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The Fall of Your Jericho | Hebrews 11:30

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKER

Rev. Sandra Anderson

I am Rev. Sandra Anderson, and I am happy to be before you this morning.

Bear with me, this is my first time using actual paper notes. I'm gonna be moving around a lot today. If I get lost, just bear with me. I'm a little traumatized. My first sermon was an outdoor service, and my papers went flying in the wind. I vowed to never go back to paper, but I want to give it a try today.

So, the title of my sermon today is "The Fall of Your Jericho." As we continue the sermon series of Hebrews 11, the heroes of faith. If you are here for the first time, or if you've been here and just completely forgot what we talked about every Sunday, we are in Hebrews 11, journeying through the heroes of faith.

To get to where we are today, I'm gonna give you a little brief. The Israelites were captive by the Egyptians, and they were slaves until Moses went to free them. God then tells them about this promised land that he was going to take them to. They actually go, boom, story supposed to end like a Disney movie, the magical music comes up, they live happily ever after. But that doesn't happen. Just like us, when life starts life, and we get discouraged, and we let circumstances get in our way. So, we go down a rabbit hole.

They make it to the promised land, but they didn't go in because they were afraid. Moses dies, and now Joshua is their new leader. But even then, God was with them. He never left them. He created a new way for them to still get to their destiny. Sorry, I got small ears, so this has been a problem today. So, the passage today is Hebrews 11 and 30. It reads, "By faith, the walls of Jericho fell after the army had marched around them for seven days."

How many of you need some walls to fall down in your life? I know I do. But the part, at least for me, is I don't want to do the march. I just want God to just blow it down. A lot of us just don't want to do the work. We just want God to snap his fingers and do the work for us. But that's not how it always is.

So, the origin of this story is in Joshua 6. We've been starting in Hebrews, but we go back to the original story. The original story is in Joshua 6. Joshua was raised up as their new leader and 40 years later, it's finally time. They enter into the promised land. Verse one says they arrived at the gates of Jericho, but now it is tightly shut. Because the people are afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go in or out.

This was their promised land, but somebody was already there. It was kind of weird to me. It's like, God gives you a deed to a house. He said, "This is yours." Then you get to the house and squatters are there. They got a gated fence, a security alarm, and guard dogs. You're wondering, if it's mine, how am I going to get what's already mine? Those are the kinds of challenges we sometimes face when God has promised us something, but it looks like an impossible task to get what he's already promised you.

Jericho was the gateway to the promised land. If you look at this picture of Jericho, it gives you an idea of how it was. The walls had two different barriers. If you got past one wall, you still had another wall to get past. They were about six feet thick and at least 12 feet in height, up to 28 feet was the highest watchtower. They get to this place and they're saying, wow, this is a big obstacle that we have to get through. This is what God has promised us, but it is barricaded now.

Joshua and the army looked at this and started thinking, maybe in their heads, how are we going to tackle this land? Some may think, hey, maybe we should dig a tunnel, or maybe we should get a ramp to go over it. But any other plan of attack besides what God had in mind. The word tightly shut up means the entire city was barricaded. The people in Jericho were only about 2000, and they got 2 million hungry Hebrew slaves ready to take over their land. My first thought was, that they just got to be casualties of war. We got 2 million, they got 2000. Eventually, we should be able to overpower them. But that's not how it went.

The people inside of Jericho realized that they had heard the stories that God was with these Israelites. So, they did everything they could to barricade themselves in, so that they could keep their land. It was good land, flourishing with vegetation and everything they needed. They wanted to keep the land that they had, they didn't want to give it to the Israelites.

Joshua was a military leader, so he probably could have thought of different plans on how to maneuver this city. But Joshua did something very pivotal in Joshua 5. It says, "Now when

Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him that had a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and said, 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' 'Neither,' he replied, 'but as commander of the army of the Lord, I have come.' Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence and asked him, 'What message do you have for your servant?'"

Joshua, at this time, thought that that was his title. He thought that he was in charge of the army of the Lord. The Lord appears to him and he's like, "No, that's my job." Joshua, in this moment, submits and says, "You know what? I am second in charge. It's not my way. What do you want us to do for this Jericho?"

For me, obedience is more than just taking commands and following them. Submission is more important than just obeying laws. You can obey without submission. Submission requires love, respect, and willingness to yield to another. Obedience, on the other hand, doesn't require any personal relationship between the one giving the command and the one receiving the command. It's all about the heart. It's all about the relationship.

