



Jericho: And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Date: Sunday 3rd October **Speaker:** Jo Ramdas-Harsia (Central AM) & Adam Pipe (South AM & Central PM)
Key Verses: Joshua 6

Talk Summary:

Part 1 – The gates of Jericho were barred shut and the Israelites faced **insurmountable obstacles** to conquering the city and the Promised Land. Some of us feel like we are facing the gates of Jericho, there are situations in our lives, in our families, in our workplaces and in our relationships which seem to be tightly shut. We need God to open up those situations for us. The walls of Jericho collapsed (6:20) and God turned them into a gateway for his promise. In 6:2 God says to Joshua **‘See I have’** given Jericho to you. God wants to give Joshua eyes of faith rather than focussing on the locked gates and the fortified walls. Sometimes all we can see are the problems, difficulties and challenges we face which are overwhelming. God wants to open our eyes to see him and what he has done. In 6:3-5 God gives the Israelites a **battle plan of obedience**. God offends the mind to reveal the heart. One of the major emphasises of the book of Joshua is obedience to God’s covenant. The people had walked in circles grumbling for 40 years (moving but not changing) and God is now calling them to a new kind of circling. The Israelites had to **trust in God’s presence** (note emphasis on the Ark of the Covenant), **trust in God’s power** (6:10 they had to circle in silence) and **trust in God’s promise**. God is calling us to obediently trust in him as we live between the now and the not yet of the Kingdom.

Part 2: the Elephant in the Room (6:21,24) - When we read Joshua we see huge amounts of violence. Men, women, children and animals are slaughtered by the Israelites. God is seen as someone who commands the Israelites to commit genocide. We don’t know what to do with verses like these. Often we try and come up with an elaborate explanation for them trying to justify the violence we see, or we question the God whom we put our faith in, or most often we embarrassingly ignore them...and they become the elephant in the room. God is not offended or angry with our questions. When we read our Bible and when we come to church we don’t have to leave our brains at the door. The book of Joshua is written in the same genre as other ancient near eastern conquest accounts. The style of this type of writing is to engage in hyperbole *‘exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.’* **Jesus is God’s selfie** (Hebrews 1:3) It is Jesus who finally and fully reveals to humanity what God is really like. The cross is the most definitive revelation of God’s character. How does God ultimately deal with violence? God takes it upon himself exhausting it of its power and setting us free. Jesus is the new and greater Joshua who has

come to bring salvation to the whole world. We must read Joshua backward in the light of Jesus and his revelation of how salvation comes and whom it encompasses.

Resource referred to in the talk: : Meghan Larissa Good, The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1513802348/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_5562J5JTE6FP3E9CRXGQ

See also: Gregory A. Boyd, Cross Vision: How the Crucifixion of Jesus Makes Sense of Old Testament Violence

https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B074GJSPNZ/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_2TNPRB9BEXS30G1GCTOC

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

1. Does anyone remember singing songs or doing dramas about the walls of Jericho coming tumbling down when they were young? (could use as a welcome/icebreaker question)
2. What stood out to you from the talk?
3. Where have we see God bring down walls in our lives? Share experiences of impossible experiences where God made a way.
4. Are there things in our lives which feel locked shut and we need God to open them up?
5. Has God ever asked you to do something that didn't seem to make sense at the time?
6. God gave Joshua and the Israelites a battle plan of obedience. Where are we called to trust in God's presence, power and promise as we live between the now and the not yet?
7. How do we react as we read the violent conquest accounts in Joshua? What questions do they raise?
8. How does it help to read the passage backwards through the lens of Jesus who perfectly reveals the heart of the father?
9. In what ways is Jesus a new and greater Joshua?

Witness - How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?