



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Kindness & Severity

July 18, 2021

Joshua 6

Clint Pressley

6 Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. ² And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. ³ You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. ⁴ Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵ And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him." ⁶ So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." ⁷ And he said to the people, "Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD."

⁸ And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. ⁹ The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. ¹⁰ But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." ¹¹ So he caused the ark of the LORD to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

¹² Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³ And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. ¹⁴ And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

¹⁵ On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. ¹⁷ And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her

house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. ¹⁸ But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. ¹⁹ But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." ²⁰ So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. ²¹ Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

²² But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her." ²³ So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. ²⁵ But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

²⁶ Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

"At the cost of his firstborn shall he
lay its foundation,
and at the cost of his youngest son
shall he set up its gates."

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

(Pastor prays)

This is a story about God and we should view it as such. This is not about the Canaanites and their inhibitions. This is not about the Israelites and their victory or Joshua and his leadership. This is not really even about Rahab and her deliverance. This is about God. It's what we need to hear, God. We need to hear God. We don't need to hear about how not to be bad like the

Canaanites or how to be good like the Israelites or even how to lead like Joshua. What our souls need is God. Who is this God? How does He work? What does He want? And where do I fit into His plan? Those are the questions to ask as we approach this story. There need to be fewer questions about you and more questions about God.

We've landed in chapter 6. God brought His people through the wilderness into the promised land by miraculously crossing the Jordan. He cleansed His people at Gilgal and removed the stain and shame of Egypt. He gave them back the Passover which would foreshadow Christ and his substitutionary death on the cross. And now in chapter 6 the people of God are going to have to trust God. Do you? Do you trust that God is good and that He is working? Do you trust that He is holy and that He is real? This passage invites us to look squarely at God and believe...

God is Kind in Grace and Severe in Judgment

Let's jump into the passage and see a few things about God.

There is nothing too hard for God

Join me in verses 1 and 2 and let's take them together and see the contrast. *6 Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. ² And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor.*

Kent Hughes says that this is a blunt statement of fact. Jericho is a walled city built to withstand a siege and is now locked into siege mode. Every door is locked and every bridge is blocked. Nobody is coming in and nobody is going out. What is Israel going to do? They don't know how to siege a city. They don't have a battering ram and they don't even have ladders. This is a fortress in Jericho and it is impregnable.

Now pause here. This is a completely hopeless situation for Joshua and the people of Israel. It feels hopeless, it looks hopeless and is a bottomless hole. It's a soul vacuum. Now look quickly at what God says in verse two. *"See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor."* God is saying, Look over here and you see the impregnable and impossible and I want you to see what I've already done. I know Jericho is a walled city with a king and mighty men of valor. But He says this in past tense (as in) "I've already done the work

of the conquest.” Isn't that what the Lord said in Jeremiah 32: 27. *“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?”*

There is nothing too hard for God. A wayward child? A lost husband? An addiction to pornography? An anger issue? A broken marriage? And ultimately how God saves people out of sin. The Gospel is not “do better.” The Gospel is that *Jesus is better* and every one of us here deserves to be condemned in our sin like the Canaanites. But we can be delivered like Rahab through the free grace of God given to us in Jesus.

Let me pause here. This is a good place to talk about the Gospel. What does it take to actually become a Christian?

What the Gospel is according to the Bible is this: God is the holy creator who created every one of us here in the image of God. One of the most wonderful things about the dignity that you have is that you were created in the image of God. That image in us of God however has been disfigured by our own sin. We inherit that from Adam and Eve who fell in the garden. Man has been plagued by sin ever since the Fall. We are not only born into sin; everyone has actually sinned. That sin is so offensive to God that He will not have fellowship with people of sin. But because He is a loving God, He gave us Jesus Christ who lived perfectly. And part of salvation is that Jesus lived perfectly because we can't so that at the cross there is a transaction that happens. Jesus gives us His righteous life and takes our sin so that God judged every sin of every sinner who will ever be saved at the cross. Therefore, the Gospel is that any sinner who will believe in the finished work of what Jesus has done on the cross, that is what saves us. It is something that God has done. And this reminds us that there is nothing too hard for God.

In weakness God is made strong

That's what God said to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 and that's what He shows us right here in the passage. Listen to the instructions that will be repeated several times. ³ *You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days.* ⁴ *Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.* ⁵ *And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.”*

Now truthfully this makes no real sense from any point of view. It feels ridiculous. We will talk a little more about the detailed instructions in the next point.