Many of you probably had leaders and bosses in your life where you're like, "I'm just doing my job, not because I respect you, not because I believe in it. I'm just checking a box." But it's different when you have a leader that you know believes in you, loves you, supports you, and tries to push you to your next destiny. It's easier for you to trust in them, and it makes you want to learn from them and do whatever they're asking of you.

That's what submission is, it's like a relationship. You start off and you're like, "Yeah, I trust you." But you're not going to trust them to pay your bills or watch your kids. The more you build that relationship, the more you say, "Yeah, you've been reliable. I know you love me." That's how it is with God. To really submit and obey God, you have to have that relationship. Otherwise, we're just living our lives feeling like, "I'm doing what's right. I'm doing what's right." We've seen that several times in the Bible. You can do the right thing, like Cain and Abel. You can bring the best sacrifice, all the money to the church, check all the right boxes. But it means nothing if your heart isn't in it. It means nothing if you don't have that relationship with God.

That's what's important to submission and being obedient, you have to have that relationship. God calls us to a deeper relationship to say, "Hey, I want you to know me. I want you to trust me. I want to show you that I'm reliable. I want to show you that I can be your healer, your deliverer, bring peace to your life." Just like us, we're not going to give that if we're not even willing to do that exchange. To submit and obey God, you have to have that relationship.

Before, when I did the sermon on Jeremiah, I have two tests that I told you when I'm in distress. I look down at God and know the plans. Without obedience, that's saying, "Hey, God,

I trust you that regardless of what it seems like, regardless of what the situation is, I trust that you will lead me in your plans for me." Whether I understand it, whether life is life, it's that obedience conjoined with the plan. Without that relationship, you won't even fully understand the plan.

Alright, I went off course. Now, I gotta find my way. Verse two says, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its kings and fighting men." If you see here, God doesn't say, "I'm thinking about doing it. I may do it. If you do good, maybe I will." He says, "See, I have given Jericho into your hands." It's already done. Before the battle even starts, God's already saying, "I already got you." This is powerful. I don't want you to miss it. When you know something is already done, your whole behavior changes.

I think of times when I'm running low on my bank account, and then I get an email from my job that says, "See, your paycheck is coming." My whole behavior changes because I know that this is a guarantee that this receipt is saying, "Hey, your problems are going to be solved in just a little while." Instead of complaining and wondering, "Man, how am I going to get money?" that "see, this is coming" gives me that relief to say, "Hey, I can struggle for two days. Maybe I can just eat some chips." But you have the anticipation that, "Hey, in three days, I won't be eating just chips and rice."

This is what God is saying, "See, I've already given it to you." That gives you that assurance that, "Hey, it may not be right now, but you can bank on that I've already given it to you." You come in with a better attitude. I don't walk around wondering when it's gonna fall from the sky. It's guaranteed it's coming to you. I believe that today, God is saying that whatever is your Jericho, He's already given it to you.

So, what is your Jericho in your life? I debated about this. I said, this is probably an eyesore, and people are going to be wondering, what is this? A distraction. This is like your Jericho. You come to church, and that thing that is on your mind, that thing that won't let you go, you're thinking about your bills, thinking about tomorrow, thinking about all your problems. While you're trying to worship God, this thing is just there. You focus on this thing instead of being able to focus on God. Focus on the moment, focus on what is going well, or focus on what God is trying to tell you. We got this thing here that just won't move. It's big, and it keeps staring you down. You're saying, "I'm trying to focus, but this thing keeps showing up. It keeps distracting me. It won't even let me go to church because it's right there." So, what do you do when your Jericho is always there?

I'm gonna teach you something today that really helped me. Joshua 6:3-5, this is what God's plan was for them. Try not to laugh because I'm in the military, so this was very comical. He says, "March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven

priests carry trumpets of ram's horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. Have the whole army give a loud shout. Then the wall of the city will collapse, and the army will go up, everyone straight in."

What a plan. Are you thinking about digging trenches or maybe firing some darts? God is saying, "I want you to walk around the perimeter in silence, six days. Walk around, go rest. Walk around, go rest. On the seventh day, I want you to walk around seven times. Then the trumpets are gonna shout. On a long shout, I want everybody to just shout, and the walls are going to come down." How many of you would say, "Yes, that sounds like an awesome plan?" Not me. I guess I'm in the military. If my commander told me, "This is how we're going to attack," I would be like, "Yeah, no. Good luck with that."

