

# Enter at Your Own Rest

## Studies in the Book of Joshua

*"Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it"*

*Alan Redpath*

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Text

Joshua 6:20-27

Topic

Rahab is kept safe as the walls of Jericho fall

Title

*"It Ain't Over til the Saved Lady Leaves"*

**Joshua 6:20** So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

**Joshua 6:21** And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

**Joshua 6:22** But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her."

**Joshua 6:23** And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.

**Joshua 6:24** But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

**Joshua 6:25** And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

**Joshua 6:26** Then Joshua charged *them* at that time, saying, "Cursed *be* the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

**Joshua 6:27** So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

## Introduction

Think of all the people in the Bible who started strong but did not finish strong:

1. In the Old Testament you could name Samson, Gideon, Saul, Absalom and Jonah.
2. In the New Testament you could name Judas and Demas.

Demas is not too well known. He's mentioned first as a **fellow laborer** of the apostle Paul (Philemon 1:24) but last as having **forsaken** Paul because he **loved this present world** (Second Timothy 4:10).

Sadly we can also think of people in our own Christian experience who started strong but did not finish strong.

Finishing strong needs to be a major goal in your walk. In the same passage in which Paul described Demas' crash-and-burn, he wrote of himself,

**2 Timothy 4:7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Of the many lessons we might glean from the fall of the walls of Jericho, not the least among them is how to finish strong. It may have been only seven days but it was a week in which the Israelites had to walk strong everyday for six days then finish even stronger. On the seventh day they marched seven times around the city; shouted; and only then did the big finish come.

Let's see what lessons we can learn from them. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You Will Finish Strong If You Are Not Moved To Compromise, and #2 You Will Finish Strong If You Are Moved With Compassion.

#1 You Will Finish Strong  
If You Are Not Moved To Compromise  
(v20-21; 24; 26-27)

Since we are in mid-story it might be helpful to quickly summarize God's plan for destroying Jericho.

A representative group of armed men were to march around Jericho once a day for six days, followed by seven priests each blowing a trumpet. The priests carrying the ark of the covenant would come next and the rear guard would complete the procession. The only noise permitted was the sound of the trumpets. On the seventh day the procession would march around the city seven times, the priests would give a long blast on the trumpets, and then the marchers would all shout. God would then cause the walls to fall down flat so that the city could easily be taken (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Strong*).

Their week of marching as ordered is a good example of finishing strong. Here is how they did it and how we can, too.

**Joshua 6:20** So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

There is a lot we could mention from just this one verse:

1. In order to finish strong you need to be in submission.
2. In order to finish strong you need to be faithful in little things.
3. In order to finish strong you need to stay focused on your mission.
4. In order to finish strong you need to be ready and willing to move forward when the time comes.

Over all of these points is the simple but profound understanding that you must do what you are told in the Word of God. These people were obedient to the most minute monotonous detail. They did as God instructed, no questions asked and no complaining, and after a

prescribed period of time and training they experienced spiritual victory.

Obedience aint that easy! It usually is tested in private, in your home, at church, or at your workplace. God's commands are clear enough but I don't always want to hear or heed them.

**Joshua 6:21** And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

I have to pause for a moment to theologically defend what seems a merciless attitude on the part of God. Why kill them all – including children and animals?

The people in the land of Canaan were unspeakably wicked. They deserved judgment. If anything, God had been longsuffering. They had had about four hundred and forty years of warnings that judgment was coming.

For another thing, they could have repented! Rahab is an example of God showing mercy even as He decrees judgment.

But why the children? *That's not on God!* It's on their parents. The parents are the ones teaching those kids to worship idols and perform all manner of abominable acts of immorality. The parents are the ones refusing to repent and putting their kids in jeopardy.

