

God Battles for His People

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[0 : 0 0] But we're going to turn now to our Bibles to read from the Word of God. And we're going to be reading in the Old Testament in the book of Joshua. If you don't have a Bible, we have visitors' Bibles at both sides, at the front, at the back.

It'd be great for you to be able to follow on. Don't hesitate to go and grab one. And then you'll be able to see what it is we're reading together. We're going to be reading from Joshua chapter 5 into chapter 6, beginning at chapter 5 and verse 13.

We've been studying with Paul Brennan these last few weeks this rather extraordinary, exciting book in the history of God's people as they come into the land of promise that God has given them. And so we pick up the story at chapter 5 and verse 13, and we're going to read right through to the end of chapter 6. And it's the story, as you'll see, extraordinary story of the fall of Jericho. When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand.

[1 : 1 2] And Joshua went to him and said to him, Are you for us or for our adversaries? And he said, No.

But I'm the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped and said to him, What does my Lord say to his servant?

And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you're standing is holy. And Joshua did so.

Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, See, I have given Jericho into your hand with its king and mighty men of valor.

You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus you shall do for six days.

[2 : 1 8] Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times. And the priests shall blow the trumpets.

And when they make a long blast with a 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. 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 ram's horns before the ark of the Lord.

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. Just as Joshua commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram's horns before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them.

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. 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.

[3 : 3 6] Then you shall shout. So he caused the ark of the Lord to circle the city, going about it once. And he came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took the ark of the Lord. And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram horns before the ark of the Lord walked on, and he blew the trumpets continually.

And the armed men were walking before him, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the Lord while the trumpets blew continually. And the second day they marched around the city once

and returned to the camp.

So they did for six days. On the seventh day they rose early at the dawn of the 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. And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpet, Joshua said to the people, Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.

[4 : 41] 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.

But you keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you've devoted them, you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.

But all the silver and gold and every vessel of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord. They shall go into the treasury of the Lord. 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.

And then they devoted all in the city to destruction with men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, donkeys, with the edge of the sword. But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from the other woman and all who belonged to her as you swore to her.

[6 : 02] 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, put them outside the camp of Israel.

And they burned the city with fire and everything in it. Only the silver and gold and the vessels of bronze and iron they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. But Rahab, the prostitute, and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive.

And she's lived in Israel to this day because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. 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. So the Lord was with Joshua and his fame was in all the land.

Amen. May God bless to us this His Word. Well, good evening. Please have Joshua, chapter 5 and 6, open in front of you.

[7 : 26] And it would be helpful if you can be able to refer to that as we spend a few minutes thinking about this chapter together. Now this is a passage all about conquest and warfare.

Although rather strangely not much fighting goes on. At least not in the conventional sense. But it is a chapter all about warfare. A city is defeated, wiped off the map, and Joshua and his army are victorious.

And as we thought about recently in the book of Nehemiah, there is an ongoing battle for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth. And it's a battle that's raged from the very earliest chapters of the Bible.

And that battle, that warfare, is ongoing. Despite the fatal blow having already been struck by the Lord Jesus Christ with His death on the cross of Calvary.

Christians today are still involved in that same conflict as we await the return of the Lord Jesus. Although the nature of our conflict is different in terms of the nature here.

[8 : 41] we don't fight literal battles. But we do fight a battle. And it's fundamentally the same battle that Joshua is fighting.

And there are, I think, two dangers when it comes to applying this sort of passage to the New Testament church, to Christian believers today. Two dangers. Number one is to think there is no battle at all.

Number two is to think there is a battle and the church is on the losing side. This wonderful, astonishing story we've just had read.

It guards us against those two dangers. It guards us against making those two errors. There is a battle. That much is clear. And it's not just a one-off battle here at Canaan against the city of

Jericho.

But it is a battle. It's the warfare that's raged right from the very beginning of history, from Genesis 3 onwards. There is a battle. But let's make no mistake about thinking we're on the losing side somehow.

