **(Deuteronomy 4.9-10) 9** *“But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren. 10 Never forget the day when you stood before the LORD your God at Mount Sinai, where he told me, ‘Summon the people before me, and I will personally instruct them. Then they will learn to fear me as long as they live, and they will teach their children to fear me also.’*

On this side of Jesus' Cross, Christians are no longer under the Law. But this warning is still for today. In Jesus, the Gospel is TRUTH and His Law is LOVE. Every Christian parent has a mission field, their children.

Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him. in (Psalm 127.3). Christian parents find great joy in their children. A responsibility to God comes also. I know of a Japanese Pastor frustrated at her congregation's refusal to teach Jesus to their children. This is not only in Japan. I heard similar stories from Sunday School teachers in America. “They expect us to do all the work to teach their children about Jesus!”

Our evangelism and priesthood of all believers begins in our own family. Children have a natural way of looking at their parents as to God. They often hide this from you. Don't believe it! You are the best teacher by both life style and testimony to save your children from the wrath of God's judgment that we all deserve. Also, don't hide the judgment of God to sinners in the Older Testament. They will soon see movies and television with violence without any righteousness! **(Proverbs 1.7) says:** *Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.* Children also can feel the importance of this verse before they understand much of life. I have met few children, or non-Christians, who don't want to run and hide when they hear a thunderbolt near them.

THE GLORY AND DANGERS OF THE LAST DAYS -THIS SIDE OF THE CROSS

The Dangers of the Last Days

Modern times has us closer to end of History when God closes the books for Mankind. It is easy to wish we had an easier world to keep the Faith in. We neglect to remember that many Christians in the 1st Century of the Church were martyred, or forced to leave their homes to escape death.

The Apostle Paul says in **(2 Timothy 3.2-3)** *You should know this, Timothy, that **in the last days** there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good.*

The Glory of the Last Days

The Apostles Paul and Peter knew how Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection ushered in the New Age. The Day of Pentecost defined this as the Age of the Holy Spirit. These last days may be *difficult* before Christ's return to rescue all of us from this world. But, when I consider what I deserved for my sin, I thank God that I was born on *This side of Jesus' Cross*. God has showed He has chosen and accepted us Believers in Jesus by placing His Spirit within each of us. Yet, before we accepted Christ, we were no better than the sinners fighting for the King of Jericho against God and His chosen people. But God called us His own and washed away our sins with Jesus' Blood. He has given us His faithful Promises. His seal is like that of a king in ancient days. Such seals are still used for documents in Japan. His seal is to show that He will keep His Promises. His seal is His own Holy Spirit.

SABBATH REST – ALREADY AND NOT YET

So, knowing this, Dear Christian brothers and sisters, we have the blessing of Holy Spirit inside us. Yes, God's almighty power is inside us yet we live in a world getting more difficult until the End of Time. We are much like the Israelites standing by while God performs the destruction of the immovable and invincible wall before them. The immovable wall of our sin was crumbled to pieces by Jesus' Sacrificial Death and Resurrection. We had no part in His Work. **Jesus paid it all.** The Apostle Paul wrote this to Christians in **(Ephesians 2.8-9)** *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.* Jesus declared on His Cross: *"It is Finished. Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."* in **(John 19.30).**

When we sinners were born-again we experienced peace like never before. **THIS IS THE ALREADY OF SALVATION.** Just as the Bible promises in **(Romans 5.1-2)** *Therefore, since we have been made right in **God's** sight by faith, we have **peace with God** because of what Jesus Christ*

*our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing **God's** glory.* But before long, young Christians sense there is a spiritual being attacking their peace. Like the Israelites after they had watched their immovable wall crumble, they suddenly realize that those swords in their hands are not by accident. God did the miracle of crumbling the Wall, but now they must fight. But as God promised to crumble the wall at Jericho, He has promised that Christians cannot lose the fight. Our lives have periods of joy and peace beyond measure; and, also spiritual battles against the devil's lies to discourage. His lies will crumble like the red bricks at Jericho because Jesus' Blood has not lost its power. **“This Blood is for Us!”** Our unending bliss and peace is still ahead. Let us keep our confidence in God's Promises. God's armor is omnipotent. We should shout for Victory in Jesus as Joshua commanded *“Shout! For the LORD has given you the town!”* God has given us eternal life...a much greater gift than a town. We have as in **(Romans 5.2)** *undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing **God's** glory. **That glory will be complete and never ending when we see Jesus!*** **THIS IS THE NOT YET OF SALVATION!**

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus...

Let Us Pray,

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