

## **Boldly Going Where No Man Has Gone Before – Part 8:**

### **Joshua Chapter 6:26-27.**

#### **A Prophetic Testimony.**

1. Do you recall the angel that Joshua met on the road? (retell the story AGAIN).
  - a. I shared with you that the angel's assignment was to tear down the spiritual supports that held up the walls of the city. In other words, to literally remove the obstacles to victory that Joshua needed.
  - b. In Psalm 103:19-21 *"The LORD has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything. 20 Praise the LORD, you angels of his, you mighty creatures who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. 21 Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will!" (NLT).*
    - i. We aren't going to do a study on angels...but it is important for us to understand that angels do have an assignment. They are assigned to "carry out God's plans" or literally to enforce and to carry out the decrees (declarations) of God. I urge you sometime to do a search for angel/angels in Studylight.org and read what the angels actually DO. It is absolutely amazing! They do stuff in the heavenly places that shows up in the physical realm.
2. The Israelite army has just achieved their greatest victory. They had faced down an enemy behind 50 foot high walls and watched the power of God destroy the obstacles to their objective. They had seen the strong hold of their enemy torn down and destroyed.
  - a. Now as they stand on the ruins of their enemy, Joshua calls them together and has them make a strong oath.
  - b. Joshua 6:26-27 *"Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates." 27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land."*
    - i. **An oath is a binding declaration that ties our words to our actions.**
      1. One of the reasons that the bible speaks so strongly about oaths is that they have a forceful and binding power in eternity. Your words have a creative and a destructive force to them. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 *"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment."*
      2. The "name it and claim it" folks have a correct understanding of the power of words, they simply overemphasize and misapply this truth. *Don't throw away a biblical truth because someone misapplies it.*
    - ii. Joshua tells that whoever rebuilds this fortress (which is now a heap of ruins as a testimony to God's desire to destroy strongholds), that they will be under a great curse: his eldest son shall die when he begins the work, and, the finishing of his work shall be attended with the funeral of his youngest.
3. **Why does God not want them to rebuild Jericho?**
  - a. For the Israelites, it is a fortress of the enemy that must be in ruins as a reminder, literally as a testimony to God's action and character.
  - b. As long as the city remained in ruins, it would be a testimony that God is who He says He is.
  - c. Every time a father would pass that ruined city with his family, he could recount the saving power of God to his children.
4. Let me side track on **the prophetic power of a testimony**. *I alluded to this before our testimony time this morning.*
  - a. In Revelation 19:10b we are told *"for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*
    - i. I believe the bible takes for granted what we miss, that is that there is a prophetic power in a testimony.

- ii. Let me make a few definitions here:
  1. **Prophecy** is about what God is going to do or is doing and reveals the heart of God toward us. It **reveals the heart and will of God**. Do you understand that in its simplest form?
    - a. Eg: Old testament prophets showed the heartache of God for His people and His desire to have a relationship with them. They showed the future plan of God which reveals the Father's heart for mankind in the promise of a Savior.
  2. **Testimony** is the his-story of what God has done, experientially, in the lives of people. It **is the re-telling of what God has done**.
    - a. The root word for the Hebrew word for Testimony is "to repeat or to do again."
    - b. It is the written or spoken record of anything that God has done in history.
    - c. Are you a part of history? Has God done something in your life? Then you have a testimony to tell! What has He done?
  3. This passage in Joshua is a testimony with prophetic power, it is a prophetic declaration that anyone who tries to rebuild the ruins that God had made would do so at a terrible personal cost. I won't take you there, but you don't have to go very far forward, a couple of hundred years, (1 Kings) to find someone who tried to rebuild Jericho and it cost him his children.
- b. So what is this stuff about the prophetic power of a testimony? Let me explain.
  - i. One of the primary reasons I felt that we needed to have testimony time during our services was so that we could rejoice together in what God is doing in our midst. And that is true. But I have discovered that there are bigger reasons that God wants us to do it!
    1. There is power in the testimony of what God has done because it testifies to who God is and what His heart is for us.
      - a. In other words, there is prophetic power in testimonies because it is through testimonies that our faith is stirred and we believe God for what His heart is for us.
      - b. In fact, I would even go so far as to say, that **a testimony is a DECLARATION of God's intent to act on our behalf.**
      - c. And what does God use to carry our and enforce His declarations? Angels.
      - d. The net result is that **a testimony given in faith, actually CAUSES a shift in the supernatural spiritual atmosphere where it is given.** (Angels go to work, faith is released, God's heart is revealed). And it is easier for people to come to meet with God.
        - i. Have you ever been in a service where someone gives a word from the Lord and the whole place feels like God just moved in? We experienced it here the past couple of weeks! This is the power of the prophetic. The same is true for the testimony, when it is given and received in faith.
  - ii. All of this to say, that a testimony becomes a prophetic declaration of God's heart toward us.
    - i. When Melissa shared last week about the cyst on her hand disappearing, I was in awe of God. I am sure we all were. I was rather surprised at how casually some of you responded to that testimony...as if it weren't anything special.
    - ii. **We all applauded God for what HE HAD DONE but we all missed what God WANTED TO DO in our midst as a direct result of that testimony!**
      1. *God was revealing His heart toward us* and had changed the spiritual climate in our meeting. I missed it, and maybe you did too. He desires to do MORE with us and in us.

