

JOSHUA 6:3-11
BATTLE PLANS?

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 6 as we continue our study through this amazing and important book for us to learn and apply to our lives.

As I have said many times already, the lessons in this book give to us a picture of that Spirit-filled life, of walking in the Spirit.

The children of Israel spent some forty years wandering in the wilderness and it truly is a picture of the carnal life.

Now that was all going to change. They were going to have to learn to walk by faith and trust in the Lord. They were to follow the Lord according to the Word of God.

And, as we have seen, they have crossed the Jordan River and are now in the Promise Land, the land of Canaan.

But that is not the end of the story, far from it. You see, they owned none of the land of Canaan. In fact, all they had to stand upon was the Word of God, the promises of God and thus, this is all a walk of faith on their part.

Now they are going to have to do battle against the enemy to take the land that God had promised them.

And, if you think about it, that too is a picture of the Spirit-filled life. You see, the Promise Land is not heaven because there are battles in the land. But for us, in this world, we will do battle with the enemy of our faith every single day of our lives.

That means that the war we are fighting is not necessarily a physical war, but a spiritual war and we must put on the armor of God to fight against these powers of darkness!

The first battle that the children of Israel will encounter is against Jericho. And Jericho was a strong city. Listen to the description of the walls of the city. We are told,

These walls were structured on a three-tiered plan. The walls started with an earthen rampart, or embankment, which ran from ground level upwards on an incline to a stone retaining wall - the second tier. The stone retaining wall stood 12 to 15 feet in height (4-5m) on top of the earthen embankment . . .

On top of the stone retaining wall, stood another wall made of mud-bricks, 6 feet (2m) thick, and 20 to 26 feet (6-8m) high. Together these two walls combined to form a fortification 32 to 41 feet high.

To put this into perspective, envision a 4-story tall building. Such was the height of the walls of Jericho. On the other side of the double wall, the embankment continued to climb upwards. The third tier was at the very top of the embankment, where yet another mud-brick wall stood.

At their base, the walls of Jericho stood 46 feet (14m) above ground level outside the retaining wall. To the Israelites below, Jericho seemed impenetrable.

- <http://bit.ly/2RDEfoz>

So, for them to defeat the city of Jericho they were going to have to come up with a powerful battle plan. Just trying to get past the walls of the city seemed an impossible task. And there was more than one wall to get through!

That seems to indicate that there is a lot of pressure on Joshua to come up with a strategic plan to get into the city and then defeat the people of Jericho.

But God does not always do it that way and many times He doesn't do it that way! And that can be a problem for us because we want something that makes sense to us. We want something that we think will work and in doing that, in thinking that way, it shows we are not trusting in the Lord and His Word to us!

And that is not a good thing, coming up with our own battle plan. Let me show you what I mean. You may have seen this AT&T commercial, I love it, it makes me laugh and it does drive home the point. It goes like this,

A guy walks into a brake shop and asks the local mechanic who is working on the brakes of a car, "Are you guys good with brakes?"

And he replies, "We're okay!"

"Just okay?" the man who needs brakes done on his car replies.

And the mechanic says, "We've got a saying here. 'If the brakes don't stop it, something will!'"

"That's not a real saying!" he replies back.

And the mechanic responds back, "It is here, I wrote it!"

And then the response back, "Just okay is not okay!"

- AT&T Commercial

As funny as that is, that is what we do with our faith many times. "I will try this and if it doesn't work, something will work!" Okay is not okay! And the reality is, that is not faith, you are just rolling the dice you might say and whatever happens, happens!

True faith, Christian faith is based in the Lord and in the promises of God and not my feelings or what may seem like the appropriate thing to do.

And, as we will see this morning, that is where the children of Israel are at. Trusting in the promises of God by faith and then walking accordingly!

Now you may be wondering where this promise to them is found? First of all, the Lord spoke to Joshua and told him in Joshua 6:2, **“See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.”**

Was that true? Well, yes and no! What I mean by that is yes, God had promised them this great victory against Jericho. And no, because it did not happen yet. The children of Israel were going to have to walk by faith and it is in this that they will see the victory!

I have called this study, ***“Battle Plans?”*** and I have put a question mark in there because we don’t know yet what they are and when we do find out, I think we will still have some questions.

