

**Intro:** Remember what it was like when you were in grade school and you were picking sides for a game. Didn't matter WHAT game...Basketball, baseball, tag, hide and seek, you ALWAYS wanted to be on the winning side. And, you knew the players...you knew that Tommy was the fastest runner...so if you were playing tag...Tommy, pick me! Or, Tommy, whose team are YOU going to be on, because I want to be with YOU! You are going to win!

That's where we are in Joshua 5. The Israelites are IN the promised land...but it is FULL of people that aren't going to want to leave...and now it is time to take over. Now it is time to fight the battles they know they are going to have to fight to accomplish what God has promised. Now they are facing fortified cities that aren't just going to say, OH, OK, God says you can have this...no problem...Let us pack up and be on our way!

Now they are going to have to step out on faith and start fighting for what God promised. And, just like kids on the playground, Joshua wants the BEST people on his side because he wants to WIN! So, when he goes to survey his first big obstacle, the city of Jericho, and finds a soldier standing with a drawn sword in his hand...asks: WHOSE SIDE? Totally understandable. Are you friend...or foe...for us or against us? Are you going to HELP us win...or fight against?

I want to talk with you today about HOW TO WIN the Battles of Life. Just like the children of Israel, Every single one of us face battles. And after walking with Jesus for a while, you come to understand, this is not a one time battle. The battle to receive what God promised, the battle to do what God calls us to do, the battle to make a difference in our world, and our community, and in our families...It is a battle we fight every day.

Sometimes it is a physical battle with health, sometimes a financial battle, sometimes it is a relational battle with an individual, sometimes battle at work, sometimes at home, sometimes at school. All at same time! How do you WIN?

### 3 Principles For Winning The Battles of Life

#### 1. Trust God's Provision

5:10-12

The Israelites had a problem. They couldn't just leave JERICHO behind...and go around it. Leave them defenseless to the rear as they tried to take the land. Jericho was large, it was fortified and it appeared to be impossible for them to take. This is a battle they are going to have to fight...and just like YOUR battles...Seems impossible

City of Jericho:

- Walls of Jericho: Double wall (Retaining wall 12-15, mud brick 20-26; area between; top wall 12-15 (50!) For people with bows and arrows and spears...seemed impossible!
- Spring inside provide water, harvest just been taken in, Have enough food and water to withstand a siege!
- Israelites...have little to no battle experience...certainly NOTHING qualified them to win this battle.

So, before they go to battle, God teaches them a lesson ALL of us need to learn. TRUST HIS PROVISION! He does something amazing to remind them of who HE is and the reality they can depend upon Him for miraculous provision.

- Read with me 5:10-12
  - ~Celebrated Passover: Reminder of the opening of the Red Sea...God's Great Deliverance from Egyptian Army
  - ~Ate the last of the Manna: Reminder of His provision every single day for 40 years
  - ~Manna ceased...and they ate the produce of the land Reminder: GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES!

Think about it...what was the conversation like around the meals that night? Remembering...Reliving...the power and the provision, the faithfulness of God. The very first time...Eating of the produce of the land. GOD KEEPS PROMISES

I am convinced that the people of Israel were strengthened...and prepared...for Jericho...by remembering the Past!

Hudson Taylor said it this way: *"God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply!"* About missions... But ultimately, it's about every single issue in the spiritual life. The Children of Israel faced an overwhelming obstacle, and God reminded them...This isn't the first time...I have NEVER let you down...And I will not now! TRUST ME

#### 2. Gain God's Perspective!

5:13-15

One of the challenges Joshua had to overcome from the onset was learning how to see things from God's perspective and not his own. For most of us that is VERY HARD! Think about it like Joshua. It's simple. His question is right on target from his perspective. Are you FOR US...or FOR THEM? Are you FRIEND...Or FOE? Fight WITH US...AGAINST US

Look at this answer! It is Beautiful! Stopped Joshua in His tracks. Joshua...NO! NEITHER...Joshua...there is a third possibility here...one that you evidently have NEVER considered. Im not your side...or their side: ON GOD'S SIDE! I am here as commander of the army of the Lord! I'm on God's side...and Joshua...that's bigger...and different than YOU

Joshua...gain a different perspective. NEVER forget it Joshua...YOUR side...it isn't always God's side! Sometimes God is doing something bigger than you. The issue is not is God with YOU...Issue is are YOU with GOD! DIFFERENT.

