

- “Oh Victory in Jesus, my Savior forever! He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood. He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him. He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.” If you have spent any time in the church at all then you have probably sung “Victory in Jesus” a solid 700 times. It is certainly a wonder song full of hope and excited about the victory that is indeed found in Jesus. Of course, this victory is the victory of the soul. It is the soul’s salvation that is only found in Jesus Christ the Son of God. Sadly, not every person will experience this victory in Jesus because they will refuse Him. Some will experience the victory only to let it go because of their choices to turn their backs Jesus. Some, thankfully, will regain the victory by once again turning to Jesus in faithful obedience. We all know of people who fit into these categories. We know people who refuse to come to Jesus either all together or not on His terms. We know people who have come to Jesus, but have then fallen away. We also know people who have obeyed, fallen away, and then come back into the fold of God.
- Have you every considered the story of Joshua and the Israelites and how their story of conquering Jericho and subsequent chapters that follow? I see **Joshua 6-8** as a near perfect microcosm of this life. I believe there are many lessons we can learn and applications that we can take away from each of the chapters individually, but I also believe that we can put these 3 chapters together and learn the all important lesson that victory only comes through God. So let’s study these 3 chapters this morning as we consider Victory Through God. I think we really see clearly the 3 different stages that a person can find themselves in in this life. Hopefully this story of Jericho and the following events will remind us of exactly how the Victory can be had through God.

I. Victory comes only through God’s terms.

- A. Israel was given the victory over Jericho because they followed God’s commands. **(Chapter 6)**
1. Israel came up against the very fortified city of Jericho, and God gave Joshua very specific instructions as to how they were going to bring down these mighty walls.
 2. God instructions to Joshua.
 - a) All the men of war and seven priests were to march around the city one time for six days with the ark of the Lord. **(vv.3,4)**
 - b) The priests were to carry with them seven trumpets of ram’s horns to blow before the ark. **(v.4)**
 - c) On the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times and on the seventh time the people were to shout with a loud voice. **(vv.4,5)**
 - d) The Lord said that the walls would fall down flat and the people could take the city. **(v.5)**
 3. Joshua relays the message of the Lord to the people of Israel. **(vv.6-10)**
 4. The Israelites obey the instructions of the Lord and they are victorious over the city of Jericho. **(vv.11-16, 20,21)**

B. Application: One can only come to God through His terms.

1. You know some of the people had to be thinking that this plan was crazy and didn't make any sense. I'd suggest that if they would've tried a different way that they would've failed. Yet, they obeyed God and they were blessed with victory because of it.
2. Many people, today, hear God’s plan of salvation **(Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:35-38; Acts 22:16)** from the Scriptures and don't think it makes sense.
3. They might think that it sounds like we are “earning” our salvation. Or they might question the practice of baptism as being nothing more than magic water. They might even think that it should be something much more dramatic.
4. We must avoid that type of thinking and just simply follow God’s instructions and be willing to come to Him on His terms. If we aren't willing to accept His terms then we can’t expect to have the victory over sins that only comes through being in Jesus. **(Gal. 3:27)**
5. Any failure to come to God on His terms for salvation will result in the ultimate defeat at the hands of sin. **(Matt. 7:21-23)**

II. Defeat comes through failure to meet God’s terms.

- A. Israel fail against Ai because some had disobeyed God’s commands. **(Chapter 7)**
1. After the walls had fallen, God had commanded for the city to be under a ban and the only people to make it out alive were Rahab and her family because she helped the spies earlier. All silver, gold, and bronze were to be put into the treasury of the Lord. **(6:17-19)**
 2. The vast majority of the Israelites obeyed the commands of God and destroyed everything within the city (except Rahab and her family) and gave the valuables to the treasury of the Lord. **(6:21-24)**

3. Unfortunately, there were a few individuals that disobeyed the Lord's commands (**v.1**) and there were great consequences because of their disobedience.
4. Israel's next conquest was focused on Ai. They spied out Ai and determined that it should be a decently easy conquer because they were few in number. (**vv.2,3**)
5. However, they were pushed back and defeated because of the sin of Achan, for he had taken some of the valuables and had hidden them under his tent. (**vv.3-5**)
6. Joshua and the people are distraught and they go to God wondering why this type of defeat came upon them. (**vv.6-9**) God informs Joshua that there was sin within Israel and that it must be dealt with before Israel could again prosper. (**vv.10-15**)
7. Joshua conducts the search for the one responsible for the sin. (**vv.16-18**) Achan is taken and questioned by Joshua as to why he had done this sinful thing. (**v.19**) Achan admits his sin and then is punished for it. (**vv.20-25**)

B. Application: Failure to continue on by God's terms will result in God not being with us.

1. Israel had initially obeyed God and they were victorious because of that obedience, but some within the camp decided to leave that way of obedience and break some of the commandments.
2. We can do what God asked of us in regards to our initial obedience to the Gospel, but we must continue in obedience before God or else we will suffer sad consequences just like Achan.
3. Our faith is a continual process. We must always be learning and growing and obeying God in all that we do.
4. We must live from that point on for Jesus Christ in all that we do. (**Gal. 2:20**)
5. If we fail to continue in the path of righteousness then we are doing nothing but crucifying Jesus again and making His sacrifice worthless. (**Heb. 6:4-6**)

III. Defeat can be turned into victory through God's terms.

A. Israel was able to defeat Ai because they had corrected the wrong. (**Chapter 8**)

1. After Joshua had righted the wrong of Achan, the Israelites went back to take care of the people of Ai with God on their side this time.
2. Again, God gave them a plan to follow in order to over take the city. They were to break up into 2 groups. One would approach from the front while another waited behind the city to ambush it. (**vv.1,2**)
3. Joshua and the people of war went out to execute the plan that God had told them to follow. (**vv.3-8**)
4. 5,000 sat waiting to ambush Ai and Joshua took 25,000 for himself to attack head on.
5. The people of Ai came out to meet Joshua and the people. The Israelites fled as if defeated which caused the people of Ai to give chase. This gave the other group the opportunity to ambush the city and take control of it and burn it. The Lord gave Joshua the command to keep his javelin held up towards the city and he did so until every person was destroyed. (**vv.14-29**)

B. Application: We can be stored back to God by correcting the mistakes we have made, and God will be with us once again.

1. The Israelites had transgressed God's commands, but they rebounded in a big way and became victorious once again with God on their side.
2. Sometimes, as Christians, we fail before God. We make mistakes and we might have to suffer through consequences of those mistakes, but that doesn't mean that we have completely cut ourselves off from God. There is the opportunity to realize our mistakes and come back to God.
3. I am reminded of the prodigal son of **Luke 15**. That young man made a mistake by leaving his father and blowing his inheritance on foolish living. He, thankfully, recognized his mistakes and went back to his father. His father was thrilled to have his son back and welcomed him with open arms and great joy.
4. Our heavenly Father waits to welcome us back, but we first must correct our mistakes and then seek to live for Him once again and not ourselves. We can have the victory again, but we must recognize our shortcomings and make up our mind to come back to God and live by His commandments once again.

We all should want to be victorious in this life over Satan and sin. That victory can only be had through our God and Jesus Christ. The story of Joshua, Jericho, Achan, and Ai should show us that this life isn't a simple straight street without any sort of difficulties or struggles. There will be mistakes made, but we can overcome those mistakes by simply following after the commandments of God. May He help us to always trust in Him and simply do as He has commanded us to do in all things.