I have broken down these verses here in Joshua chapter 6 like this,

GOD GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO JOSHUA – JOSHUA 6:3-5

JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PRIESTS – JOSHUA 6:6

JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE – JOSHUA 6:7

THE WALK OF FAITH – JOSHUA 6:8-11

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Joshua chapter 6, beginning in verse 3 as we look at the ***“Battle Plans”*** that God has given the children of Israel as they do battle with the people of Jericho.

JOSHUA 6**VERSES 3-5**

Again, we read these stories and we just move on, but think about what the Lord told Joshua the battle plan was. That is the first point I want to look at - ***GOD GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO JOSHUA!***

For six days they would march around the city of Jericho with seven priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant, and the rest of the soldiers, blow the trumpet and return to base camp. And on the seventh day they would go around seven times, the priests would blow their trumpets, they would shout, and the walls would come down!

I don't think Joshua was thinking like this, but I would be. "Okay, do you have a plan B? Do you have any other ideas? Does anyone else up there want to give some input here?"

You see, no matter how you slice this, this was not a great military strategy, from a human perspective!

This is just plan foolishness, again, from a human perspective! What we need to understand is that God's plans are perfect.

Remember what the Lord told Joshua in verse 2 of this chapter, "**... 'See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.'**"

Do you see what the Lord is saying here? It is not Joshua who would give them this victory! It was not the soldiers of Israel who would give them this victory! But it is the Lord who will give them this victory and you can take that to the bank! All they must do is walk by faith!

You see, the Lord is testing their faith because there will be many more battles over the next several years for them to fight and they have to learn to rest in Him, to understand that God will give them the victory as they walk by faith!

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 1:25, **“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“[This is] because the foolish thing [that has its source in] God is wiser than men, and the weak thing [that springs] from God is stronger than men.”**

And the Living Bible puts it like this; **“This so-called ‘foolish’ plan of God is far wiser than the wisest plan of the wisest man, and God in his weakness-Christ dying on the cross-is far stronger than any man.”** May we not forget that!

You see, the difference between the foolishness of man and the foolishness of God is that God is wiser than men and He is stronger than men. So that means anything that He does will be successful, He will win because man cannot stand against God and win!

What do we do when God calls for us to take a step of faith and it seems so foolish, it seems like there is no way that this will work?

I think many times we rebuke Satan for those foolish ideas, and we don’t even give it a second thought that maybe God is speaking to us. Let me share this story with you, it is an amazing story and it shows that the foolishness of God is wiser than man and that the weakness of God is stronger than man.

At one of the pastor's conferences several years ago one of the pastors was sharing this amazing story that happened in his church. There was a young man who just came to the faith, he was a new Christian and this young Christian had such zeal to serve the Lord. But again, he was very young in the faith.

One day he was driving through a very expensive area of California, an exclusive area. Which seems crazy because they are all expensive. But this was one of those very expensive and exclusive areas.

While driving through he felt the Lord telling him to stick his head in a mailbox and yell, ***“Jesus loves you!”***

Can you even imagine! Even if you were 40 years in the Lord that is a tough one!

Well, immediately he rebuked the devil for putting that foolish idea in his head.

Wouldn't you do that? Of course you would.

The problem for this man is that as he continued to drive, he kept feeling the Lord was telling him to do this. And he kept struggling with this, thinking this is foolish, it is ridiculous, but he could not get it out of his mind. Again, I can fully understand this.

Finally, he slowed his car down and saw this big metal mail box and stopped in front of it.

He got out of his car, still feeling foolish, put his head in this big metal mailbox and yelled, ***“Jesus loves you!”*** at the top of his lungs.

And then he ran back to his car to get out of there as fast as he could.

Don't laugh, so would you and so would I!

Think of this man's faith. He stopped his car. He got out of his car. He put his head in a mailbox! Did you get that? He put his head in a mailbox. And then, if that was not enough, he yelled, "***Jesus loves you!***" at the top of his lungs.

I am glad I was not a passenger in his car!

But that is not the end of the story!

You see, before he could leave, he saw this man running out of his house towards him. And, at this point he felt foolish and sorry he had done this.

Again, I can't imagine what this young man was thinking as he saw this young man running after him especially in the days we are living in.

The man ran up to him and came to the car and the young Christian apologized for what he did, and the man stopped him.

