

“The Lord’s Side”

(12th in our series, Jesus Everywhere)

Joshua 5:13-6:27; Luke 19:35-45; Revelation 19:11-21*

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April 1st, 2012

**All scriptures are ESV unless otherwise noted.*

Sermon

“Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho.” That song is about the first battle in the conquest of the Promised Land. Joshua chapter 6.

Movie Clip from *Veggie Tales*

Narrator: *On the 7th day, just like God had told them, they marched around Jericho seven times while the Priests blew their horns. And just like God said, when they finished marching the Priests blew one long blast and then all the people yelled.*

Two soldiers on the wall begin to laugh when nothing happens. Then one stone pops out of the wall and a rumbling begins. The walls begin to tumble down.

Joshua (Larry the Cucumber): *Hello! My name is Joshua and God hath given us this land.*

The soldiers run away.

That’s the *Veggie Tales* version.

Joshua 6:20 *“The walls come tumbling down.”*

Joshua 6:21 *“Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkey with the edge of the sword.”*

I have a good friend who’s husband left the church several years ago. She told me *“One day my kids were singing that Jericho song and my husband just flew off the handle and grew furious. He won’t let the kids even read the story. He says its Genocide.”*

And you do realize, pictures of bodies burning in the ovens of Auschwitz would be a far more accurate historical representation than cute talking vegetables. We do need to be honest – it was a Holocaust. Holocaust from the Greek *“Holokauston”* meaning *“burnt whole.”* Webster’s definition number one *“a sacrifice consumed by fire.”* Holocaust.

And yet, to be fair, the folks inside the city walls of Jericho kinda had it coming. The Cannanites and Amorites were pagans who practiced ritual prostitution and child sacrifice; they worshiped demons.

You may never have encountered that sort of thing, but I have. I’ve encountered demonic spirits manifesting in human flesh. I’ve heard the stories. Susan has even seen the pictures in visions as we’ve prayed for people that have been ritually abused.

When I first began to encounter that stuff and saw how ingrained it was in the psychology and sociology of these groups, I really grew angry at God and this was my question:

“God, why didn’t you just destroy them all with your Fire?”

“Dear God, why was there no Holocaust?”

I mean if my friend's husband could witness the Hell that was inside the city walls of Jericho, I bet he'd drop to his knees and beg for a Holocaust. A great question is why it didn't happen sooner?? And to that there is a rather disturbing answer. In Genesis 15:16, God tells Abraham that his seed would not return to Canaan until the 4th generation *"for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet complete."* See what that means? Even the sin of Jericho was part of God's plan.

And that means God set them up for a "Holocaust."

And that gets us right back to my friend's husband's criticism.

God not only commits a Holocaust, He sets it up.

And if we believe, like most, that these people are now devoted to endless conscious torment.

How can we even read the story - let alone allow our children to read it? How can we bear to read it?

Well maybe we can't. So we turn it into a story about cute talking vegetables. Why? Because its so hard to avoid the idea that damming people to endless conscious torture appears to be infinitely more sadistic than Hitler. Hitler killed 'em, burned 'em, and it was over. But we've been told that God is into endless torture.

Who would be interested in telling us such a thing?? If you believed such a thing, you might really struggle to love God and struggle to love your neighbor. And when Jesus said *"Be merciful as your heavenly father is merciful,"* it would mean blessing a few people and endlessly tormenting other people, for no fault of their own like the people on the other side of the wall in Jericho; people who never even hear "God saves," in a word Yeshua.

Who would be interested in telling us such a thing?? That God endlessly blessed some and endlessly tortured others; through no merit or de-merit of their own. Is that God that divided? Well this is the point where most folks shut their minds, shut their hearts, shut their Bibles, and watch videos about cute talking vegetables; secretly hoping the Jesus stuff is true and the Wrath stuff is false. Or if they're angry, hoping the Wrath stuff is true and God is on their side.

Don't do that. And don't stop reading. Don't stop wrestling the Word.

Joshua 6 follows Joshua 5 and its all one story. The chapter divisions were added 2,000 years later.

