

A Winning Strategy or Complete Foolishness

October 9-15, 2011

PRAYER:

Begin with a few moments of sharing thanks and praises in prayer.

Leaders, it's your call; you may choose to incorporate more information/scriptures as time allows for your small group lesson. **Reflecting:**

OPENER: Growing up, what were you taught about fighting? (Turn the other cheek? Stand up for yourself?)

When have you rooted for the "underdog?"

Israel had experienced a great miracle, the enemy was frightened, and God was at work. Now was the time for action! But God told His people to wait. Why? So that He might prepare them for the conquest of the land.

Read: Joshua 5:13-24

Who was the most intimidating person you've ever met? (Your prospective father-in-law? The captain of the other team? Your new boss? Your new secretary?)

DISCUSS:

Who stands in the way of Joshua (5:13-15)? (The initial preparation for this battle was spiritual. It was no ordinary strategy. What God was about to command Joshua to do was strange indeed compared to the battle techniques he had used on previous occasions. In fact, all of Israel needed to be prepared spiritually and psychologically for what would appear to be a ridiculous and foolish battle plan.)

What does this divine commander want? Why? What is the effect on Joshua?

What is meant by "take off your sandals" (5:15)? How is this like Moses' encounter with the "burning bush" (Ex 3:5)

Read: Joshua 6:1-14

How do you think the Israelites felt about Joshua's battle plan? (this is weird; What will keep them from taking shots at us from along the wall?; I hope I don't get dizzy?; If God wants us to, let's do it; I could use the exercise.) (Imagine what must have been going through the minds of the inhabitants of Jericho as they watched the children of Israel from inside their fortified walls. Soldiers were marching around the city. IN the middle of the procession, priests of God carried the Ark of the Covenant, and still others blew rams' horns. But, just as God had commanded, none of the Israelites said a word. They marched in total silence.)

Read: Joshua 6:15-21

What was the purposes of the trumpet blast and the people's shout? (the noise collapsed the wall; it was God's cue; it was psychological warfare; it was a test of Israel's obedience; it was an expression of the people's faith.) (When the walls collapsed, the army of Israel entered Jericho and began to destroy their enemies (vv 20-27). Caught off guard by this strange strategy, the people in the city were confused and had no time to prepare to avoid the catastrophe. God was on Israel's side all the way – both outside and inside the city. It was a supernatural victory. God had said, 'I have given Jericho into your hand'" (6:2). The death blow that fell on the inhabitants of Jericho was a judgment from God because of their sin and their unrepentant hearts. Although these people fell at the hands of the men of Israel, the victory was God's. Israel was merely the vessel He used to accomplish His purpose.)

Read: Joshua 6:22-27

Why did God call for the total destruction of Jericho? (because of their wickedness and idolatry; to keep the Israelites from becoming like them; to make a statement to the other Canaanites; because the Promised Land was exclusively for the Israelites.)

What lesson can you apply from this story? (I need to be persistent day after day; I need to find the right battle plan; I need to recognize I can't win the battle on my own; I need to let the Lord lead the way.)

PLAN for ACTION:

What obstacle or "wall" are you currently facing? (problems at work; family hassles; financial struggles; an enemy; a bad habit; nothing in particular right now)

What have you found helpful in breaking down walls? (Marking with the right crowd; seeking God; obeying God; trusting God; other?)

How can this group pray for you this week?