

Great Moments in Faith: Jericho Falls

Passage: Joshua 6:1-15. Jericho falls to the Israelites

Background: The Israelites have just left the wilderness after forty years and are taking their first steps to conquering the entire area as God promised they would. This is their first taste of battle in the conquest west of the Jordan River.

Don't Miss: There are a lot of things going on in this story. First, Jericho is here being offered as a "first fruits" sacrifice where the first of every harvest is offered to God in faith that more would come. Everything here belonged to God as an act of faith that more would come in time. Second, the people are naturally nervous and uncertain. God steps in and takes over. This is tailor made to make the point that the people had nothing to do with this victory. It is God's, and God will continue to fight.

Third, this is the only miracle of this nature from here on in. Other miracles happen, but the people always had to fight from here on. This is the conquest with training wheels to get people used to the fight, and to convince them that God will continue to be on their side. And yes, these actions would have been just as strange to them as to us.

What would this have been like if you put yourself in the shoes of....

Joshua: You are one of the two oldest people in camp. God has spoken to you but you have to convince the people to believe you for a week when you know how fickle and weak they are.

The Israelites: You have been promised the victory but you look like an idiot, wasting a week while people mock you. Then you have to give up everything in the city and move on.

People of Jericho: You have heard of the Israelites as a group of warriors but they just walk around praying and chanting for an entire week.

Rehab: You saved the spies because you believed God was working for the Israelites. But now they just walk around, seemingly powerless to get in. Then when they do get in you watch everyone around you die.

Questions:

- Why was this event so important for the Israelites? For God?
- Sometimes God asks us to do things that are purposefully odd so we can show our faith and trust before God asks. What aspects of our life are like this?
- What first fruits of our own do we have that we can give to God?
- How long would you have walked around the walls with people laughing at you? One day? Two? All Seven?
- Was walking around the walls really important? Why did God act when they did that?
- How did this story prepare the Israelites for the war ahead where there wouldn't always be miracles in their battles?

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The Sticking Points (Take-Away Talking Points):

- Miracles aren't always short and they don't always amaze people. Sometimes they take forever and people laugh at them until the end.
- Other people might laugh at you, but follow God anyway, right up to the end.
- A good start is important for a long journey, and whatever we do our first steps should be steps of faith.
- Sometimes God uses a small act to test our faith and see if we're ready before entrusting us with something bigger.