In Joshua 5, the nation of Israel has just crossed the Jordan River, carrying the Ark of the Covenant. We preached on the Ark for the whole month of February. It was literally Law covered in Mercy.



This is a modern day satellite picture of Jericho. This is Jericho – this is Jerusalem – this is the Promised Land and this is the River Jordan. They crossed here where Jesus was baptized and they camped here (or on the plain of Jericho).

Joshua 5, God commands them to all be circumcised (cut before they do any cutting). We just preached on that. And then they must celebrate Passover (Body broke and Blood shed) – we celebrate that every week.

And then verse 13

¹³ When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries." Joshua 5:13

"Are you on our side or their side?" In that day a drawn sword was like an assault rifle pointed at your head. A friend bought me this sword. I hang it on the back of the cross as a prayer when I preach. "Truth" is painted on the blade, because Truth is a sword; the Word of God is a sword. There was a flaming sword placed at the entrance to Eden in the East. According to *Old Testament* scholars (like John Sailhammer), this was the East entrance to the Ancient land of Eden – the Promised Land – the Holy Land.

Well Joshua looks at the man with the drawn sword and asks the obvious question, *"Whose side are you on?"*

Today's Palm Sunday. As Jesus rode into the walled City of Jerusalem – that's where they were asking *"Whose side are you on?"* The crowds thought they knew. So they sang *"Hosanna"* – it means *"Save us now."* *"Save us from the Romans – the other side."*

It's an election year and so it's the obvious question. *"Whose side are you on, God?"*

*"Save us from Republicans.
Save us from Democrats.
Save us from the New York Jets."*

'Cause God is obviously on Tebow's side. This week Pat Robertson said that if Peyton Manning was injured *"It would serve 'em right"* – *"Serve Denver right."* Why? 'Cause obviously God is on Tebow's side.

Terry Tyler sent me a cartoon last week while Tebow was still a Bronco.

In it, Tebow prays *"Jesus help me win a Super Bowl."*

He sees Peyton Manning and says *"What are you doing here?"*

And Manning responds *"Jesus called."*

Now that's not a commentary on Tebow, that's a commentary on us. We don't know what Tebow is praying while Tebowing; maybe He's praying *"God bless my enemies."*

Well Tebow and Manning are both Christians and now they are on opposing teams. So, whose side is God on?? He can't be on both sides and still be playing the game!

So, whose side is God on?? Barack Obama's, Mitt Romney's, or Rick Santorum's. They all claim to be Christians and they're all Americans? Is God on America's side? Maybe you have one of these:

[Image of a "God Bless America" bumper sticker]

a "God Bless America" bumper sticker. If you do, that's good. You should "Bless Your Country." And yet the Bible never says "Bless Your Country." However, it very specifically says "Bless those who persecute you" (Romans 12:14). And right after that Jesus says "Love your enemies" (Luke 6:28), He says "Bless those who curse you." He's very specific and it is a command. So how come I've never seen a bumper sticker that says "God Bless Afghanistan" or "God Bless the Taliban."

WHY? WHY?

You know why. You put something like that on your car and you'll get crucified 'cause if you're on their side, you're not on ours.

Would you put this on your car?



I found a web site where you can have bumper stickers made to order. I made and ordered a 100 of these. If you saw this on a car, what would you think?? "Stupid Hippy" – if you bless everybody, you're not even playing the game. "You just try and bless everybody – you'll get yourself crucified, you idiot!"

I asked the staff this week, "What would happen if you put this bumper sticker on your car?" All of 'em said, "Well people would call us traitors" and then one of 'em said something like "Yeah traitors! Bet it wouldn't be the people of this world (tax collectors and sinners), it would be Christians." Isn't that interesting...

I'm a Christian. Is God on my side? And if so, does that mean that God is not on the other side. You know before you hate people, it helps to convince yourself: God is not on their side, the side of "the last and the least."

Joshua 5:13-14

¹³When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped...

