

Message Summary

Through faith, God overcomes the walls of our lives and grants us victory, in this life and forever. We often face “walls” and obstacles in life, insurmountable opposition from outside or even inside of us that prohibits our progress (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8). Our passage in Hebrews’ hall of faith takes us to the walls of opposition Israel faced at Jericho. It shows us two characters who, although different in many respects, were united by faith in the God who fights our battles for us.

The first was Joshua, the spiritual and military leader who succeeded Moses (v. 30). Hebrews’ hall of faith is chronologically structured to demonstrate the centrality of faith to the Biblical storyline. It omits the time between the Red Sea crossing to show Israel’s absence of faith. The walls of Jericho are Israel’s first obstacle under Joshua’s leadership. The second figure was Rahab, the most unlikely character in the hall of faith because she was a gentile prostitute. Rahab’s life showcases the glory of God’s salvation and shows us that no one is outside His grace.

Israel gained victory over Jericho singularly because the Lord was with them and had promised to give them the land (Gn. 12:1-3). But this was no excuse for passivity. They were commanded to do exactly what the Lord had commanded them. Joshua met with an angel of the Lord and received the divine strategy that outlined Israel’s responsibilities (Josh. 5:13-15). Joshua was full of wisdom and vigor in pursuing God’s purposes in Israel. Worldly endeavors such as business, sports, or military combat display ambitious strategy in pursuing their goals. How much more was Israel of old, and the church today, to carefully strategize how to pursue the greatest mission on the planet (Mt. 28:18-20). The strategy was based on the report from twelve spies Moses had previously sent in. Ten spies, the vast majority, failed to believe God’s Word and led Israel to the doubt that eventuated into forty years of wilderness wondering. Joshua and Caleb, however, trusted and were rewarded with a share in the Promised Land (cf. Josh. 14:6-12).

Meanwhile, Jericho knew they were coming. Jericho had heard that the Lord fought Israel’s battles, and cowered in fear inside their walls. Rahab, however, trusted the Lord and protected the spies by hiding them in her home. With a multigenerational vision, Rahab asks the spies for protection from the impending judgment for both herself and her household. The spies promised it by tying a scarlet thread from her window to mark her faith in God’s provision. The scarlet represented Christ’s blood, the thread of redemption that strings all of Scripture from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3) to the Great Banquet of the Lamb (Rev. 20-21). Rahab’s faith was in neither the walls nor the spies, but in the God who guarantees redemption for all whose faith is in Him.

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

Joshua and Rahab are part of the same Biblical story of the Lord’s victory over Jericho, but they could not be more different. What do their differences teach us about who the Lord uses for his purposes? What is the significance of the Lord choosing a Gentile prostitute?

If the Lord alone grants victory, why are we still commanded to be engaged and not passive in our roles? See the examples of Paul in Rm. 15:17 and 1 Cor. 15:9-11.

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don’t have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.

1. What “walls” of opposition are you facing now or will you face in the near future? How can you better trust in the Lord for victory in them?
2. Are you prone to think you are too bad or too out of reach for God’s grace? How does Rahab’s inclusion in the Hebrews 11 hall of faith demonstrate God’s grace for all kinds of sinners (cf. 1 Tm. 1:15)?
3. Do you tend to fear opposition or spiritual warfare? How can you better trust the Lord for victory this week and fight from victory, not for victory?
4. Are you strategic for advancing the gospel with people around you? In what arenas in your life this week can you be more gospel strategic?
5. Are you consumed with strategy for worldly things, such as sports, education, career, etc, to the neglect of spiritual strategy?
6. Are you too easily influence by the majority that doesn’t trust the Lord’s victory?
7. Are you strategic to show hospitality to people who need it for gospel purposes? How can you use your home this week to welcome others?

Prayer

- Pray for Our Church:
 - Thank God for shedding his own blood to make the way of salvation open for all
 - Pray that the Lord would grant strength and perseverance to those in our faith family fighting walls of obstacle in their lives.
- Pray for Our Community:
 - Pray that the Lord would give CFC a strategic vision to reach others around us for gospel purposes, and protect us from overindulgence in worldly strategies that so easily hinder us from running our race (Hb. 12:1-2)
- Pray for Our World:
 - Pray that as the Lord gave salvation to Rahab, a Gentile prostitute, that He would also give salvation to many nations and allow us to be part of proclaiming the gospel to them. Pray that we would zealously preach the gospel to the nations even here in Gadsden.