He said to this young Christian, "Right before you yelled that I was standing on a chair with a rope around my neck ready to hang myself. And before I did, I just cried out to God and said that if He is real, He needs to show me right now. And as soon as I said that I heard the words, '***Jesus loves you!***' You saved my life!"

Now please, please, please, don't go running around Manitowoc and sticking your head in a mailbox and yelling, "***Jesus loves you!***"

I really don't want to get calls from the Manitowoc police department saying that the people from Calvary Chapel are sticking their heads in mailboxes and yelling, "***Jesus loves you!***" Unless, of course, the Lord is leading you to do that!

Think about this young man's faith. And, can you imagine if this young Christian listened to his own understanding of the situation, if he was guided by his emotions instead of the Lord?

Remember what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5-6, **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”**

That is what this young man did and that is exactly what Joshua and the children of Israel were going to do.

But they did not have to listen to the Lord. They could have come up with their own battle plans. Maybe surround the city and starve them to death! Or, make some ladders and scale the walls of the city! They could even make some battering rams to break down the doors, that might even be safer than climbing up those ladders! They could even do a surprise attack by tunneling under the walls of the city!

But these would have all failed because the Lord was not in any of them. His plan was simple, and they just needed to listen and obey!

And who will get the credit for this victory? Do you really think the children of Israel will get the credit? Imagine them speaking with Fox News, “Yes, this was our battle plan. Six days we marched around the city of Jericho with seven priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant, and the rest of the soldiers, blow the trumpet and return to base camp. And on the seventh day we went around seven times, the priests blew their trumpets, we shouted, and the walls came tumbling down!” I don’t think so!

You see, they could never take credit for this victory. But the credit would go to the Lord for He is the One who gave them this victory. And so, from a human standpoint, impossible. But, when you look through the eyes of faith, nothing was going to stop them!

Remember what we read in Joshua 5:13-15, **“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’ So He said, ‘No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’ Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”**

And we saw that this was none other than the Lord. And the question that Joshua asked the Lord was not correct. It was not if the Lord was for Joshua or against him. But was Joshua with the Lord!

And we saw the words he spoke to the Lord and Joshua was ready to do anything the Lord told him, even this battle plan!

And here is the key for us. Don’t focus on this strategy that the Lord gave to Joshua. If you think about it, the strategy was secondary. Then what was more important than that? It was their faith in God Himself to give them the victory!

Let me also say this. We don’t see the Lord give to Joshua and the children of Israel any more bizarre battle plans, only here. And the reason being is that this first battle would set the stage for the rest of them. And if they could trust in the Lord in this battle, then the others would be a walk of faith as well!

In fact, He gave them some very sound military strategies for future battles they would face. But sometimes He will ask us to set aside human logic, to set aside common sense to take a step of faith.

Think of what God was saying to them, ***“I want to show you from this initial battle against the strongest the enemy has to throw at you that I don’t need you at all. The issue is not your determination, it’s not your human effort, it’s not your ingenuity. The issue is My power and you having faith in Me.”***

And I believe what God is saying to the children of Israel, He is saying to us as well. That our victory in the Christian life is not going to be based upon how resourceful we are, how determined we are, the effort we put forth, the wisdom we have, but how much do we trust and obey the Lord! That is the key and then we must walk by faith!

So the Lord has told Joshua the battle plan and now Joshua is going to speak to the priests, and then the people about this battle plan. And maybe he was thinking, “Great, and now you want me to have a staff meeting and tell the priests, the soldiers, the rest of the people that this is our plan?”

But Joshua will do it because he is walking by faith and not by sight! He is trusting in the Word of God and folks, so must we!

GOD GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO JOSHUA!

VERSE 6

In this verse we see the second point, ***JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PRIESTS!***

Think about that for a minute. The first group of people he speaks to about this battle plan are not the soldiers, but the priests. That sounds kind of strange, why did he do it that way?

Think about it for a minute. The priests were the spiritual leaders of the nation. They were the ones who were to bring God to men and men to God.

And here we see that they were to take up the Ark of the Covenant in this battle, which was unusual. The ark would be prominent in this victory, even as it was in the crossing of the Jordan River. Israel had to keep their hearts and minds on the LORD who was present with them, instead of putting their hearts and minds on the difficulty of the task in front of them.

I think the idea here is that as the people saw the priests, with the Ark of the Covenant going forward, it gave them the confidence to follow along with them. You see, the priests trusted in the Word of God and so must the people.