[9 : 43] For all those who are united to the Lord Jesus Christ, for all who fall upon His promises held out in the Gospel, there is great reassurance for you in a chapter like this.

You are on the right side. You are on the winning side. If you're with Christ, you're on the right side. So there's great reassurance.

But there's also terrible warning. This battle, it was, in part, an act of judgment on a deeply idolatrous and sinful nation.

And as we know, there is a much bigger, far more terrifying judgment to come for all people. And for those who remain unrepentant, that will be a terrible day.

That's the big picture. Let's zoom in on Joshua chapter 6 where we see in the clearest possible terms that the Lord and He alone wins the battle over His enemies and gives His people the victory.

[10 : 54] Three points tonight. Number one, the Lord fights and wins this battle for His people. Look in particular here at the end of chapter 5. So verses 13 to 21 of chapter 5.

The Lord fights and wins this battle. This is not, as you may have guessed as it was read, this is not an ordinary sort of battle. In fact, there's barely any fighting at all.

The only actual face-to-face combat, the only drawing of physical swords gets the briefest of mentions there in chapter 6 verse 21. It's very clear indeed that this is a battle fought not by the Israelites, not by Joshua's army, but by the Lord.

Notice four things in particular that point to that reality that this is the Lord's battle not Joshua's.

Number one, the commander of the Lord's army. We meet him there at the end of chapter 5. It's a pretty extraordinary encounter between Joshua and the commander of the Lord's army.

And it's one that would have been on the one hand deeply terrifying for Joshua, but also greatly reassuring, greatly encouraging. At the end of that encounter, Joshua knew that they were not alone in the battle.

[12 : 09] In fact, there was a heavenly army on hand on Israel's side. Look at how this commander of the Lord's army answers Joshua's question.

Joshua asks, are you for us or for our adversaries? And the answer, no. But I am the commander of the army of the Lord.

Now I have come. He's saying, I'm not on your side Joshua, but rather, he flips the question, will you be on my side?

Whose side are you on Joshua? That's the key question. Apparently, somebody once said to Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War, but Mr. Lincoln, don't you agree that God is on our side?

To which he replied, that, ma'am, may be the case. But the question that concerns me is, are we on God's side? See, God can't be ticked off as a convenient ally on your cause.

[13 : 18] We would do well to remember that. when we try to domesticate God and bring him down onto our concerns, our missions, our priorities. Remember that when you try to manipulate him or subordinate him to your own agenda.

always remember that he, he is God. He is the God in heaven. And you and I, we're just creatures on earth.

We're tiny. God is infinitely wise and we, we're foolish, even on our best days. His ways are perfect. Ours may be disastrous.

be more concerned with fulfilling his will than trying to get him alongside yours. Ask not, is God on my side, but rather, am I siding with the Lord?

That's the nature of the question that the commander of the armies of the Lord throws back at Joshua. Whose side are you on Joshua? and having this encounter, knowing that the presence of the commander of the Lord's army was there, they knew that if they sided with the Lord, nothing was going to get in their way.

[14 : 34] Nothing could stop the Lord fulfilling his promises to give him this land, to give him this city. God wanted Joshua to know that he was not alone and that success lay not in Joshua's hands but in the Lord's.

This was a battle for fought by the Lord, him alone. That's reason number one, that this was the Lord's battle. Number two, the actual city of Jericho itself.

Look at chapter 6 verse 1. It is an impenetrable fortress. It was shut up inside and out. There was no way he could get in. This was a walled city in lockdown and an ultimate defense mode.

It was not going to be from a human point of view an easy city to lay siege to you, especially for a relatively untested army. This army had been walking around in the wilderness for 40 years, seen no action at all.

The week before they had been circumcised, they were not ready for battle. it was clear. It was clear that if this city was to fall, the Lord would have to do it.

[15:42] Reason three, the prominence of the Ark of the Covenant. As we've seen before in Joshua, the Ark of the Covenant takes center stage. Nine times the Ark is mentioned in chapter 6 verses 6 to 14.

