

# Lessons around Jericho



## Topic

God's faithfulness

## Theme

God is faithful to His promises.

## Desired Learner Response

The learner will examine his life for evidence that he truly believes God is faithful to His promises.

## Materials

- Resources 1 and 8
- Assembly instructions

## Scripture Focus

Joshua 5:13–6:27

## Summary

God proved faithful to Israel by first by encouraging their leader and then by giving them a unique plan for defeating Jericho. The unique plan infused His people with a strong belief that God would be faithful to His promises concerning the conquest. God's careful planning revealed His special love and care for Israel and His deep desire to see them succeed in taking the land.

## Outline

### I. God Faithfully Encouraged Israel (5:13–6:5)

- With His coming (5:13, 14)
- With His command (5:15)
- With His control (6:1, 2)
- With His circling (6:3–5)

### II. God Faithfully Delivered Israel (6:6–27)

## Memory Verse

*"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,  
after they were compassed about seven days"  
(Hebrews 11:30).*

## GETTING STARTED

### Some Assembly Required

If available, bring a set of assembly instructions to class and read a few pages to your learners. Talk about your experiences with assembling toys or furniture.

**ASK:** When you buy something that requires some assembly, what do you do with the directions? (Q1)

**ASK:** Describe a time when you ignored the directions on how to put a product together. What was the result? (Q2)

**ASK:** What part does safety play in how carefully you follow the directions for a product? (Q3)

This lesson covers Israel's first encounter with an enemy. God used the encounter as a learning experience for Joshua and the Israelites. His instructions for taking down Jericho were odd. Joshua could have easily dismissed them for a more traditional battle plan. But he followed God's plan, which infused Israel with a strong belief that God would be faithful to His promises concerning the conquest. God's careful planning revealed His special love and care for Israel and His deep desire to see them succeed in taking the land.

### I've an Uneasy Feeling

Put three learners in chairs next to each other at the front of the room. Have a group of eight to ten men circle the three learners as if they are getting ready to attack them.

**ASK:** How do you feel when someone is circling you? *Most people will feel threatened and uneasy even when they know they are actually going to be attacked.*

**ASK:** What did you instinctively feel like doing? *Most people will feel the urge to either hide or run.*

God used that sensation caused by circling an enemy to His advantage as the conquest of the Promised Land began. He proved faithful by giving Israel a tremendous amount of encouragement as a part of their first encounter with their enemy.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### I. God Faithfully Encouraged Israel (5:13–6:5)

God displayed tremendous wisdom in preparing Israel for their first attack in the Promised Land. He couldn't have done more to communicate to them that He is faithful to His promises. We could say what God actually attacked in the battle of Jericho was any doubt or hesitation in the hearts and minds of His people. For He constructed His battle plan to specifically infuse courage and belief into His



leader and His people. God's wisdom and power in such a plan should spur us on to want to serve Him courageously.

### A. With His coming (5:13, 14)

As Joshua observed the walls of Jericho and contemplated attacking the city, a stranger silently appeared with a drawn sword, ready for battle. Joshua approached the stranger and inquired about his loyalties (5:13). No doubt the stranger's appearance at first unnerved Joshua. Would his leadership end so quickly at the hands of just one enemy soldier? To Joshua's relief, the stranger revealed Himself not as just another soldier but as the *captain of the host of the Lord* (5:14). Joshua communicated with God regularly, but the appearance of the Lord before him must have strengthened Joshua and infused his heart and mind with unbelievable courage. The fact that God appeared to him is evidence that Joshua was probably wavering a bit in his faith. He needed to see the *captain of the host of the Lord*.

**READ:** Joshua 5:14. **ASK:** What does Joshua's question reveal about his mind-set as he anticipated the battle? (Q4) *He was humble, submissive to God, and willing to serve.*

**ASK:** What might you have asked if you were in Joshua's position? (Q5)

Joshua's question was telling. He was faced with a tremendous obstacle. His reaction was to ask God for direction. He did not complain. He did not whine. He was totally open to what God would have him do.