2. When one person shares a testimony of a healing or a provision (of protection or finances) our faith is stirred. If we have a similar need, our heart cries out, “I want that, God!”
  3. This morning with the testimonies about Job Provision... was your heart stirred to desire God and all that He has? Was your faith stirred or were you content to say, “that’s nice going God, good job!”
  - d. There is yet another bothersome truth about faith. It works best through love. If you don’t believe that God loves you, you will seldom see the miraculous works of God on your behalf. Why would you? You can’t fathom Him caring enough for you to do so.
    - i. A lot of us believe God can heal us, but few of us believe He WANTS to heal us.
    - ii. So when we declare the works of God, we release a creative, prophetic anointing that changes the atmosphere. We release the revelation of the heart of God... saying “*I DO love you and care about the minute details of your life!*”
    - iii. **We cannot separate the Words of God from the Works of God.**
      1. **The declared testimony creates access for the very anointing that brought about the testimony in the first place** – which was released through a declaration – to bring it about again! (that is why oaths are so irrevocable, they bind words to actions).
      2. The testimony of God MUST be declared, as there is a clear connection between the declaration and the release of power.
  - e. **Herein is the power of testimony.** It is like a raging firestorm. The more we tell what God has done, the more we release the power of faith to work in our lives.
    - i. Testimony to what God has done in supernatural ways unleashes the fires of revival!
    - ii. **Revival shouldn’t be the exception but the rule. The invasion of the Presence of God displaces the prince of darkness and the result is that people experience the life and power of the Kingdom. Bodies are healed, souls are delivered and saved, and believers grow in unity and society is transformed.**
    - iii. Revival wasn’t meant to be a refreshing time for the church and then we go back to living in the dark ages until God meets us again. Revival was meant to be the norm. The first century church is the norm.
      1. Because revivals have only lasted a few years at a time, we have interpreted our theology based on our experience (bad) that God only does it this way. But the truth revealed in God’s word is that revival is the norm of the Christian life! Beware when we rewrite history to make us comfortable with our failures rather than write it based on the nature of God!
      2. Jesus showed us what one person could do with the Spirit of God without measure. What could millions do?
5. Back to Jericho and Joshua: As we have studied this book of the bible, we have also talked about the parallels between the book of Joshua and the Christian life.
- a. Crossing the Jordan – Entering the new life of the Kingdom of God and the Spirit.
  - b. Jericho – the fortress blocking the conquest.
    - i. I told you last week that Jericho represented the enemy’s stronghold upon the land of Canaan, and that it blocked the conquest. It had to be eliminated before the conquest could begin in earnest
  - c. But keep in mind, Jericho has a parallel to the Christian.
    - i. If you rebuild it, it will be a constant reminder of your past life. And not only will it remind you of the past, but as long as it is there, you will always have the temptation to go and habitate that place again. But, if it destroyed, you can’t go live there anymore.
  - d. What has God destroyed in our lives?
    - i. Micah 7:19 says he casts our sins (all our failures) into the depths of the sea,

- ii. God has destroyed our past. Paul says in Galatians 2:20, "*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*"
- e. Last week I asked you what major enemy strong hold exists in our lives right after we become Christians? You all answered correctly...the flesh. (the old nature, the old way of thinking and doing things, the old wineskin).
- f. Joshua 6:26-27 "*Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates." 27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.*"
  - i. Why was this cursed placed upon Jericho? If you remember, this city represented the stronghold of the enemy. To allow it to be rebuilt would be paramount to surrendering their inheritance in the land.
  - ii. If Jericho represents your flesh, what does that say about the Christian life? You were delivered from the flesh, because you were crucified with Christ. You no longer live, but Christ lives in you! You cannot go back to living according to the flesh. It would be paramount to surrendering all that Jesus won for you!
- g. Let me contrast "spirit" and "flesh" for us. When we come to Christ, we are delivered from our overt fleshy sins. We don't just "try" to give them up, we shed them because they died with us. Many of us part ways with lust, smoking, drunkenness, promiscuity, etc. And many of us find that there are a few pieces of that flesh hanging on us, and most of us are tormented by our frequent failures to shake that off. The more we try the more we fail, and the more shame and guilt and beat up we get.
  - i. But we forget that wasn't how we got victory in the first place, why do we think we can get do it by our efforts again? Jericho fell because of the spiritual realm, and our flesh will only act dead when our focus and hearts are consumed by the spirit of God.
    1. "*Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*"
    2. We are called to move to the deeper things of God, not to keep fighting the same battles over and over again.
      - a. Last Sunday evening, we were talking about confession of sin, and I shared that as I move closer to God, I find myself confessing fewer and fewer flesh sins and more sins of the heart and intent. In fact, when I am not enjoying the presence of God and am consumed by stuff of the world, I feel empty. I cannot go back and forth from spirit realm to physical realm and back again. I gotta stay in the spiritual realm. Walk by the Spirit. That's what I desire more than ever now! Consume my heart o God! Let me ache for your presence!
      - b. We tend weave back and forth between the spirit and the flesh, as if we are turning a light switch off and on and off and on. But the truth is, God wants our hearts on Him. He wants our switch stuck in the ON position. That's where the world changing changes take place.
  - ii. To walk by the spirit – with our attention on heaven's priorities and not on the desires or priorities of the flesh (which are buying, building, or feeding its desires). Walking by the Spirit has its attention on what God is doing. Your eyes are on your master, not on what you want.
    1. Walking by the Spirit or the flesh is a bit like the difference between a trained bird dog and an indulged lap dog.
      - a. The trained dog will ignore and not be distracted by the scents of anything but what he is seeking for his master. He pursues relentlessly and without divided heart, the will of his master...which is the birds which are hidden in the brush.

