

**Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
May 19, 2021**

"AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN!"

"See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers--to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--and to their descendants after them." (Deuteronomy 1:8)

I remember an old children's song, it may have been from my Vacation Bible School days back when I was "a wee lad"...if I ever truly was "wee". It went like this, "Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho. Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, and the walls came tumbling down."

Remember that one? Those of you who do I heard you start to sing as you read along. Anyway, there's a bit of "innocent heresy" in that song (if there is such a thing as innocent heresy) in that Joshua or anyone else in the army of the Hebrews fought in that battle. Not a spear was chucked, not a sword was wielded, not a rock was thrown, not a doorway was hit with a battering ram. The Jericho walls did indeed come tumbling down, but it was God alone who did it. God fought the battle of Jericho. God won the battle of Jericho, and it was God who gave the victory away, to the nation of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, of Isaac, and ultimately Abraham. These are the lessons that we are learning in our "Glory Days" Bible study on Tuesday mornings based in the Book of Joshua. God never told Joshua and the couple of million children of Abraham that he was leading to go in and fight to conquer the Land of Canaan, that's because He had already done that, fought, and won, a spiritual battle, and so God's command was to go and take possession of the land that the Lord had sworn to give them. Now was the time to receive this great gift, the fulfillment of the promise. Jericho was a fortified city, more so than perhaps any other city of its time. Its concentric walls were impenetrable. Before the Israelites could take possession of the Land of Canaan as their inheritance, they had to take out Jericho. The enemy had to be dispossessed first in order for that to happen. Again, God did the heavy lifting. He brought down the courage and strength of the King of Jericho and all his mighty men of valor, all the while offering them the opportunity to surrender, repent, and be spared destruction. Then He alone caused those fortified walls to crumble and fall so that the army of Israel could rush in and take the city. All that the Hebrews had to do was to believe in God, trust His power and His promises, and follow the commands that He gave to them through Joshua. They did that, and God delivered to them what He had already won for them. The underlying premise of this wonderful book, "Glory Days" by Max Lucado and the accompanying study is that God has a "promised land" for us as well, one that He's already given us, one that He wants us to take possession of as our inheritance as God's children. At first you might think that our promised land is heaven, and yes, heaven is the ultimate land of God's promise in Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. But God also has a promised land for you in this life too, where we live out and live in the promises that He gives us in Scripture. Promises that He has already delivered on. Promises that "we're more than conquerors through Him who loves us". That "nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus". That "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". God promises all who believe and place their trust in Him that ours is a life of joy, of peace, of contentment, confidence, hope, courage and strength. He's already given us all those things, it's ours to receive them in faith, to trust God to be true to His Word of promise. Yes, we'll still have

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struggles in our life in this world, but our attitude and outlook will be one of total victory. We'll rise above all our struggles through the power of Christ that dwells within us, the Holy Spirit. Like the ancient Israelites we have our Jericho's that stand in our way. We call them strongholds... strongholds of the devil, our enemy, that keep us from taking possession of what is already ours. A stronghold is anything that tells you "I can't" I can't stop worrying. I can't stop being afraid. I can't forgive that person. I can't believe that God could forgive me after what I've done, or for what I might do in the future. "Bad things always happen to me", the stronghold of self-pity. "I have to be in charge", the stronghold of pride. "I'll never recover", the stronghold of defeat. "I don't deserve to be loved", the stronghold of rejection. "I have to be good, or God will reject me", the stronghold of performance. "My value equals my possessions", the stronghold of materialism. They go on and on and on. Satan uses these attitudes to bind us, to keep us wandering in the wilderness rather than living in the land of promises. Satan's problem is that he's the one who has been bound. Jesus did that through his life, death, and resurrection. The devil is defeated and disarmed and has no claim on us, no power over us. We are sons and daughters of the King, equal heirs to all that God has for us with Jesus. EQUAL HEIRS WITH JESUS. That's amazing! The devil doesn't want us to know about this, to live in this reality. To live in the land of fulfilled promises where our lives are dominated with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...all fruits of the Spirit that lives within us. God has broken down the walls for your Jericho, your strongholds, and wants us to take possession of our promised land. Churches have promised lands and Jericho's too...I'll have a lot more to say about that on Sunday.