Today we are seeing that very idea lacking in many churches. You will hear the Word of God spoken of, but not taught. And if it is not taught, or if doubt is placed in the minds of the people regarding the Word of God, you are not bringing them to God and when things get tough, who are they going to trust in?

And what we see happening is that Christians are being tossed to and fro by the winds of doctrine that are blowing into the church and they don't know how to discern between sound doctrine, healthy doctrine and false doctrine!

And please understand that it is the individual's responsibility to grow in the Lord, but it is also the pastors, the leaders who are responsible for teaching them and warning them of the dangers that are out there as well as the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Listen to what Paul says the responsibility is for pastors and teachers as he wrote in Ephesians 4:12-16. They are, **“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”**

The Greek word that Paul uses for **“equipping”** is KATARISMOS, (kat-ar-tis-mos). It is a word that is often used as a medical term for the setting of a bone.

It also illustrates to us the idea of putting something back to its original condition, that it is made complete, perfect.

Pastors and teachers are there to help return men and women back to God and to make them complete in their walk.

How do we accomplish that? By teaching them the Word of God! You doubt that? Maybe you don't agree with that, but if you don't agree with it, you are wrong!

Listen carefully to what Paul says in II Timothy 3:16-17, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

Did you see that? Paul says that the man of God will become complete, he will be ready for **“every good work”** if he takes the Word of God into his life and applies it to his life.

You see, all of Scripture is given to us by God, not some of it, or part of it, all of it!

And the Bible is there to help us live out our Christian life because it points us to God and what He has for our lives as well as it shows us our heart and what we need to change. It makes us complete if we take it in and apply it, as I have said!

And we are to continue in the Word of God, growing in the Word of God, until we come to the **“unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”**

Paul is speaking of Christian maturity, growing in the Lord, being complete in Him.

And if we are not in the Word of God, if we are not being taught the Word of God, if we are not growing, we will be **“tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.”**

You see, instead of being stable, those that don't grow in the Lord are unstable.

Paul uses the Greek word, KLUDONIZOMAI, (kloo-do-nid'-zom-ahee) for **“tossed to and fro”** and it is the same Greek word Luke uses in Luke 8:24 as he is describing the stormy Sea of Galilee.

And men come in and they use **“trickery”** or KUBEIA, (koobi-ah) in the Greek, which is a word that illustrates the idea of a person who has skill in manipulating the dice. He is a master of deception.

Thus, immature Christians hoist up their sails and as these men blow their false doctrine through the church, they are taken away, they go whichever way the wind is blowing them, they have no real direction. God's desire is that we would grow and not be tossed around like this!

Let me show you what the early church was like. In Acts 2:42-43, 46-47 we are told, **“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles . . . So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”**

So you see how simple it was and yet, we have made it so complicated. Years ago, when we were meeting in the other building, I would get tons of e-mails and mailings from Willow Creek Church.

And they would be promoting how to grow a church and how a church is to function. And they put on skits and plays for every service it seemed.

And that is what they were promoting for our church. And I just laughed. To do what they were doing we would have to hire actors and actresses to do these skits and plays because there were not enough people in the church to pull this off!

Let me just say this. It is not needed in the church. We need the teaching of God’s Word.

The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, they were being taught the Word of God!

They were in fellowship with each other to encourage each other, pray for each other, correct each other and-so-on.

They shared in communion together and many times it was during their agape feasts or meals that they shared together that they shared in communion.

And they prayed together.

Do you see how simple that is and you don't need a lot of people to do this! And the early church was strong as we are told, "**Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles . . . So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**" Acts 2:43, 46-47.

JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PRIESTS, who then would lead the people. How important that is.

VERSE 7

Next, we see that *JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE*.

And within this group of people were the soldiers and they could have numbered some 500,000!

And once again, can you imagine the staff meeting between Joshua and the military leaders of Israel and the rest of the people?

"Men, here is the plan. The armed guard will lead, marching under their tribal banners. Then we are going to have the seven priests with trumpets. Then the Ark of the Lord will go next, followed by the rear guard. We will march around the city while the priests blow the rams horn, and then return to camp. And no one will say a word as we circle the city!"

And each day Joshua would tell them what they were to do. Can you imagine what was going through their minds at this point?

