

And the Walls Fell Down Flat

Joshua 6:1-20

Introduction:

Americans are having problems sleeping well. A poll released by the National Sleep Foundation showed that 74 percent of respondents suffered symptoms of a sleep disorder a few nights a week or more. The number was up significantly from 62 percent in 1999. Those symptoms include difficulty falling asleep, waking up a lot during the night, waking up too early and not being able to go back to sleep, and waking up not refreshed.

The problem is that we have more to worry about nowadays. Most of us are experiencing various levels of stress due to problems in life. This chapter in Joshua tells us what to do with those stubborn problems that are like a city “securely shut up.”

Background:

Joshua and the children of Israel had finished their forty-year trek in the wilderness, had crossed the Jordan River, and were ready to sweep into the long-awaited Promised Land.

- [Joshua 6:1 HCSB](#) Now Jericho was strongly fortified because of the Israelites--no one leaving or entering.

They faced a great obstacle, the city of Jericho. It was an unsolvable problem—vast, powerful, directly in their path, and undefeatable. Do you have any problems like that?

For the Israelites, the Lord’s solution was strange.

- [Joshua 6:2-5 HCSB](#) The LORD said to Joshua, "Look, I have handed Jericho, its king, and its fighting men over to you. (3) March around the city with all the men of war, circling the city one time. Do this for six days. (4) Have seven priests carry seven ram's-horn trumpets in front of the ark. But on the seventh day, march around the city seven times, while the priests blow the trumpets. (5) When there is a prolonged blast of the horn and you hear its sound, have all the people give a mighty shout. Then the city wall will collapse, and the people will advance, each man straight ahead."

He told them to march around the city one time a day for six days, then to march around the city seven times on the seventh day. Afterward they were to blow the trumpets, to shout with a great shout, and the walls would fall down flat—and that’s what happened.

Remez: What is the lesson for us? When we face an unsolvable problem, one like a city securely shut up, we must realize that God alone can solve it. But He expects us to encompass the problem as He directs:

1. Encircle the Problem with Prayer.

- [Joshua 6:6-14 HCSB](#) So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant and have seven priests carry seven trumpets in front of the ark of the LORD." (7) He said to the people, "Move forward, march around the city, and have the armed troops go ahead of the ark of the LORD." (8) After Joshua had spoken to the people, seven priests carrying seven trumpets before the LORD moved forward and blew the trumpets; the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. (9) While the trumpets were blowing, the armed troops went in front of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard went behind the ark. (10) But Joshua had commanded the people: "Do not shout or let your voice be heard. Don't let one word come out of your mouth until the time I say, 'Shout!' Then you are to shout." (11) So the ark of the LORD was carried around the city, circling it once. They returned to the camp and spent the night there. (12) Joshua got up early the next morning. The priests took the ark of the LORD, (13) and the seven priests carrying seven trumpets marched in front of the ark of the LORD. While the trumpets were blowing, the armed troops went in front of them, and the rear guard went behind the ark of the LORD. (14)

On the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

How often in the Bible did the Lord's people, facing an unsolvable problem, encompass it with prayer, beseeching the Lord to do what no human power could do. Examples:

- Abraham's servant praying for a bride for Isaac in Genesis 24;
- the Israelites praying for deliverance at the Red Sea in Exodus 14;
- Hezekiah facing the invasion of Assyria in 2 Kings 19;
- the church praying for Peter's deliverance in Acts 12.

In The Kneeling Christian, the anonymous author gives this advice to those burdened for loved ones who, despite our pleading, are tightly "shut up" against the Lord: "*They may not listen to us when we plead with them, but they cannot hold out if we pray for them. . . . Tell God, and then trust God.*"

2. Encircle the Problem with Praise.

- [Joshua 6:15-16 HCSB](#) Early on the seventh day, they started at dawn and marched around the city seven times in the same way. That was the only day they marched around the city seven times. (16) After the seventh time, the priests blew the trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city.

On the seventh day, Joshua said, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!" The ability to praise the Lord in the midst of impossibility is a powerful secret. Satan can't abide the presence of godly praise and worship. An old hymn, translated from the German, says: "Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find, May Jesus Christ be praised! / Or fades my earthly bliss? My comfort still is this, May Jesus Christ be praised! / The night becomes as day, when from the heart we say, May Jesus Christ be praised! / The powers of darkness fear when this sweet chant they hear, May Jesus Christ be praised!"

3. Encircle the Problem with Faith.

- [Joshua 6:20 HCSB](#) So the people shouted, and the trumpets sounded. When they heard the blast of the trumpet, the people gave a great shout, and the wall collapsed. The people advanced into the city, each man straight ahead, and they captured the city.

What an act of faith for Joshua and the Israelites! They had no organized army, no weapons, nothing but sheer obedience to an odd command while going against a powerful enemy.

- [Hebrews 11:30 HCSB](#) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after being encircled for seven days.

When we have those unsolvable problems, we encompass them by prayer and praise, then we continue walking around them by faith until the walls fall and the Lord sends His deliverance.

4. Encompass the Problem with Perseverance.

Notice that the successful result was not achieved in a day or two. It took day after day of encompassing the city. The Israelites must have grown weary, but they didn't give up. It may take time for the Lord to break through and achieve the victory in your situation, but don't give up!

Conclusion:

If you're worried about a particular problem today, one that is "securely shut up," one that is robbing you of sound sleep at night, try the Jericho pattern. Encircle the situation with prayer, praise, faith, and perseverance. Don't give up, and in due time the walls will fall down flat.