What do we learn about finishing strong from verse twenty-one? Show no mercy to your mortal enemy! In your case your mortal enemy is described as your flesh. After you are saved your new nature resides in your old body. It has tendencies toward indulgence and sin. It is in a constant struggle against the Spirit of God. You are told to put your flesh to death:

**Romans 8:13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

**Colossians 3:5** Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

You cannot compromise with the flesh. You died to sin with Jesus on the Cross. Stay dead! Don't resuscitate sin in your life.

**Joshua 6:24** But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

There was a lot of good spoil there. Why this approach?

Remember I mentioned Demas – the fellow laborer of Paul's who defected? It was because of his love for this present world.

The flesh is not your only enemy. So is the world – or your love for it. Some things need to be **burned**; i.e., you can't co-exist with them, they are sin to you. Everything else in the world should be dedicated to the Lord, for His use.

Drop down to verse twenty-six:

**Joshua 6:26** Then Joshua charged *them* at that time, saying, "Cursed *be* the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

This curse finds a sad fulfillment in the days of evil King Ahab. You can read about it in First Kings 16:34.

As far as finishing strong, the lesson here is this: Always maintain a biblical worldview. Jericho represents the world. God has overcome the world. Men try to build and rebuild in the sense they think they can thwart the plan of God in the future. But God's Word will come to pass. The Lord will return and finally destroy this world system and set up His kingdom on the earth.

Keep a kingdom worldview.

**Joshua 6:27** So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

The final lesson in finishing strong is to let the Lord promote you. I've found over the years that many problems are caused by thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to. Don't believe your own press! Stay humble, do as the Lord leads, and He will use you as He – not you – sees fit.

I want to finish strong. Certainly that means to get to the very end having faithfully discharged my calling and ministry. But it also means I want to finish strong in every activity. It's the moments that make a lifetime. Finish everything strong.

## #2 You Will Finish Strong If You Are Moved With Compassion (v22-23 & 25)

You remember Rahab from our previous study. God told the Israelites to destroy everyone. Rahab repented. Her family repented. When the walls fell, one part of the wall didn't! Her house was on the wall and she and her family were spared.

People may blame things on God – natural disasters and personal tragedies. "Where was God?" they ask. He was in Heaven watching His own Son die on the Cross for our sins so that He might redeem lost men, women, and children from perishing.

Her rescue from Jericho is in verses twenty-two, twenty-three, and twenty-five:

**Joshua 6:22** But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her."

**Joshua 6:23** And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.

**Joshua 6:25** And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

The saving of Rahab, and her placement in the camp of Israel, shows that God is moved with compassion on the lost. People may blame things on God – natural disasters and personal tragedies. “Where was God?” they ask.

He was in Heaven watching His own Son die on the Cross for our sins so that He might redeem lost men, women, and children from perishing.

One of the most important things we can have that will help us to finish strong is compassion on the lost. Whether they are near, national, or international – we are to care about people who do not know our Jesus.

They don't know it but they are living in 'Jericho' on borrowed time. God is coming in judgment. It will be awful and terrible and will end in eternal punishment and pain for those who reject Jesus Christ.

There are many 'Rahab's' in the world. Moved with compassion we will find them!

Look upon others the way God looks upon them. Then act-out God's compassion towards them.

Jesus, when dying on the Cross, prayed for those who were killing Him and mocking Him while doing so.

OK, so I'm not Jesus! No, but I am Stephen – the first martyr of the church – in the sense that I have the Holy Spirit indwelling me. He, too, prayed for his killers even as they were murdering him with stones.

One of them, at least in attendance at the stoning of Stephen, was a young man named Saul. God would answer Stephen's prayer of compassion by saving Saul. We know him by his Greek name, Paul. He would turn the world right-side up with the Gospel in a thirty-year ministry.

It doesn't really matter if the nonbeliever you have compassion upon is the next apostle Paul or not. It's the compassion that is important – not the result. Leave that to God.

Want to finish strong?

**Of course you do!** Then don't compromise along the way. And do let compassion be your rule of thumb.