"Hey Joshua, you have been in the sun too long! This is ridiculous!"

And yet, each day the same plan was given for six consecutive days. Then on the seventh day they would march around the city seven times and as the priest blew the rams horns, they were to shout, and the walls of Jericho were to fall down.

And I think that the encouragement from Joshua was this, what he said in Joshua 6:16, **“Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!”**

When you hear those battle plans you have to accept the fact that it was not going to be what you do but what the Lord does. The victory was not going to be found in the strength of the nation of Israel but in the **LORD!**

This was a test by God to see if they would walk by faith and a temptation by the Devil to see if they would refuse.

And the thing I want you to understand is that every battle we face is not the same as we see here with Jericho, only once did the Lord bring victory to Israel like this.

Also, did you notice that the children of Israel were instructed on a daily basis, step-by-step?

Folks, we are no different. God directs us step-by-step and before he shows us step two, we must take step one!

This is illustrated for us in the life of Phillip, in Acts chapter 8.

Phillip was preaching Christ in Samaria, and things were happening. People were getting saved. People were being healed physically and those possessed by demons were set free. This was the place to be, things were happening.

Then God calls Phillip to go to Gaza, a desert! That is step one.

When step one is completed then God gives him step two. He was to go and minister to this Ethiopian treasurer.

And this man ends up getting saved and baptized.

It is then that Phillip is taken to Azotus, where he continued to preach, as God directed him one step at a time.

Another point I want to bring out, and we touched on it when we talked about Joshua giving the battle plan to the priests, is that the people need to hear the Word of God so that they may obey the Word of God!

In Amos 8:11-12 we are told, **“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord God, ‘That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, But shall not find it.’”**

When we think of a famine we tend to think of food and the lack of food. But I don't believe that this kind of famine is the worst. I know, you may not agree with that but listen to what I have to say regarding the famine that the Lord is speaking of here in Amos.

The Lord is speaking of a spiritual famine in that they are no longer hearing the Word of God. And that is far worse than a physical famine and this is the reason. The death of the body is not the end of our existence. We all have a choice to choose where we want to go, to either be with the Lord for eternity, through Jesus.

Or, to be eternally separated from the Lord and cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth! That is a far worse death than physical death because, let's face it, these bodies will not last forever, but our spirit and soul will, either with the Lord or apart from Him!

Now as much as there was a famine in the days of Amos, we see another one in the days we are living in. And it is not that people don't have the Word of God, they just are not interested in it or they want it to say things that make them feel good about the way that they are living.

To do that you have Bibles that distort the Word of God, you have teachers that are willing to tickle the ears of the people and thus, the deception that Jesus warned us about in the Last Days is upon us because people are not testing what is being taught with the Word of God!

Listen to what one writer wrote regarding what we see happening in churches today. He wrote,

“It is well and good for the preacher to base his sermon on the Bible, but he better get to something relevant pretty quickly, or we start mentally to check out.” That stunningly clear sentence reflects one of the most amazing, tragic, and lamentable characteristics of contemporary Christianity: an impatience with the Word of God.

The sentence above comes from Mark Galli, senior managing editor of *Christianity Today* in an essay entitled, “Yawning at the Word.” In just a few hundred words, he captures the tragedy of a church increasingly impatient with and resistant to the reading and preaching of the Bible. We may wince when we read him relate his recent experiences, but we also recognize the ring of truth.

Galli was told to cut down on the biblical references in his sermon. “You’ll lose people,” the staff member warned. In a Bible study session on creation, the teacher was requested to come back the next Sunday prepared to take questions at the expense of reading the relevant scriptural texts on the doctrine. Cutting down on the number of Bible verses “would save time and, it was strongly implied, would better hold people’s interest.”

As Galli reflected, “Anyone who’s been in the preaching and teaching business knows these are not isolated examples but represent the larger reality.”

Indeed, in many churches there is very little reading of the Bible in worship, and sermons are marked by attention to the congregation’s concerns, not by an adequate attention to the biblical text. The exposition of the Bible has given way to the concerns, real or perceived, of the listeners. The authority of the Bible is swallowed up in the imposed authority of congregational concerns. . . .