Worships – as if this man is God, a God-man. And when Joshua asks him a simple question: "Are you on our side or their side?" He answers "NO." "Should I run the ball or pass?" "NO."

This guy reminds me of Jesus. "Love your neighbor" and the lawyer asks "Who's my neighbor?" and basically Jesus says "No." Like usual, He doesn't answer the question; He tells a story about a man on the other side; a story about a Samaritan and a Jew lying in a ditch.

It's like the lawyer asks "Should I run the ball or pass the ball?" and Jesus says "No, we're not even playing that game."

Joshua asks "Whose side are you on?" and the God-man says "NO. I am the Commander of the Lord's Army. Now I have come. We meet Him now – the time is now."

Who is the Commander of the Lord's Army? The Dread Warrior.

Who is the Angel of Yahweh? Who is the God-man? Who appears throughout the *Old Testament*. Folly God and Folly Man – It must be Jesus; the same "Yesterday, Today, and Forever." That means totally undivided – Jesus.

And check this out, in Hebrew the name "Jesus" is pronounced "Joshua."

- So Joshua is talking to Joshua – the real Joshua.
- The First Adam is talking to the last Adam.
- The Old man is talking to the New Man.

When you talk to Jesus to whom are you talking?

St. Paul wrote "It's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." That means that the old resentful genocidal Paul had been destroyed and when Paul looked at Jesus He was seeing His true self – his new self.

Well the temporal Joshua says to the eternal Joshua "Whose side are you on?" The answer is "NO." And you think "Ok I get it." It's like Abraham Lincoln said "Pray not that God is on our side; pray that we be on God's side." We used to sing this song in Youth Group "Whose side are you leaning on? Leaning on the Lord's side. I lean, I lean, I lean, I lean."

Does God have a side?

Does God have a cause?

Does God take sides?

Is there any side other than the Lord's side?

And does God root for His side, hoping it wins?

Søren Kierkegaard wrote this

There are those who talk about God's cause, and about wanting to serve that cause. This is all very fine, but how, exactly, is this to be interpreted? The common view thinks that God has a cause in the human sense of the word, that he is ... interested in having his cause win and therefore eager to help the person who would serve his cause, ...

No, no! God has no cause...in this sense. For God everything is infinitely nothing. Any second he wills it, everything, including all opposition to his cause, becomes nothing. Wanting to serve God's cause can never mean the same thing as coming to his aid. No, to serve God's cause is to face examination. [You'll notice that Joshua immediately falls prostrate before the God-man in worship. Kierkegaard continues.] God is infinite love and for this reason has no cause.

And God is all powerful. If He's Creator of Everything and Sustainer of Everything; well then it would seem that God's side is the only side and so the other side is like ... nothing; but what a horrid nothing. It is the Adversary. It is "Sawtawn" – Satan in Hebrew.

The Bible says we battle not against flesh and blood, but "Principalities and Powers of Darkness."

God is Light and what does Light battle? The darkness (the absence of Light) and darkness isn't something; it's nothing – a horrid nothing.

- What does Life battle? The absence of life – Death.
- What does Truth battle? The absence of Truth – Lies.
- What does the Way battle? The absence of the Way – Lostness.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; the Light of this world.

What does the Word of God battle? - The Void (into which He's spoken).

What does Love battle?? Well we do know this – God is not on one side or the other side of that Wall. And yet look, the God-man is standing there with His sword drawn. What's He gonna attack? What's He gonna cut and tear down? Joshua asks *“Are you for us or our adversaries”* and the God-man says *“NO.”*

¹⁴ *“No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. [The Army of Yahweh – I am – that I am.] Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?”* ¹⁵ *And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.*
Joshua 5:14-15

Joshua says *“Commander, command me”* and the God-man says *“take off your shoes.”*
That's silly.

[Image of a desert scene with camels]

This is a picture of the “plain of Jericho” – sharp hot rocks and cactus. And this is the preparation for war? Baptism in the Jordan, circumcision before the city walls, and a Passover meal. And now *“Take off your shoes.”*

Well what happens next is far, far too big for one sermon. What happens next is literally *The Apocalypse* – last book of the Bible – the Revelation of Jesus. I wrote a book on it. *Eternity Now* – you can order on Amazon or get it downstairs or *Apocalypse Now*, the unedited version you can download on our website.