It was the Ark that was to be at the very center of the feet of Jericho. It's the focal point as the army marched around. They were following the Ark. That was the key thing. The Ark was the very presence of God in the midst of his people and it was his presence that was going to make all the difference in this battle.

Reason number four that makes very clear this is the Lord's victory, not Joshua's. The fourth reason is the unorthodox nature of the battle.

it's really pretty bizarre isn't it? Imagine the CBC, Canaanite Broadcasting Corporation with their reporter there on the front line sending back reports on the conquest.

Those hearing the reports would be utterly baffled wouldn't they? What they would hear about was a small group of armed soldiers leading out a group of priests who were playing trumpets and they were followed by more priests carrying a large golden box who in turn were followed by more armed soldiers.

[17:03] They walked around the city and then went back to camp. Six days in a row they did that. And on the seventh they walk around seven times.

They shout loudly and the walls crumble. Simply astonishing. Imagine witnessing that. astonishing for Joshua his army the people of Jericho those on looking those in the surrounding cities hearing about this going on. They would have been no doubt whatsoever that this was the work of the Lord alone.

His people did nothing but walk around a city and yet the walls fall flat. this was the same God who parted the Red Sea.

This was the same God who stopped the River Jordan flowing. This was the God who caused the hearts of the inhabitants of Cana to melt away. And this is the same God who gives us victory over our enemies.

[18:13] And he does it today in a way that looks utterly bizarre to those looking on. the central event in all of human history. The key moment was the cross of the Lord Jesus.

That was the event through which the Lord defeated Satan, death, and all our enemies. And that, to be honest, looks very bizarre and weak.

How is that the key moment in history? And yet it is. For us today, his method, for extending his kingdom here and now, is through the church.

As we proclaim a message through local congregations like this one, scattered all around the world. How very weak and feeble-looking to onlookers.

That's the plan? That's how God is going to transform the world and bring people into his family forever? It's through the church proclaiming a gospel message.

[19:22] It looks very weak, but actually it is supernaturally transformative. What he's actually doing is something so unusual, so baffling, so extraordinary that the praise and the honor and the glory can go only to him.

he works extraordinarily through very normal, weak people. He does something that's beyond our abilities.

And it's clear that anyone looking on knows that the power belongs to him and him alone. You've perhaps seen that up close in your own life. The way in which people's lives are turned upside down, completely turned around by the gospel, from disaster and despair, to purpose and joy, from death, spiritual death, to new life in Christ.

That is utterly impossible unless God is at work in their lives. And that is the reality. What is happening right now?

It looks extraordinarily ordinary, but it's God's means for transforming lives for all eternity. You've experienced it yourself.

[20 : 40] If you're a Christian here tonight, you know the reality of that. How the Lord can turn your life upside down and use it for his purposes, for his glory. Only God can do that. It is clear from this passage that it's the Lord and him alone who fights and wins battles.

But, here's the other side of that. That does not mean that his people do nothing. nothing. Yes, the Lord is the one fighting the battle, but his people don't just sit there.

The writer is very careful to recall that Joshua and all the people are careful to obey God's words, and they do it exactly. Look at verse 6 of chapter 6. After the Lord speaks to Joshua, he calls the priests and he passes on the instructions.

Here's what we're going to do. Again, verse 8, just as Joshua commanded the people. And it goes on to report the actions of the army, and they do just as they are instructed by the Lord.

The fact that the Lord was fighting this battle for them, the fact that he, verse 2, had in one sense already given the city to Joshua, that does not negate their obligation to obey and to follow up what God has asked them to do.

[21 : 58] Obedience really matters. And the next chapter, chapter 7, underlines that so clearly, that obedience really does matter.

The fact that the Lord was fighting this battle did not mean that Joshua just pulled out his lazy boy and just kicked back and just watched the whole thing unfolding. No, no.

That God was fighting for his people did not mean his people were passive. Trusting God's words that he would give them Jericho meant action.