Joshua, this is NOT just about you. God is doing something bigger...He is building His Kingdom! This land that He is giving you...It's not just about your comfort...nor just about your provision, it's not just about what you want and need. God is furthering His Kingdom...and you get to be a part of it. But remember...it's about Him....NOT YOU!

The Question YOU have to settle is exactly the same as you fight your battles...Whose side are YOU on

- Other side: Is your battle all about defeating something...winning something, achieving something
- Your Side: Is your battle about YOU, what you want, what you desire, makes you comfortable
- God's Side: Have you learned what Joshua learned...God is doing something BIGGER THAN YOU IN YOU

God's Perspective to Jesus: *"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will ALSO make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*

God was giving the people of Israel a home...a place....provision...protection. Not Just for them...But so they too could be a light to the Gentiles...to show the whole world what it means to be the people of God! To demonstrate His love, His grace, His faithfulness, His provision, His goodness...so that people would be drawn to Him.

Listen to me: He is doing the same thing in YOUR battles! When you GET that...Understand...Learn. God's work in and through you is about more than JUST YOU...You will gain the right perspective. Issue is NOT is God on my side: Issue is: AM I ON GOD'S SIDE? Or...Listen now: Am I JUST In this relationship for what I GET!?

### 3. Follow God's Plan.

6:1-27

From the outset I want to say something to you about God's plan. He doesn't do things the way we do, Understand? We SAY we know that...and we believe that...and we can even quote the verse...but I'm going to tell you something. This passage is going to stretch you to the breaking point. This is one of the most difficult passages in the Bible. Basically I want to call three things to your attention about How God Works in this passage.

Is 55:8-9 *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

- God's ways sometimes seem CRAZY to us! March/Trumpets/Shout And the walls fall down! NUTS! (1-5) Who would EVER believe such a thing...but it did! (Archeology: walls from top fell down OUTER RAMPS)
- God's ways sometimes seem COSTLY to us! (Don't take a single thing for yourself!) Treasury/Burn (17) All the plunder Goes either to God (temple) or is burned! NOTHING FOR YOU! Give it all up! Archaeology: Layer of ash right where it is supposed to be: whole city: Jars FULL Of grain still there NEVER
- God's ways sometimes seem CRUEL to us! (Kill everything...Men women, children, animals) (21) Now it's not so easy to quote that verse is it? We like to read over it...but we can't: Some thoughts ~Gen 15:16 Not about God being cruel: Picking Favorites: About Judgement of sin: Used Israelites Abominable Sexual and Religious Practices: Pedophilia; Child Sacrifice; Religious Prostitution;Beastiality Generational Animosity Look at Israel and Palestine today! Spiritual Protection: They never really fully rid the land...Always haunted them spiritually

You can know ALL of those things...and you will still struggle...I don't have an easy answer...but this is what I know. God is good...and His ways are NOT my ways...and He always does what is best...And I question that...and walk a different path...at my own risk.

**CONCL:**

- **This morning...WHATEVER battle you face...TRUST GOD'S PROVISION!** Listen to me: He will NEVER forsake you, NEVER let you down, Always Give you just what you need, Just when you need it...and sometimes in a miraculous way!

*"I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread."*

Psalm 37:25

Come to Him...Tell Him your needs...Trust His provision!

- **This morning...WHATEVER battle you face: GAIN GOD'S PERSPECTIVE!** Quit asking, God are YOU on My side... START asking: God am I on YOUR side? Am I looking beyond myself, my desires, my wants, my comfort to the bigger picture of what YOU might be doing through me?

God, who do you want me to be a testimony of Grace to?

1 Cor 4:9-13

Come to Him...Offer yourself to God...say...God HELP ME SEE YOUR WAY, YOUR GOAL, YOUR KINGDOM

- **This Morning...WHATEVER battle you face...FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN**  
If it is health....Call the Elders of the church together to pray!  
If it is financial...Start tithing! Give 10% Costly, Crazy, Seem Cruel to give away what you need...FOLLOW  
If it is Spiritual...You do what God calls you to do...even when you don't understand it, when you don't like it.  
The Children of Israel...and I myself...Have regretted it EVERY single time I question His goodness, every single time I question His wisdom, every single time I question His plan...and I go my own way, I always pay a price!

Whatever battle you are fighting today...Bring it to Him....Get on HIS SIDE...HIS PROVISION....HIS PLAN SUCCESS