What happens next is that *“Yeshua” “Joshua”* and his army march on Jericho.

Joshua 6:1 – A city entirely *“shut up inside and out”* says Scripture; protected by walls or maybe imprisoned by walls.

According to the Lord's command, they walk around the city 6 days, like the 6 days of Creation – the days of time. On the 7th day (the Sabbath day) they walk around 7 times. Hey, remember all the 7s in the Revelation? – 7 Angels, 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Thunders, 7 Bowls of Wrath and a walled city – the walled city is called “Babylon,” but it's also “Jerusalem” and some argue “Rome;” it's the Tower of Babel: the institutions and cities of this world. In the city is a great harlot – a prostitute – and God's people are “in the prostitute” according to the Revelation. In the *Old Testament* God calls Jerusalem a prostitute and His Bride.

Well at the 7th Seal, 7th Trumpet, and 7th Bowl, that city falls. And the Commander of the Lord's Army appears on a white horse. The Armies of Heaven follow Him. He tramples the “Winepress of the Fury of the wrath of God.” An angel, standing in the sun, calls to the birds saying and I

quote *“Come gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders and the flesh of all men [Read it – Revelation 19:18.] the flesh of all men – both free and slave – both small and great.” “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.”*

All flesh eaten and then a New Jerusalem comes down from God, like a Bride and the *“Kings of the Earth,”* who just got their flesh eaten, bring their Glory into it as the voice on the throne cries *“Behold I make all things new. It is done.”*

Listen closely. The Revelation of Jesus is the siege of this Earth by the Kingdom of God and its happening now.

Do you remember it was Palm Sunday when Jesus cried, *“Now is the Judgment of this world. Now is the Ruler of this world cast out and I, when I be lifted from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.” “Now I am come.”* He is the Commander of the Lord’s Army.

And do you remember why He was crucified? He rode in on Palm Sunday and then went into a rage; ripped apart the Temple and the Court of the Gentiles clogged with Jewish merchants. He was yelling something about sides and quoting Isaiah 56 *“My Father’s house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”* That’s All Sides and then He said something about walls that would come tumbling down. And so they crucified Him – the Commander of the Lord’s Army. They crucified him and then all sorts of walls really did *“come tumbling down.”*

Well anyway, back to our story. Sorry I got off topic. On the 7th day, the 7th time around, carrying the *“Ark of the Covenant,”* the 7 Priests, like 7 Angels, blow the 7 Trumpets as the people shout. And *“the walls come tumbling down.”* Then following the instructions of the Lord

²¹Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword. ²²But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.” Joshua 6:21-22

Her name was *“Rahab”*- it means *“dragon.”* She was marked by the dragon. And she had hidden the spies with lies. Even *“her good works were like filthy rags.”*

²⁴And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. ²⁵But Rahab the prostitute and her father’s household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. ²⁶Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, “Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation...” Joshua 6:24-26

“Devoted to destruction.” In Hebrew, it’s just one word: Haram is the verb and Herem is the noun. It’s translated *“decree of utter destruction”* and *“devoted”* and *“net”* which tells you we no longer have a mental category for such a word.

Haram is to devote something exclusively to God.

Herem is His consecrated possession.

The Jews saw Herem every day in the Temple; it was a sacrifice cut and consumed by Fire.

Well verse 17 tells us *“Jericho and everything in it was Herem”* (sacrifice).

Hitler tried to save Germans by sacrificing Jews. Canaanites tried to save themselves by sacrificing their children. Maybe we try to save ourselves by sacrificing Arabs, Afghans, the poor, the weak, the unborn – the last and least. It’s Evil. But maybe not because it’s a sacrifice or even human sacrifice, but because we sacrifice to the wrong God rather than to the true God, who is Love.

