

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 26th October 2008

Joshua – new vision new land

The walls of Jericho - Joshua 6:1-27



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

The story of the fall of Jericho has 3 important lessons. Firstly to serve God we must be a people of **vision**; secondly to serve God we must be **obedient** whatever the outcome and thirdly we need to be **persistent**

Vision: As Joshua stood before Jericho looking at what lay ahead, no doubt planning his strategy for the military campaign, something remarkable happened - read chap. 5 v13 -15. Joshua, who proved to be not only a military strategist but also a statesman in the way he governed the tribes, is put in his place. It is at this point that two significant lessons occur. Firstly Joshua's real authority and identity lie wholly in God's hands. And secondly God is not the servant of Joshua but Joshua is the servant of God. All that Joshua does is as nothing if it's not wholly anchored in the service of God. Chapter 6 v. 2 has some important lessons for us. We read that as Joshua looks toward Jericho the Lord presents Joshua with a vision when he says "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. But Jericho is still standing complete and fully defended before Joshua's eyes. To his natural mind he must have been puzzled because clearly it wasn't yet in his hands. The Lord treated the coming victory at Jericho as an accomplished fact. This is because God is above time. To Him the future is already history. For Joshua, the victory of Jericho was a future possibility. To the Lord God, it was a present reality. Suddenly Joshua is seeing things from God's perspective, grasping his vision – the walls of Jericho were high indeed but with vision they were already crumbling. There is a perspective and vision in the Spirit that God wants to show us too. Look at Mathew 16: 19 in the New American Standard Bible because this translation makes this point clear. We see that Jesus both knew and understood the 'future but not yet' 'We are called to be a people of vision, be a people who dare to believe the impossible can happen This may seem harsh and I may have got it wrong, but it seems that God is not so much interested in our plans for our lives or for his Church here at St Pauls. He is much more interested in us discovering His plans, His vision for our lives and for his Church

Obedience: God describes to Joshua, in v. 3 to 5, how the heavenly reality of fallen Jericho is to become a present reality. If we were told today that all of Dorking would come under the Lordship of Christ if we walked its borders for 6 days, would we obey? The story of Joshua and the battle of Jericho tells us that Joshua responds with immediate obedience to the Lord's plans to take the city. He doesn't question it, but obeys completely. Obedience to the Lord is such an important lesson for us. We must remember that Joshua was an experienced military commander. (See Exodus 17:8-16.) He had the intelligence reports of the spies. Jericho was now in view. Joshua knew the best military strategy for taking the fortress-city. But God required only that Joshua and the Israelites be obedient. We might expect Joshua to sneer at such strategy, but there is no hint that Joshua questioned God's plan in the least. He trusted explicitly the mysterious methods of God. He immediately relayed these plans to the priests and to the people. God's plans may not seem logical to us. In fact naturally speaking they are quite ludicrous but in the Spirit it's quite different. It will always be the best plan, if we continue to trust and be obedient to the vision God gives us.

Persistence: Read v 3 – 7. What on earth did the people think I wonder? By the 6th day did they think 'Let's give this up for a lark - why don't we shout now and get it over with, why wait until tomorrow'. In some ways perhaps we're rather like that – I'm fed up with this Christian lark. My faith doesn't seem to be going anywhere. I'm tired and frankly I can't be bothered anymore. I've been praying for this and that for ages and nothing appears to have happened. The people's obedience and persistence I believe came about at this particular time because the people were at rest in the Father's love. They trusted God implicitly. When we are at rest we can hear and see in the Spirit so much more easily.

We are being called to be a people who are passionate, committed and convinced, just as Joshua was. Joshua was known for his deep trust in God cf. Numbers 27:18 you will see he is described as "a man in whom is the Spirit." God is calling us all to be people in whom the Spirit lives, to be a people "who are spoken for" – a consecrated people - that we make a difference to whatever place we are called to live out our daily lives and to the people we meet there.



Witness: questions to discuss

Here are some questions for prayer and reflection that you might like to ponder; feel free to use any or none of them:

1. Read through the passage from chapter 5:13 to 6:27. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and share your thoughts and reflections. Are there other lessons that we can draw?
2. Joshua's identity lay wholly in God's hands. Where does our true identity lie?
3. Are there any instances that you can share that relate to hearing/receiving in some way a word, message or picture from the Lord that at first didn't make sense to your natural mind, yet in the end became clear?
4. Prayerfully consider how we might discern what are God's plans and purposes (vision) for our lives in light of the picture of a boat in a place of calm with the sails down- right for now but the wind is coming when the sails will need to be up and be filled!
5. "God is not so much interested in our plans for our lives or for his Church here at St Pauls. He is much more interested in us discovering His plans, His vision for our lives and for his Church." How does this statement relate to God's care for us as individuals?
6. If we were told today that all of Dorking would come under the Lordship of Christ if we walked its borders for 6 days, would we obey? What would convince us that this was right to do?
7. What does it mean to be at rest in the Father's Love? (read Hebrews chap.4) What difference does it make when we are?