The fixation on our own sense of need and interest looms as the most significant factor in this marginalization and silencing of the Word. Individually, each human being in the room is an amalgam of wants, needs, intuitions, interests, and distractions. Corporately, the congregation is a mass of expectations, desperate hopes, consuming fears, and impatient urges. All of this adds up, unless countered by the authentic reading and preaching of the Word of God, to a form of group therapy, entertainment, and wasted time - if not worse.

Galli has this situation clearly in his sights when he asserts that many congregations expect the preacher to *start* from some text in the Bible, but then quickly move on “to things that really interest us.” Like . . . *ourselves?*

One of the earliest examples of what we would call the preaching of the Bible may well be found in Nehemiah 8:1-8 . . .

Ezra and his companions stood on a platform before the congregation. They read the scriptural text clearly, and then explained the meaning of the Scripture to the people. The congregation received the Word humbly, while standing. The pattern is profoundly easy to understand: the Bible was read and explained and received.

As Hughes Oliphant Old comments, “This account of the reading of the Law indicates that already at the time of the writing of this text there was a considerable amount of ceremonial framing of the public reading of Scripture. This ceremonial framing is a witness to the authority of the Bible.” The reading and exposition took place in a context of worship as the people listened to the Word of God. The point of the sermon was simple: “to make clear the reading of the Scriptures.”

In many churches, there is almost no public reading of the Word of God. Worship is filled with music, but congregations seem disinterested in listening to the reading of the Bible. We are called to sing in worship, but the congregation cannot live only on the portions of Scripture that are woven into songs and hymns. Christians need the ministry of the Word as the Bible is read before the congregation such that God’s people - young and old, rich and poor, married and unmarried, sick and well - hear it together. The sermon is to consist of the exposition of the Word of God, powerfully and faithfully read, explained, and applied. It is not enough that the sermon take a biblical text as its starting point.

How can so many of today’s churches demonstrate what can only be described as an impatience with the Word of God? The biblical formula is clear: the neglect of the Word can only lead to disaster, disobedience, and death. God rescues his church from error, preserves his church in truth, and propels his church in witness only by his Word - not by congregational self-study. . . .

- <http://bit.ly/2TwioKP>

I hope you are seeing the danger that is out there when the Word of God is replaced with the words of man!

And think about it. How did the people, the soldiers, the priests know what to do?

Because the Word of God was spoken and the Word of God was directing them, and all they needed to do was walk by faith.

That is why it is so important for us to hear the Word of God, be taught the Word of God. We might not always like it. We may be challenged by what we hear. But it is what is needed for us to stay on track and to keep our eyes on the Lord. The way we follow the Lord is by obeying His Word to us!

So this is the third point, ***JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE.*** And that will lead us to the fourth and final point, ***THE WALK OF FAITH!*** And we will look at that next. Look at Joshua chapter 6 starting in verse 8.

VERSES 8-11

Now it probably didn't take that long for them to march around the city, maybe an hour or so but as this lead group finished, some of them may have just started their march around the city. And, as I have said, this was a ***WALK OF FAITH*** for them!

And maybe the first time around the city walls the people of Jericho were fearful, ready for an invasion and when nothing happened, not a word even spoken, by the 3rd or 4th or 5th or 6th time, they must have been laughing and mocking the children of Israel.

How foolish they must have looked and even with all the insults, the children of Israel kept quiet.

Folks, many times when the world is mocking us, making fun at us, don't say a word, it is not worth it. God will give us the victory. You see, the problem is that many times when people are mocking us, we end up lashing out at them and nothing good comes out of that!

And I think the mocking, the making fun of Christians, coming against them, is growing in this country. And it is easy to lash out at them for what they are doing, as I have said. But again, be careful. Sometimes silence speaks volumes.

Let me show you what I mean. Several years ago Julie and I went to see the Chicago White Sox play the Milwaukee Brewers in Milwaukee. And, of course, we wore our Chicago White Sox jerseys!

And we did some tail-gating outside the park before we went in. And as we were finishing up, I went to use the rest room.

And as I was walking there was this group of young adults who were all wearing Brewer Jersey's and they were drinking and having a good time tail-gating.

And as I was walking by one of them yelled at me, "White Sox Suck!" At least it wasn't too bad. And I could have said something, but I just felt like I needed to keep silent. Let's face it, there were several of them and one of me!

So, as I walked by them, after that one comment, I heard the guy who said that say to his friends, "Thanks a lot guys for helping me out on that one!"