Romans 12:1 – *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”* That’s a real devotional. Jesus said *“if you want to follow, pick up a cross.”* You know if we don’t die for Him, we will still die.

I watched my Dad die and let me tell you, I’d much rather die from an Israelite lance in my heart, than lung disease in my chest.

Did you know All Nations, All Peoples are “Herem” (Isaiah 34:4-7) and Isaiah 43:28, even “Israel” is “Herem” and that means Jerusalem is “Herem.”

In 70 AD, exactly one generation after the death of Christ, Her walls come tumbling down and she’s consumed by Fire. In the Revelation, she’s rebuilt by God. The Foundation Stone is Christ. You see she’s rebuilt at the cost of God’s “First-born Son.” Jesus really is everywhere.

Well, all of Jericho was devoted, including the silver and gold, but silver and gold are not destroyed by Fire; they’ve already been through the fire. And now get this; they are placed in the Lord’s Treasury. They’re treasure and that’s what we modern Americans don’t get. Leviticus 27:28 *“Every Herem (every devoted thing) is most Holy to God.”* That means every man, woman, and child in Jericho was Absolute Treasure to the Lord God.

The Hebrews knew: You sacrifice the best, not the worst; sacrifice is a gift. And just because something is destroyed by God; that doesn’t mean He won’t re-create it. He is the Creator. This idea that God is into unending, conscious torture can’t be found in the *Old Testament* and is a gross distortion of the *New Testament* ...

Well, all Jericho was devoted – gold and silver devoted. Even Rahab was devoted – “Herem.” Perhaps she wasn’t burned by the Fire for she had already surrendered to the Fire. If you die with Jesus, the 2nd death won’t hurt you. At the Cross we die and at Pentecost we’re filled with Fire. Rahab the Harlot was now “Herem.” Herem is from the same root as the Arab word Herem; it’s the place of the King’s Bride. That old harlot, Jerusalem, is our Lord’s Bride and Herem. Maybe the temporal Holocaust of this creation is just part of God’s eternal plan to romance all people to Himself and create His Bride; His Herem. People devoted to endless conscious Love – the Fire that is our God.

Well Jesus, the Commander of the Lord’s Army, doesn’t hate the people in the Herem on the other side of the wall. But look, He holds a sword. What does He cut? What does He tear down? What does He hate? Isn’t it obvious? He hates the walls.

So, at the 7th Trumpet, on the eve of the 7th day, a Friday, 6th day after Palm Sunday; as the sky grows black and the earth shakes, the Commander of God’s Army hangs nailed to the Tree in the ancient land of Eden, just outside the wall of Jerusalem (His Bride). He lifts his head and

cries *"It is done. It is finished."* And the walls *"come tumbling down."* A Roman soldier drops to his knees confessing this is the Son of God.

What walls? Ephesians 2:14

¹⁴ [He] has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. Ephesians 2:14-16

The Dividing Wall of Hostility –

1. It must refer to the curtain in the Temple separating man from God, which ripped when Christ died.
2. And the wall in the Temple courts separating Jews from Gentiles.
3. In 70 AD, the walls of the Temple came tumbling down.
4. And the walls of Jerusalem come tumbling down.
5. Around Eden there was a wall, perhaps it came tumbling down.
6. The New Jerusalem is a New Eden. It has walls but check it out:

Revelation 21:25 *"The gates are never shut by day and there will be no night there."*

The New Jerusalem is a Bride and that Bride is the Church and you are the Church. Your gates are to be always open.

7. At a Presbyterian meeting five years ago, my wife heard the Lord say *"A church without walls and I will be a wall of fire around her and the glory is in her midst."* She didn't know the Scripture, but God was quoting himself in Zechariah 2:5.

So what walls come down?

- How about this wall?

[Image of a wall]

It stands between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

- How about this wall?

[Image of President Regan giving a speech]

"Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

- How about this wall?

[Image of a wall]

It stands between Mexico and the US. It's a little different when we build the wall.

- How about this wall?

[Image of Adam and Eve feeling ashamed and hiding with fig leaves]

We all wrap ourselves in fig leaves. We call it clothing. It's a wall.