I'm reading Jim Hamilton's book called "God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment," and Jim contends that taking the land highlights God's glory in mercy and justice. God initiates the conquest of the land. God puts the fear of Israel on the land. God gives them this insane plan. To the world this is folly and weakness. Israel is to trust God even if they can't see how He will accomplish this plan. Furthermore, this is exactly what Paul says about how God saves people. In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul says ¹⁸ *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* Paul will go on to say in 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, ²⁷ *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;* ²⁸ *God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,* ²⁹ *so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*

This is about God. Don't despise the weakness, deficiencies, failures, hurts, history. We are all trophies of grace. There is nothing too hard for God. In weakness God is made strong.

God's plan is perfect

If you go back and read the battleplan in verses 3-5 and verses 6-11 and then again in verses 12-15, you are going to see several things. The number 7. You see it first in verse 4. The number 7 shows up all over the Bible. There were 7 days of creation, Moses waited 7 days on Mount Sinai before God spoke. Ezekiel sat 7 days before he preached, and the list goes on and on.

In the Bible, the number 7 brings with it the idea of total perfection and total completion. With that in mind, if you walk slowly through the passage you would count the number 7 fourteen times. His plan is utterly perfect, doubly perfect.

Not only that, if you look at verses 4, 6 and 7, you will see the Ark, the Ark of the Covenant, or the Ark of the Lord. You read the whole passage and you will see it mentioned 10 times. This plan pulsates with the presence of God. In addition, don't forget what is in that Ark. There are the stone tablets with the 10 Commandments, the Law of God. There is manna reminding us of the provision of God. And there is Aaron's rod that budded, signifying the deliverance of God.

The plan is perfect. It is saturated with God. And I would put another thing on it.

God's plan requires patience

Are you a patient person? In verse 11, the Israelites circled Jericho once. Then in verse 12 they got up early and did it again. And verse 14 tells us they did the same thing 6 days. In verse 15 the Israelites will circle Jericho 7 times on the 7th day. That makes 13 times in total. Over and over again they did this same thing and nothing happened. Its easy to be faithful when you can see the results, some transition or the fruit of your labor. It takes a different kind of faithfulness to keep going when you aren't seeing results. God's plan is perfect, God-saturated and requires patience. I'd like to add one more point here as the walls fall flat.

God's judgment is the backdrop of God's mercy

Let's read the account in verses 15-25 and in this last point I'll come back and make some applications. ¹⁵ *On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times.* ¹⁶ *And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city.* ¹⁷ *And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.* ¹⁸ *But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.* ¹⁹ *But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."* ²⁰ *So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city.* ²¹ *Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.*

²² *But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her."* ²³ *So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside*

the camp of Israel. ²⁴ And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. ²⁵ But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

David Howard said this story concludes with 4 things: the total destruction and judgment of Jericho, a curse placed on Jericho, Joshua's leadership was confirmed in verse 27, and the deliverance of a prostituted named Rahab.

That last mentioned point is important. Here is a great and complete act of judgment by God. No one in Jericho deserves to live, no one has honored God and no one has given thanks to God. But when God decided to save someone in Jericho, He didn't choose the most noble or ethical person. He chose a prostitute, and the burning of Jericho makes the salvation of Rahab all the more covered with the weight of the glory of God's grace.

Here is the Gospel. The first word is **grace**. Three times in the story we are reminded of Rahab's past. She was a prostitute. She was the worst person in a terrible town, and that's who God saves. Grace.

There is another word. **Faith**. When the writer of Hebrews goes back into the Old Testament and pulls out the heroes, he goes to Rahab and in Hebrews 11:31 tells us that by *faith* Rahab didn't perish.

A third word is **evidence**. In Joshua chapter 6, verses 17 and 25 we are reminded that Rahab acted on her faith. And James, the half-brother of Jesus, says in James 2 that Rahab, what she did hiding those spies was *evidence* of faith.

I'll give you another word this morning. It's **joy**. In verses 23-25 we find that Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute, was made part of the people of God.

And so I'll add to it one word. **Legacy**. In Matthew 1 as he sits to write down the genealogy of Jesus, Matthew includes in all the names, Rahab. Rahab was the great-great-grandmother of David, and would be an earthly ancestor of Jesus.

Jesus, the son of God who saves us from the judgment of God and gives us the love, grace and mercy of God. God is kind in grace and severe in judgment. Receive God's grace found in Jesus.

(Pastor prays)