Faith always means action. It means responding and trusting what God has said. In the New Testament letter of Hebrews, we read in chapter 11, that by faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

The people had to do something. Yes, the Lord was doing it, but the people also had to take action. And so as you and I are engaged in less visible but no less real battles, we're not just to sit back and put our feet up.

[23 : 09] Christ may well have won the decisive victory, but that does not take away the fact that we have to obey his words, to act in faith. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians where he deals very explicitly with spiritual warfare, does not suggest that God's people take it easy.

Far from it. He says, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. A bit later he says, take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

To that end, keep alert, with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. Yes, the Lord is the one who ultimately fights and wins spiritual battles, but all of us, each one of us, has a role to play, an obligation to take up that armor that the apostle Paul is talking about.

Take one of those things to pray, to make supplication for all the saints. That is one way in which we take part in the spiritual battles that we're all involved in.

So are you doing that? are you taking up the call to pray? We have a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening. Willie's mentioned it.

[24 : 30] It's not easy to haul yourself out on a Wednesday night. It requires effort. It's maybe not the first choice on a Wednesday evening. You've had a busy day, but the reality is we are in warfare mode.

As God's people today, we are involved in a spiritual battle. And whilst that meeting, that prayer meeting may look weak, feeble, as we pray, what is actually happening is we are bringing our petitions before the one who can tear down walls, to the one who can hold back the Red Sea, the one who can raise the dead.

That's the one to whom we pray. And his gospel, it is going to the very ends of the earth, all conquering, unstoppable. And we get to take part in that.

We get to join in God's army, holding out the message of peace terms in the battle. And ultimately, we know we're on the winning side.

We're on the right side. That's a wonderful privilege. It's the first thing we see in this incredible story. The Lord fights and wins the battle, which means that his people don't do nothing.

[25 : 54] They pick up their swords in the spiritual battle. Second thing to see in this chapter, from verse 15 to 21 of chapter 6, we see here the Lord commanding the destruction of his enemy.

And this makes for a rather chilling and uncomfortable read, doesn't it? Particularly for the modern Westerner. The instructions for Israel's army are to do to Jericho, we read there in verses 16 to 19. Just cast your eyes over there to devote the city to destruction. In verse 21, we read these words, then they devoted it all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep and donkeys with the edge of the sword.

It's pretty uncomfortable to read that, isn't it? We perhaps squirm in our seats. You maybe see where the atheist Dawkins is coming from when he writes this.

He says, the God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction, jealous and proud of it, a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak, a vindictive, bloodthirsty, ethnic cleanser.

[27 : 11] He goes on. What about this from someone a bit closer to home who identifies himself as an evangelical, although he demonstrates with these words that he isn't.

He says that the treatment of the Canaanites is indefensible and we need to stop trying to defend it. What do you make of that?

Do you feel the pull of that sentiment as you read these words? It's tough to read. Tempting to airbrush it out, just skip over it. But we can't pretend it away, it's there, black and white.

Why is Canaan singled out for this sort of treatment? Well, there's a lot we could say, but here's two things, two key reasons. Number one is for the protection of Israel.

The devotion to destruction here, it's not to counter a military threat, but rather a religious one. The destruction of an idolatrous people, which is what the Canaanites were.

[28 : 20] If you want to get a flavour of the kind of things they did, just have a read over Leviticus 18 or Deuteronomy 18, and you can read there, the sorts of things they did.

Sexual immorality on a horrific scale, bestiality, infant slaughter, infant sacrifice. This destruction, it was necessary in part to protect Israel from all that immorality that would otherwise seep in and gradually infect within.

Deuteronomy 20 gives the reason for what's going on here. Deuteronomy 20 verse 18 says that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the Lord your God.

The risk is they will teach you, Israelites, how to go astray. God's purpose in commanding the destruction of the Canaanites is so that his people would be protected, so that they would be holy as they take possession of the land.

They were to be totally separated from the pagan idolatry of the pagan nations. And a failure to separate themselves, it would lead to a failure to be what God has called them to be.

[29 : 42] And they were called to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, among all the peoples of the earth, a people who demonstrate the wisdom of God to the world by their obedience to their Lord.