- How about the wall around your marriage?

You know in Scripture God ordains walls, for a time. He told folks to build the walls of Jerusalem. But think about it: All those walls guard a communion. They guard communion from that which would divide the communion. What if, one day everything is communion? In Heaven, we're all married to the Lord, which I suspect means something like all married to each other.

One Body – One Life – One Blood in all our veins.

You know Life is Communion. To divide a life is to kill it. To make a life, well it requires a communion.

The Commander of the Lord's Army hates that Wall – why?

Do you realize what's on the other side of that Wall? His mother – literally – His mother. If you're a science fiction fan, this should fuel your jets for a while. He's literally fighting for His life against the Wall. For on the plain of Jericho, in the army of Joshua, there is a man named Salmon (it means garment or covering). Salmon is the great, great, great, great grandfather of Jesus. On the other side of the Wall in the City of Fear is a woman named Rahab. Rahab is the great, great, great, great grandmother of Jesus, the Commander of the Lord's Army. When the Wall comes down, Salmon communes with Rahab and she gives birth to Life, Christ's Life.

And did you know the Jerusalem above is your mother? Because *"the walls come tumbling down."* What walls?

How about this wall?

[Image of someone alone and depressed]

I mean "your flesh." That prison of self-centeredness, pride and fear, which feels only its own pain, sorrow, and joy.

One day you'll actually hear the 7th Trumpet and that Wall will come tumbling down. If you don't know the Commander of the Lord's Army, nothing could be more terrifying than that. But if you know Him, nothing could be better – He is your husband.

What wall? Maybe it's every wall. Colossians 1:19

¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

"All things reconciled." I think that means No Walls, No Sides, One Life and Even Now, in this fallen world, reconciled to Himself He gives us His *"ministry of Reconciliation."*

2 Corinthians 5:8 - We are to no longer battle with our Swords of Steel for the Lord of Hosts has given us His Sword of Fire -

That is, His Spirit

His very Self.

Many years ago in Poland, during the Holocaust, the Nazis entered a small village; rounded up all the Jews; had them dig a shallow grave... they mowed them down with machine gun fire and then covered the corpses in dirt. One 10 year old boy lived. Later that night, covered only in the blood of his parents and dirt, he dug his way out of that shallow grave. He made his way to the

nearest house and begged for Mercy. But immediately he hit a wall – a wall of fear (closed door after closed door). The villagers all recognized him: a Jewish boy marked for death (Jewish – the other side). Finally something inside seemed to prompt him to say something Jewish boys don't often say. At the next house when a woman opened the door and before she could close it, she heard him whimper *"Don't you recognize me? I am the Jesus you say you love."* She stood there staring at him and then the walls came tumbling down. She swept him off his feet, wrapped him in her arms and covered him with kisses.

True story and she would tell the story later, not in pride over some good deed she'd done, but in gratitude for the life of the boy who was now her son.

"I am the Jesus you say you love." And it was.

It was the Commander of the Lord's Army standing in her doorway. He came to tear down the wall. She didn't save him – he saved her – He saves us. From what?

- He saves us from the Adversary.
- He saves us from darkness and lies and death – that divide Light, Truth, and Life.
- He saves us from our sin – He saves us from our flesh.
- He saves us from our self-centered prisons of Pride and Shame – too terrified to experience the ecstasy of Communion.
- He saves us from the Hell that is Jericho, a city locked down in Fear.
- He even saves us from the Wrath to come – for we are Rahab, His Bride.
 - But you see, even that Wrath to come is a work of Salvation. It is God's Wrath – the Wrath of Love.
- He saves us from walls dividing walls

And NOW

You are His Bride; you are His Body; You are Joshua!!!

And now if you're thinking – wow that was too much info. Peter, boil it down and just tell me what to do. What to do. OK, fine, that's easy.

Take off your shoes. I'm serious unless you have some sort of medical condition. Take off your shoes. The "Commander of the Lord's Army is here" for He promised He would be here. This is Holy Ground. Take off our shoes. Watch and listen.