And I just smiled, not letting him see me smile. Not one of his friends chimed in and commented against me like this guy did! Silence spoke very loudly that day and I think that is true in our Christian lives as well. Be careful what you say and how you say things. Maybe God wants you to be silent in the situation you are in!

And imagine, some 500,000 or more people walking around the city of Jericho and they are silent. That tells me that they were taking this battle very seriously as they are obeying exactly what the Lord was telling them to do. This was not a game, not at all! They were not joking around, not at all!

Make no mistake about it, their lives were hanging in the balance, not only for them, but for their families, their friends as well.

Today, we don't see the Christian life as a battle, we don't see ourselves as soldiers. But we now are in this playground instead of a battleground and we see the results that happen against our family and friends, as well as our own lives. Take the battle seriously!

Also, I think we can hear God when we are silent and paying attention to Him. If we are talking all the time, it is hard to hear what God is saying to us!

In Psalm 46:10-11 we are told, **“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.”**

As the Psalmist concludes this Psalm, he tells us to **“Be still, and know that I am God.”** You know, we can make so much noise; we can be trying to do so many different things that we lose sight of God. It is when we rest in Him; learn about Him that He will reveal Himself to us.

And as much turmoil as there is in this world, as much noise as there is in the world, we can find a quiet spot and listen to what God has for us.

Also, there is coming a day of peace as the Prince of Peace rules and reigns from Jerusalem. Of this day, we are told in Isaiah 11:9, **“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”**

Because we have been told what will take place, we are not to become fearful, but rest in the Lord - He has everything in control. And one day the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, and peace will permeate this land! Thus, we are told, **“Be still, and know that I am God.”**

Also, in Isaiah 30:15 we are told, **“For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.’ But you would not.”**

Notice what God is telling them here. He is telling them to repent, to return to Him because that is where we will find rest, that is where we are saved! And this is truly just showing that when you trust God and His promises then you are not trusting in yourself. And think about this for a minute. When we trust God, we can rest because we are not striving to do it ourselves. We can rest in Him!

When we trust in God and His promises, we can have that quietness. What do I mean by that? I mean we are not arguing with God to get our own way, we are resting in Him, trusting in Him. We can be quiet not only before the Lord but also before others because we are trusting in Him!

And when we trust in God and His promises, we can have that confidence that what God has spoken He is more than able to bring to pass! And when you put this all together you have a man or women of God who is unstoppable, not because of their strength, but they trusted in the Lord and they are walking by faith!

Now let’s apply this to our own lives. Where are you at this morning? Are you satisfied in your career for instance or is your career about your own self-validation, what you have done? If that is the way you are looking at it then you are not going to be satisfied, there will always be more achievements that you will have to make to validate your life.

On the other hand, can you just rest in the Lord and the plan that He has for your life, satisfied to be just a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord you might say or is that too little for you? If it is then you will never be satisfied!

You see, God has promised them these things and their response is that they refused what God had for them and in the end, they lost!

And notice the arrogance of their speech. Instead of resting in the Lord they were ready to jump on the Egyptian war horses and instead of defeating the enemy they will be fleeing for their lives!

And it is so bad that God is saying that He is going to strip them bare in this judgment. Instead of their enemies fleeing from them, they will cause Judah to flee and be scattered.

The reason is given to us in Deuteronomy chapter 28 where we see the promise of blessings for obedience unto God and also the promise of cursing for their disobedience unto God.

They refused to hear the prophets of God, they wanted a positive message which were nothing more than lies from these false prophets, and judgment came.

But for Joshua and the children of Israel, they walked by faith in the promises of God and that is exactly what God is calling for us to do. There is great comfort, peace, hope, rest that we find when we walk by faith and leave the victory to God! That is what the children of Israel are doing here!

Look at what we have seen in our study this morning.

GOD GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO JOSHUA. And then we see that ***JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PRIESTS.*** But Joshua did not stop speaking of what God wanted them to do and we then saw that ***JOSHUA GAVE THE BATTLE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE.*** And, after they all heard what God desired of them, we see ***THE WALK OF FAITH!***

Remember with the commercial we opened up with about the brake repair place where they are okay fixing brakes, just okay! When it comes to our spiritual walk, we don't want okay, we want the best and that comes from the Lord. May we listen to His voice as we read His Word, and then may we walk by faith!