And God knows the preponderance of the human heart to idolatry. And so he instructs them to remove entirely, completely, the greatest threat to their holiness.

And if that shocks us, then perhaps we have too lower view of God's holiness. holiness. Our view of God's unique holiness is perhaps truncated, limited.

And so our view of the holiness of God's people is also truncated and limited. Do we see the importance of holiness? The Apostle Paul emphasizes it.

Just read 2 Corinthians 6 and 14 and following. The set apartness of God's people. It is to be protected. That's the first reason. Number 2 is for the punishment of Canaan.

[30 : 53] Alongside the maintenance of the purity of God's people, the Lord sanctions the conquest of Canaan in order to punish their sin. That's the reason given in Deuteronomy chapter 9. He says this, not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going to possess the land, but because of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord your God is driving them out before you.

That builds on the words God spoke to Abraham generations before when he was told that his descendants would return to Canaan because their iniquity was not yet complete.

They were a sinful nation and God rightly after centuries of patience, 400, 500 years he's been patient. he punishes them for their sin, their child sacrifice, their incest, their bestiality, their worship

of false gods.

It's not mean or vindictive what the Lord is doing here. This is the just judgment of God. It's not just the Canaanites.

in Deuteronomy 13 the Lord details the same fate for those within Israel who do likewise. They will not escape the same outcome if you reject the Lord whether you're an Israelite or Canaanite.

[32 : 27] And the writer of Joshua has not one hint of embarrassment, nor does he give any sense of feeling uncomfortable as he writes these words. That God will destroy his enemies, that is a good thing.

It is a testament to his justice. His refusal to overlook sin, to overlook rebellion, that is a good thing. These acts of judgment on Canaan, on Jericho, they were severe, there's no doubting that, but the New Testament, there's a far greater, far more widespread judgment to come.

And so the real question is not so much do you believe in God's judgment on Jericho, but do you believe God's final acts of judgment that we read about in vivid detail throughout the New Testament and in Revelation.

Dick Lucas put it so sharply, to disbelieve in Joshua's judgment will inevitably lead you to disbelieve in the judgment to come. If we don't like what we read and we sort of detest it, we want to push this out of our Bibles, which is a small and local judgment on a particular people at a particular time, if we get rid of that, we don't have to get rid of most of the New Testaments.

We need to discern the total universal judgment that is coming when the Lord returns. It is the Bible's consistent testimony that all people, all of us, will one day die and then face judgment before the God of earth and heaven.

[34 : 10] All of us will stand there and face that judgment. You see, the God of Joshua 6, he is our God. He's not changed. He hates sin and he will punish it fully and finally one day.

And that day is coming. And that will be a terrible thing for those, like Jericho, who refuse to repent. But the fact that God does judge, that is actually a good thing.

Deep down, all of us, all of us desire justice, don't we? We do want to see wrongs put right. We do want to see those who do terrible things brought to justice.

justice. The problem is that all too often human justice is unfair and disproportionate. But God is a perfect judge. On that great day, when each of us will stand before our Creator and give an account for our lives, not one of us will be able to say on that day his judgments were unjust.

Not one of us. All of us will say he is a just judge. There will be no surprise on that day as to what God thinks is right or wrong because he has already told us.

[35 : 34] It is all here in his word. God will judge rightly because he is just. But he is also merciful.

Alongside the terror of judgment, alongside the reality of judgment, there is the great comfort of the gospel here. This is our third and final point tonight. we also see in this chapter the fact that the Lord is gracious to outsiders who fling themselves upon his grace and mercy.

In the midst of this chapter up crops Rahab again. And isn't it just a wonderful reminder again of God's astonishing, his astonishing grace, his mercy.

Against the backdrop of a city's destruction, the writer zooms in on one individual, one woman, one household.

And as we've seen, it's not just any woman. We saw in chapter 2, Rahab, she was a pagan prostitute. Now, of course, we're not surprised by what we read about Rahab here.