He says *"I am the Commander of the Lord's Army. Now I have come."*

"I am the Word, spoken into the Void that is Creation."

"I am King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Communion

And this is My Body (breaks the bread with the sword).

And this cup is the Covenant, in my blood.

Eat. Drink. Worship. And then go to war against the Darkness; against the Lies; against the Death; against the Adversary; against the Walls that imprison my people, my people whom I love. I think that's what He says.

And He invites you then to come to the Table, tear off a piece of the bread, and dip it in the cup. After you've dipped your bread in the cup and you've partaken in Communion, members of our Prayer Team will be in either corner. So if you'd like prayer, you can ask them to pray with you. But come to the Table, and as you come to the Table, remember this – you're coming to Holy Ground. I mean if you believe Scripture, you are and so it makes sense to me that you'd look at Him and worship.

In Jesus' name, believe. Amen.

Benediction and Prayer

From the audio of the sermon:

So close your eyes. You realize you are a city. According to Scripture, you are like a walled city and inside this city is a Temple and in the Temple is a Sanctuary and in the Sanctuary is a Throne. Now I want you to look outside of the city walls and standing on the plain of Jericho is the Commander of the Lord's Army. Oh I tell you when I get a glimpse of Him, sometimes, when I just get a glimpse, I'm just filled with this outrageous – well this longing, this thrill and then this terror because I know that if He enters all the walls, all the walls will come crumbling down and I will no longer be able to hide.

Well you know He's good and so I need to say this 'cause some of you have been really wounded by impostors – He's not a rapist, He's the great Bridegroom; He won't rape you but He longs for your walls to come tumbling down. I mean He won't storm the Sanctuary and steal the Throne; He romances the Throne. However, He will use the situations of this world to crumble those walls. You see we're all gonna' get cancer, get hit by a bus, or something; the walls will come tumbling down. But do you see He didn't come to Jericho because He hated those people; He came to Jericho because He loved those people and He loves you. But it's not a cheap Love, it's not an easy Love; in other words, He desires complete and total communion because you're His Bride and He longs to bear the Fruit that is Life.

So, right now just in your heart, whether you've said it one time or a million times or no times, just say this *"Lord Jesus, I invite you to come in and sit on your Throne."*

In Jesus name, believe the Gospel. Amen.

Now before you go, let me just say real quickly, I really did order a hundred of these (holding up the bumper sticker *God Bless Everybody*). And if you want one, you can just come down front here and grab one.

But let me just tell you, it's easy to think *"Oh God loves everybody. Yeah! And He's given us the Ministry of Reconciliation. I can go around kissing people and stuff like that."* And think it will be easy. But I'm just warning you, you need only wonder, Palm Sunday is this day of incredible irony because we all wave palm branches and say *"Yeah, Jesus is the King"* and everything and yet six days later they kill Him. Why? Well, you search the Scriptures, you read very closely and I think you'll see that it's because when He rode into Jerusalem, this bumper sticker was on His ass (and by that I mean His donkey, of course). And you see, they just take too kindly to that and yet that's our battle against the walls.

[From the notes: But don't think it will be easy. Jesus got crucified 'cause He rode into Jerusalem with this bumper sticker on His ass. See, they wanted Him to ride a war horse, but He rode an ass and that meant Peace; it meant God Bless Everybody.]

And one last thing before you go, I like *Veggie Tales*. Just don't let it be your Bible study 'cause if your kids have half a brain, one day they'll ask you "But Mommy does God hate the French Peas. They're the talking vegetables inside Jericho. Does God hate them?" I want you to answer with confidence "Sweetheart, God loves everyone and God will bless everybody."

Disclaimer: The transcript is a compilation of Peter's notes and the audio of the sermon with the primary source being Peter's handwritten notes. As some of you may know, Peter's handwriting is interesting to decipher. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact us regarding discrepancies or concerns about the transcript. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. Don't be shy about informing us of errors. Thanks, the Transcriptionist.

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