Because it's like, you are going to walk around with the enemy right above you in their tower, looking at you. They could probably just throw darts or whatever on top of you, throw some stones, and we are going to walk in plain daylight. Not even at nighttime, not a sneak attack. We're just going to broadly walk in the day in silence. I can't even get two people to just be quiet for a while. Imagine a whole army supposed to walk around in silence. This is the solution. You're like, "Yeah, right God." The challenge itself to even convince people that this is going to happen.

What I like about this is Joshua goes to the people and tells them. That's the part of community. Pastor Tracy and Pastor James don't just come and say, "Hey, this is what we're gonna do. I heard from God, let's just do it." They bring it to the elders. We pray about it, and we say, "Hey, what is God saying to all of us? Does this make sense? Are you hearing the same thing as elders?" Then we bring it to the community. We say, "Hey, this is our way forward," and everybody becomes aligned. Because why? Not only do we trust God, but we also have leaders here that we say have shown themselves to be true.

We have leaders here that if Pastor Tracy told me to be somewhere at a certain time, I'm going to come. Not because I just like being on time, but because I built this relationship. I trust that if she needs me to be somewhere, it's for a purpose and a reason. I value her time. It's that willingness to submit and say, "Hey, I know that you have my best interests at heart. I know that you're taking the time to listen to God." That's what community is about. Do you even trust the people giving you advice? Or are we just gossiping, just chatting?

Who are we seeking advice from when we feel like we've heard from God? Do we bring it to sound people who have shown themselves, who are walking with God, who we know will take the time to seek God on behalf of what concerns us? They have shown themselves reliable, just as God. That's the importance. Otherwise, if we're not on the same page, not all listening

to God, then it's chaos and confusion. The plans won't be completed because everybody's not in agreement.

You can't follow just by obeying because your heart won't be in it. Submission and obedience are key. We have to build those relationships, build that trust in God. We have to know God and know that the people we're talking to and journeying with are also seeking God. Otherwise, it could just be a distraction.

In this circle, sometimes you come to church every Sunday, and you feel like, "Hey, I'm doing the same thing. I'm in this cycle. I come to church, nothing's changed." I'm pretty sure after a couple of laps, they were probably thinking, "What's the point? This wall's not moving. It's still there. Maybe God needs some help. Maybe Joshua didn't hear right. Maybe we need to think of another plan." It gets tiring and weary when you keep walking around, and you feel like you're walking in circles and nothing's happening.

Think about growth. Some people are pregnant and don't even know that they're pregnant until weeks later, a month later. Guess what? Something is happening, and you don't even know it's happening. Sometimes I just got big one day. I didn't even know how I got here until one day I tried to put on a shirt, and now I'm busting my buttons. You don't see the growth as it's happening. You wake up one day and say, "Wow, something has changed." Whether it's good or bad, God is always moving.

You got to think about that in your life. Sometimes we want to see it, we want to see it. If we don't see it, we don't believe it. But I think just like they marched around, I truly believe that with every step, it was loosening something in the foundation. You may not see it, and they may say, "Hey, every step is stupid." God is saying, "No, with every step, you're shaking something in the foundation that you don't even have an idea about."

Pastor Tracy said, "This work of installing Pastor James was already in the work a couple of years ago, but we don't see it." God is always working in the background. One day you say, "Wow, how did you get here?" It didn't happen overnight. But we don't see it, and we like to see stuff in order to believe it. That's not faith. Faith is even when you don't see it, even when it doesn't make sense. You're feeling like, "Hey, I'm walking around in circles, nothing is happening."

Think of this ladder as your Jericho. Sometimes this Jericho takes the edge off of life because you're trying to have fun, trying to move on, but this thing is still there. How are you going to circle the Jericho in your life? Your Jericho could be the job, your marriage, depression, sickness, whatever is blocking you from getting to what God has promised you. You're saying, "God, this thing, I can't move it." As you circle, every time you circle, it's still there. No matter

where you turn, it's still there. It's not moving. You're saying, "God, you told me to walk around it. You told me to do it. I'm doing it and nothing is happening."

Sometimes we want to say, "Maybe I should shake the foundation. Maybe I should help God out because he needs some help." We start calling people and letting them speak into our lives. We say, "Hey, maybe I should, I need some money. God said He ain't moving quick enough. Let me call Mama, maybe she can lend me some money." We start coming up with ideas and plans because we want to fix the problem. So, we walk around and you can decide if you can walk around grumbling and complaining and saying, "Oh, I'm tired."

