

'THIS IS WAR_ The Reality of Spiritual Warfare_ CHARGE!

Open your Bibles to **Joshua chapter 6**: As in times past, I suggest you bookmark it, because we're going to be digesting it in sections. ¹ **Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.** ² **Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.** ³ **March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days.** ⁴ **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.** ⁵ **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."** Okay, take note of a couple things here. God had already delivered the city into their hands. It was there for the taking. Yet, there's the rub_ they had to "take" it_ and in order to do so, they were going to have a fight on their hands.

Let Jericho serve as a symbol of the stronghold of Satan. He has possession of so much of that which God intends for us_ peace, joy, blessings beyond measure. He **stole it all away in the Garden_** but I believe God says the time has now come for us to reclaim it. It's time to listen to Him, get into formation and **MARCH FORWARD.**

⁶ **So Joshua son of Nun 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."** ⁷ **And he ordered the people, "Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD."** ⁸ **When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them.** ⁹ **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.** ¹⁰ **But 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!"** ¹¹ **So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the people returned to camp and spent the night there.** ¹² **Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.** ¹³ **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 and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding.** ¹⁴ **So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.** So, here we go. God's plan for them to experience victory would take time and effort on their part.

He didn't drop it all in their lap. In fact they were going to have to go more than a few laps before that would happen. They were told to: **"ADVANCE! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD."** For all intent and purposes, they were led around the mile long perimeter by the LORD Himself. That's the image of the ark. As far as military strategy is concerned, the plan didn't make any sense. It would take 1-2 hours to move the entire parade of people around the city even once_ and I could imagine some would have been tempted to complain: *"Why do we have to do this? It's silly. Why doesn't God just give us the city?"* But, guess what? The people were not permitted to say a word. Not so much as a peep. This is difficult to imagine...for sometimes waiting quietly on the Lord is the hardest of all battles.

¹⁵ **On the seventh day, they 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.** ¹⁶ **The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!"** ¹⁷ **"The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent.**

¹⁸ But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹ All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury." ²⁰ When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and 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, devoting the city to the LORD..." The day finally came.

They were told to do more of the same. Being obedient, they marched around the city **7** times. Then, they shouted, sounded the trumpets, and the walls came tumbling down. The barrier keeping them from the riches the Lord had for them had been removed_ not by their strength, but by the mighty power of God. And when they saw this_ **EVERY MAN CHARGED STRAIGHT IN**. I am convinced this morning that if we are going to retrieve whatever Satan has stolen from us, we're going to have to do the same. If we are going to reclaim territory in God's kingdom, we are going to have to aggressively advance; to be more purposeful in our obedience and much bolder in our witness. Now_ I don't know where you are on your journey, but here are some observations...

Maybe you're just now recognizing that the life you're living is full of heartache and hardship_ yet devoid of the good things God wants for you to have. If so, it's time for you to make a decision. Will you join in the formation? Will you get in line with the people of God and follow Him to receive what He purposes for you to have? How do you do that? It may not make sense, but here are your marching orders. The **LORD** says you are to publically confess your faith in Jesus' sacrifice for your sins. He then commands that you be baptized in water as proof of your desire to have your sins washed away and your willingness to commit to him as the Lord of your life. Some think such a plan is silly. Why do I have to do this? Wrong question. Do you want what to receive all that God has in store for you? Salvation, forgiveness, eternal life; Peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; A meaningful and abundant life in the here and now.

Maybe you've all done that already, but thought everything would immediately be released into your hands. Now, you feel like you're just going around in circles. It seems you're getting nowhere. Don't give up now. Keep marching until the walls come down. It may be **7** days, or **7** weeks or **7** months_ or it may be on your **7th** lap today. But if you'll hang in there, being faithful to do what the **LORD** says to do, whatever stands between you and your blessing will be removed. Having said this: realize that just because you want something doesn't mean God wants it for you. Not everything you desire will fulfill or bless you. But, I assure you, God has far better things in mind than you might think.

Finally_ maybe today is your day. The **LORD** is speaking to your heart even now_ saying it's your time. If so, rush in. Charge in right now and lay claim to what God has already decided is to be yours. How? I'm not a prosperity preacher. Though physical health and wealth are of primary concern to most of us_ they are not God's #1 concern for our lives. **He is more concerned for our character than our comfort and our transformation than the treasures of this world.** And though we are almost always focused on material things, God wants us to think about hearts and souls. Satan has taken many captive and as soldiers of the cross, it's our calling to charge into the fray and rescue them for Jesus. Yet, having said this_ I personally do not want to miss out on a single blessing the **LORD** does want me to have. In fact, verse **17 & 20** of the text says that everything they reclaimed was to be **devoted to the Lord**. If that's our sincere intent, I can't imagine God withholding resources for the advancement of the kingdom. Paul says in **Romans 8:32** "**He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all--how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?**" And Jesus said that if we, the church, will charge in_ the very gates of hell shall not prevail!