[36 : 48] we've seen the remarkable story in chapter 2 of the spies and Rahab, her remarkable confession, her turning in mercy to the Lord. The spies promised, then, didn't they, to save her when they returned.

You can almost picture Rahab there in her house, her family around her, as they peer out of her home, as they see the army of Joshua encircling the city of Jericho, as they watch the very odd events over that week as they march around the city.

They're thinking, what now is going on? The tensions mounting. Can you imagine the fear in the city? Their hearts were melting before they came, and now they've got a whole week of this going on.

Rahab's wondering, will the Lord have mercy? Will the spies do as they promised? And the answer is yes.

Rahab and all her household are saved alive by Joshua. See verse 25? She lives today in Israel.

[37 : 57] The promise of salvation we saw in chapter 2 is wonderfully realized here. When God's judgment fell on Jericho, it was only by faith in the provisions of his grace that sinners could be saved.

That is how Rahab was saved and how any of the inhabitants of the city could be saved. There's only one way of salvation that's found only in the mercy of God who brings judgment. And for anyone who comes to the realization that they are standing under the judgment of God, there is mercy, even for you.

In the midst of this judgment, there is mercy. That is the message of the gospel. there is a day of judgment coming, but there is always mercy for those who turn and fling themselves upon the Lord's mercy.

And so if you're not a Christian here tonight, if you don't yet follow the Lord, then I do have to warn you that as with every war, as with every battle, there are only two sides.

One is victorious and the other is defeated. God is coming in first and judgment one day. And it's not just Jericho that stands condemned, but everyone.

[39 : 17] The Bible says all have fallen short of the glory of God, all are sinners. But he is gracious. The Lord is gracious to those who fling themselves upon his mercy.

So here's the question, will you do that? Will you repent? fling yourself upon his mercy as Rahab did? She did that wonderfully.

She's rescued, saved, plays her part as one of the ancestors of the Lord Jesus himself. Read Matthew 1. So will you do that?

And if you're a Christian here tonight, take great courage from this passage. Yes, the opposition often looks intimidating, frightening even. The world, the flesh, the devil, they are ferocious enemies.

And if you're never intimidated, never afraid in the Christian life, then check your pulse. Yes, the means by which we're to fight that spiritual battle we've been called to looks very weak, pathetic, like walking around a city blowing trumpets.

[40 : 29] what's that going to do? The weapons he gives us are the word and prayer. Not impressive looking, but they are the weapons that the Lord of all creation has given to his people.

They are reminders, aren't they, that the power doesn't rest with us, but with him alone. It was clear that Joshua did not defeat Jericho.

And it should be clear to us that we do not defeat God's enemies today. it is he and he alone who does that. It is he and he alone who is building his church.

And that should, I think, greatly encourage us. There is an enemy, there is a battle, but the God of all creation, the God who parted the Red Sea, who stopped the Jordan, he fights for his people.

And he will win. And one day everyone will see it. And if he is able to fight that great, ultimate battle, how much more can we trust him in the daily skirmishes that we face?

[41 : 36] Yes, we have hope through death for all eternity, but we also have hope through the things we're dealing with tomorrow. They may seem small to other people, but to you they feel like battle is impossible to fight.

Battles against our own sinfulness, battles against hostility of the world, colleagues who give you a hard time for your faith, feeling intimidated because you hold to the God of the Bible. But even in those skirmishes, knowing the big picture, knowing that in the end everyone will know that God has won the battle, that is I think a great comfort.

God is the God of Joshua, the God who defeated Jericho. He is your God. He is my God. And we can keep going because he is our God.

Let me pray and we will sing together. Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you for giving us these incredible accounts, these true accounts in your word of things that actually took place and they astonish us as we read them.

but they ought not to because we pray to the God of the universe, the one who spoke the universe into being, the one who parted the Red Sea, the one who rose the Lord Jesus from death.

[43 : 12] You are our God. And so help us to remember that when we are facing our day to day battles as we face enemies, remind us of these words, remind us of this story in Joshua, that we belong to the God of all the universe.

And please help us therefore to trust you. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.