I'm pretty sure when they were walking around, it probably took three to four hours to walk around every day, every lap. You're saying, "I'm tired. Why are we doing this?" Joshua also told them to be quiet. He said, "Don't say anything until I say." Some of y'all like to listen to music. Y'all would say, "I can't walk around this city without no music. Can we sing a song? Can we do a little dance and make this day a little better?" But that's our problem. We get the plan and then we want to alter the plan. How can I make this journey a little bit better? Because this is boring, and nothing's happening. At least we're going to have some fun while we walk around this mountain.

You got to be obedient to the T. You got to be obedient. So, you can either walk around this mountain and see the obstacle. When you see this, are you going to see fear? Are you going to see faith? Are you going to see the problem? Are you going to see the promise? It's all about what you see, like the song said, "My eyes are on you," not this problem. Because the problem, you can be walking around this for seven days, you can be walking around this problem for seven years, and guess what? It may not change. Are you going to grow weary and tired and say, "Forget this," because it's not happening?

Some of us start talking because we get embarrassed. We get embarrassed and say, "Well, you know, I told them that I was going to have this business." Then somebody says, "Well, how is your business doing?" You start making up stuff. "Oh, it's doing well," but you got two customers. But you're upset about it, but that's fine because we don't see that those two customers eventually are going to multiply. You're not even ready for the two customers you got, but you complain because, "I only got two customers." You don't even know what you can handle. God is saying, "I know what I'm doing."

But then what we do, "Oh, I got people lined up. They just coming in." That's that talking. That's why God said, "Be quiet." Because then you start warding off, lying now, and nothing happening. We don't want to say, "Yeah, God, they promised me this, and I may get two customers now, but guess what? He ain't done." We get embarrassed. We say, "Yeah, yes, alright."

I went to the doctor this week. A couple of you know, I've been sick. The doctor says, "How are you feeling?" I say, "Good, I even got that pain almost." She says, "Lay down." As soon as she, she said, "Yeah, you tell yourself, because you touch in it." But we want, when somebody says, "Hey, how do you feel better?" But when they say blessed in favor, as miserable as you want to be just as miserable as you want to be. You got to tell somebody that you're blessed and highly favored. Because it's embarrassing to say, now I built. But even though I'm not built, I'm not focused on my sickness. I'm not focused on what's happening because God's got a plan.

Sometimes his plan is so he can show up and show out. You won't say, "Oh, the doctor gave me something." It may remember your sickness and for the doctor to get the credit for what's happening to you. Maybe the blessing is I'm going to show you that even though the doctors can't figure out what's wrong with you, it's going to be a miracle. But now we want the doctor to tell us, we want instant healing and gratification. We can't see all who God is if we ain't going through something.

So, how are you going to circle? Are you going to circle mumbling and complaining and talking and chatting? Or are you going to circle with your eyes on God saying, "Hey, I know you're here. I know you want me to distract it, but my eyes are on you. I know you're not moving, but one day you will come down. You want to block me from where God has called me to, but I'm going to still walk in my destiny because God has already promised it to me." You got to start saying God has already promised this Jericho to me. God has already promised my healing. God has already promised the job. God, I may be unemployed now, but guess what? I'm going to keep walking regardless of how it looks, regardless of what people are saying in the chat. I'm going to tune it out because guess what? God has a plan. But are you going to submit to the plan? Are you going to focus on the problem and everywhere you let this problem show up in your life and become an eyesore for you and get you distracted from what God is telling you to do?

The first time, this wasn't even the first time they went to the promised land. The first time they went, they got scared. God told them, "I'm with you." Guess what? When you become scared, when you become weary and discouraged, you will be at the breakthrough and you stop yourself. God said, "I'm with you. Let's go do this thing." Some of these problems, we add bricks to them. We add to the problem because we're afraid, we become worried, we wonder what other people are saying, and we just add to it. Or we want to keep talking about the problem every day. What is talking doing? Is it solving the problem? Or is it making you more disturbed, discouraged? Is it making you more upset? Is it making you doubt God even more because this problem isn't moving?

That's why you got to get your focus off of this. I don't mean to sound broad, but shut up. This was the lesson, stop complaining. Because it's not doing anything for you. It's not going to solve your problem. Stop complaining and seek God and hold on to the promise that this will come down. Lastly, the loud shout came before the walls came down. That was also part of the plan. They didn't say that they praised God after the wall had fallen down. There was a portion of the plan that all of them needed to shout. There was another shift. It says that God inhabits the praises. God inhabits our praise. God lives inside of us, inside of our praises. That's why praise is so important. Some of us need a rest day, voice day like the singers do where you stop talking. You just raise your voice because there's a time in this plan where your voice is needed for the praises of God.