Joshua's calling himself a servant was not a slip of the tongue or a nice touch while in the presence of the Lord. Joshua recognized that though he was the most important person among God's chosen people, he was primarily a servant of the Lord. Joshua appointed by God to do God's work. He ranked under God in the chain of command.

**ASK:** What characterizes a good servant? (Q6) *A good servant seeks to know his master's will, follows his master's directions, and trusts his master. There is no room for pride in the heart of a true servant.*

While the drawn sword in the Lord's hand was at first a threat, it immediately became a source of encouragement for Joshua. The words *host of the Lord* in verse 14 signified to Joshua that though his army was not well suited, the Lord would more than make up the slack. The Lord had a mass of warriors with Him, though unseen, with swords drawn and ready for battle. The Lord's promise to be with Joshua (1:5) became very real. Any doubts or anxiety he had at that point were replaced by the encouraging sight of the Lord.

### B. With His command (5:15)

Before moving on to specific instructions, the Lord encouraged Joshua further. In verse 15 He told Joshua to take off his sandals, for he was standing on holy ground.

**ASK:** What did the Lord communicate to Joshua by calling the land just outside wicked Jericho holy ground? (Q7) *That the land already belonged to God and that God was present in the land.*

See 2 Kings 6:8–17 for an example of God's host standing ready for battle on behalf of Elisha. God revealed the host to Elisha and his servant, and they found courage in the face of great danger.

The Mosaic Covenant was conditional. If Israel obeyed God's law, then they would enjoy the land God promised to the in the Abrahamic Covenant.

See Isaiah 6:1–7 for Isaiah's sense of his own sinfulness in the presence of God. Such an awareness is expected. No doubt Joshua felt his sinfulness too as anyone would in God's presence.

Joshua was fighting on home turf. The land belonged to the Lord, and He had promised it to His chosen people.

The land was also holy because the Lord was present there. God's *holiness* does not seem like a theme Joshua would have been particularly concerned about at that time. But all God is and does emanates from His holy character. Removing his shoes in the presence of God's holiness reminded Joshua that God had to be faithful to all His promises concerning the conquest because God could not be unfaithful and remain holy. As Joshua stood with his shoes off, the feeling of the ground beneath his feet would have also reminded him of his own lack of holiness. If anything was to go wrong in the conquest it would be on the human side. God had given His law to Israel because they weren't perfect. He then held them to His law and used it as a condition for blessing them in the land. But there was no guarantee that Israel would obey God faithfully. They weren't holy like God is holy.

Joshua also considered that he led a group of people whose parents and grandparents had been egregiously rebellious and unfaithful. The potential for the current generation to rebel was cause for concern. That concern was realized almost immediately when sin led to defeat in Israel's second battle. That disappointing battle is the topic of the next lesson.

The possibility of human failure no doubt made Joshua uneasy. Would *he* ruin it for everyone else? Would *the people* rebel and cause disastrous results on the battlefield? The Lord addressed those unvoiced concerns by continuing to encourage Joshua, giving him insight into Jericho's state of mind.

### C. With His control (6:1, 2)

The Lord stated that Jericho was *shut up because of the children of Israel* (6:1). The people of Jericho were so worried about their safety that they let no one in or out of the gates. The Lord pointed to that fact as evidence that He had already given the king and the *mighty men of valour* into Joshua's hand (6:2). In other words, Jericho's army and king weren't going to fight because God turned them into scaredy-cats. God guaranteed victory for Joshua.

The Lord's word concerning Jericho had to be encouraging to Joshua and later to Israel. The only component that Joshua lacked was a specific plan from the Lord. How would he possibly get through Jericho's walls?

**ASK:** What might be a normal means of conquering a city? (Q8) *Besieging it and waiting for the inhabitants to give up; trying to traverse the walls or knock down the gate with war machines.*

### D. With His circling (6:3–5)

Joshua, still shoeless, stood before the Lord to receive His instructions for battle.