If you keep doing all this complaining and murmuring and talking, when it's time for you to shout for these walls to come down, you will go ahead and then nothing happens. So be quiet. Be still and know that God is God. When it's time to shout, you have something inside of your voice to praise him for all that he's done and for all that he will do to tear the walls down. Circling is a gift. Like I say, some of us don't want to circle. We feel like, hey, what's the purpose?

You ever been on an airplane, getting ready to land? The pilot gets on the speaker and says, "Hey, we're gonna have to circle." What does everybody start doing? Grumbling and complaining. Because guess what? We're right here, right here at the promised land and you want us to circle. Is it changing? The pilot is still not moving because you're grumbling and complaining. The funny thing is, we want to land so bad, but we don't even know that if he was to land, you probably collide with another airplane, and you'll be dead. We want to land so bad. We want to be on the ground so bad. What's the point of getting there? You can't even enjoy it. It's okay to circle because it's a part of the plan.

Just like praise, once they actually get on the ground, guess what everybody starts doing? Because you aren't even off the plane. You are anticipating that, "Hey, we have made it and in a few moments, we won't be out of this thing." That's the praise before the breakthrough. We didn't circle and now it's time for me to use my voice because I'm so excited that it's about to be a breakthrough. When you're at a graduation, some of y'all like these concerts. Like this one here, she gets a concert and loses her voice because she's screaming so loud.

As soon as your artist gets out on the stage, guess what y'all do? Because they ain't even sung nothing. All they did was come here and the crowd goes crazy. Because you're anticipating that the money you paid, you get what you pay for. That's how it is. It's already paid for. God has already delivered this over to you. But how are you going to praise him before you even get what you? Praise him before you get to the breakthrough.

If you watch basketball, as soon as they come out, they hype them up. They hype them up because if you've ever been playing and you say, "Oh, my mom in the stands," she hyping me up. God doesn't need you to be his hype man. But imagine if you're hyping him up, saying, "Hey, I know you gotta do something good. Hey, I know you're here to show out for me." Guess what? He inhabits our praises. He's like, "Yes, I want to come through for you. Because you're hyped about me, you believe in me, you know that I'm about to show out."

That's what we got to do. We got to be excited about praise, regardless of the situation. Sometimes they lose the game, but you have to hype them up. Regardless, because sometimes there may be another level. Maybe it's your day to learn how to circle in silence without complaining. Maybe that's where you are. God is just saying, "Hey, keep circling. Every step, I'm loosening the foundation. I don't need your help. I don't need you coming and leaning up against the wall. I don't need you, in the middle of the night with a drill, trying to shake the foundation. You understand that I am the commander of the army, not you."

Some of you may be on that seventh lap. All that silence that you've been holding up, there's a war inside of you like, "Today is the day. Today is the day that I'm about to use my voice."

So, whether you're circling or whether today is that shout day for you, if you feel that today is your shout day, as we enter back into worship, praise God. Even if you're just circling, praise him with the expectation that, "I know that you keep your promises. I know that you're faithful. I know that you gotta show up. I know that I'm not looking at this problem. I'm looking at your promise. I'm not focused on the circumstance. I'm focused, my eyes are on you."

So, I built this and kind of got direction and brought this large object in here. Thank you, Pastor Tracy and Tony. Because I want you to come up and we got markers up here and extra walls in case you got more miracles. I want you to write what your Jericho is. I want you to ask God like Joshua did. He sought God and he asked him, "What do you have for your servant? How am I going to push past this Jericho?" Because I believe that God has an answer for your Jericho, for whatever keeps blocking you.

If you need prayer for your Jericho, raise your hand and one of the elders will come and pray with you, like Joshua did with community. Sometimes we're like, "I can't hear. Maybe you can help me." What is your Jericho? What's blocking you from getting what God promised you? What's always there? Is it loneliness? Rejection? Am I good enough? What are those thoughts that are always there? What is that problem that you keep circling? Problems with your family? I keep circling it. Fights with my children? I keep circling it. Sometimes it's not for you to solve.

My biggest lesson was me not forcing people to change their relationships. It's turning it over to God. It's been more than anything that I could ever imagine with me forcing something.

Some stuff only God can do. I believe he's here today for your Jericho so that the walls will come down. So, let's worship and praise God for all that he is, all that he will do, because he keeps his promises. Amen.