**READ:** Joshua 6:3–5. **ASK:** Imagine you were the general instead of Joshua. What would have gone through your mind as you heard the Lord's instructions for battle? (Q9)

God's plan was to take some of Israel's army and priests along with the ark of God and have them encircle the city once a day for six days and seven times for the



seventh day. After the last lap on the last day, the priests were to blow their trumpets and the people were to shout so the walls would fall down flat. The flattened walls would allow the Israelites to walk right into Jericho to take it (6:3–5).

This sounds like a decent plan. Circling an enemy is a good way to intimidate them. No doubt that was part of God's thinking. But when we consider that marching around Jericho would put Israel's army and priests presumably in an exposed and potentially dangerous position, the plan starts to lose its appeal. The more times Israel circled the city, the more likely Jericho would be to attack the seemingly crazy Israelites.

We must realize that the craziness of the plan was what made it brilliant. By His plan, God left His soldiers and priests seemingly exposed to attack. But that exposure would help them learn to trust God as they marched each day. They would better understand that God sovereignly controlled the people of Jericho and kept them from brandishing their weapons. The presence of the ark of the covenant in the middle of the procession meant that God circled the city with the priests and soldiers.

**ASK:** What would the priests and soldiers have learned about God by seeing the ark accompany them as they circled Jericho? (Q10) *That God is sovereign and powerful enough to guarantee His faithfulness to Israel.*

God had more than just a desire to keep His promises. He also had the sovereignty and power to guarantee He would be faithful to them. Those marching around Jericho learned what it meant to be on the side of the sovereign, all-powerful God. God would be faithful and nothing could stop Him.

**READ:** Hebrews 11:30. **ASK:** What happened to any fears Israel felt before taking on Jericho? (Q11) *Their fears turned to faith in God.*

This first battle in the Promised Land was all about dispelling any fear and doubt Israel had toward God. It was about establishing God as the faithful One Who keeps His promises. As the narrative continues, God faithfully brings Israel their first victory.

## II. God Faithfully Delivered Israel (6:6–27)

**READ:** Joshua 6:6–11. **ASK:** What did Joshua do with the directions he got from the Lord? (Q12) *He immediately put them into practice. He did not debate their validity. He did not ask why. He did not get a committee together to get more advice.*

In a lifetime, Joshua would never have dreamed up God's plan. It was unique. No military genius would ever suggest it. In fact, it does not make military sense. Why subject your army to large falling objects or flying arrows and spears? But the plan allowed God to demonstrate His power over the people in the city. As God had predicted, Jericho was indeed scared stiff. They were just as Rahab described them—their hearts were melted; they had no more courage. One might even say they were delusional. They refused to draw a bow or pick up a stone to defend their city. Not even an eager young soldier dared to throw a spear or a javelin Israel's way as Israel made their way around the outside of the six-acre city a total of thirteen times (6:12–15).

It is unlikely that Israel moved far enough away from the city walls to be out of an archer's range. Doing so would dramatically lessen the effect of marching around the city. And such a safeguard would have meant Israel's archers were out of range too, lessening any threat Jericho might have felt from Israel's presence.

The circling had to be somewhat unnerving for Israel at first. They had to wonder if Jericho would really stay inside their walls or if they might burst forth to break Israel's line to divide and conquer them. But the further they progressed through the week, the more confident in God they became. His control over Jericho was constant. That was a tremendously important lesson for them to learn. If God could control Jericho, then He could control every city in Canaan.

After the marching had ended on the seventh day, Joshua told the people to shout.

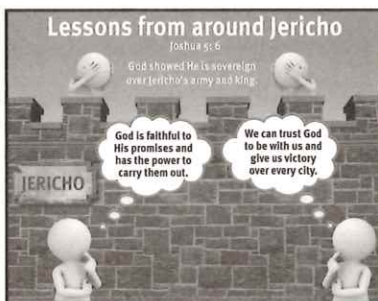
**READ:** Joshua 6:16. **ASK:** For what reason did Joshua tell the people to shout? (Q13) *Because the Lord had given them the city.*

God left no doubt in Joshua's mind and in the minds of the people that the imminent victory would come through His unconventional plan. Joshua gave the credit to the Lord as he anticipated the big crash from the walls falling down. But before the people shouted, Joshua gave them some final words of instruction. He reminded them to spare Rahab and her family and to bring all of the silver, gold, and vessels of brass and iron to the treasury of the Lord (6:17, 19). The valuables belonged to the Lord. Anyone who took them for himself would bring a curse on Israel (6:18).

**READ:** Joshua 6:18. **ASK:** Why does it make sense for the spoils from Jericho to go to God? (Q14) *They were His to begin with. Israel needed to recognize God's ownership of the land and everything in it. Also, God deserved the first fruits of the conquest just like He deserves the first fruits of a harvest.*

When Joshua gave the word, the trumpets blew, the people shouted, and the walls fell down flat. The army moved in to destroy both human and beast, sparing only Rahab and her family. The treasury of the Lord abounded with the Jericho spoil. Jericho was finished, and Joshua pronounced a curse on anyone who would try to rebuild it (6:20–26). Essentially God entombed Jericho inside the walls they built to protect themselves. Their towering protection became their downfall and Joshua's rise to fame (6:27).

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 8 to recap the lessons from around Jericho. Emphasize that the account of Jericho is proof even today that God is faithful to His promises and is able to keep them.



## MAKING IT PERSONAL

### Faithful to Fulfill His Promises

God's victory over Jericho is strong evidence that God is always faithful to His promises. That is a very important truth for us to be assured of. We have a lot riding on the promises of God in our lives. God has promised, among other things, to always be with us, to strengthen us to serve Him faithfully, to provide courage to obey His will, to reward us in Heaven, and to make us an eternal home.

**ASK:** Describe your confidence in God. (Q15)



**ASK:** How does God's complete faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to Israel help to bolster your faith in Him? (Q16)

### Be Faithful for He Is Faithful

God has already proven to be faithful! The book of Joshua alone presents an airtight case. So what are you waiting for? Be faithful to Him! He is beyond a doubt a God worthy of all our efforts and devotion.

**ASK:** What evidence is there in your life that you believe God is faithful? (Q17)

**ASK:** What are some areas of your life that you need to adjust to demonstrate that you believe God is faithful? (Q18)

Questions similar to these were asked as part of the making it personal section of lesson 1. Use this as an opportunity to test whether your learners are growing as a result of their study of God's faithfulness in the book of Joshua.

### Summary and Memory Verse

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 1. Add the following statement about God's faithfulness: God is faithful to His promises.

Encourage learners to memorize Hebrews 11:30. Give them an opportunity to say the verse in class next week.

● God's Faithfulness	
1.	8.
2.	9.
3.	10.
4.	11.
5.	12.
6.	13.
7.	



## Topic

God's faithfulness

## Theme

God's faithfulness extends to His warnings about His judgment of sin.

## Desired Learner Response

The learner will examine his life for indicators that he tolerates sin in his life.

## Materials

- Resources 1 and 9

# The Other Side of Faithfulness

## Scripture Focus

Joshua 7; 8

## Summary

Achan tested God's faithfulness to His warnings about His judgment of sin. God proved faithful and Achan experienced God's righteous anger.

## Outline

I. Achan Tested God's Faithfulness (7:1)

II. Joshua Assumed Israel's Faithfulness (7:2–4a)

III. God Demonstrated His Faithfulness (7:4b, 5)

IV. Joshua Questioned God's Faithfulness (7:6–9)

A. Joshua's first question (7:7a)

B. Joshua's second question (7:7b)

C. Joshua's third question (7:8)

D. Joshua's fourth question (7:9)

V. God Exposed Achan's Unfaithfulness (7:10–26)

A. God defended His actions (7:10–12)

B. God provided for Israel's restoration (7:13–26)

## Memory Verse

*"Let your conversation be without covetousness;  
and be content with such things as ye have:  
for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).*