

Message #1032
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"FOREBODING WALLS"
{Joshua 6: 1-20,27}

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the highlight of Ronald Reagan's Presidency was on June 12, 1987 when he addressed a throng gathered at the Brandenburg Gate in what was then West Germany. In a speech that could be heard behind the Berlin Wall in Communist East Germany, President Reagan said...

"General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

Those emotion filled words been compared by many with President John F. Kennedy's speech given twenty-four years earlier at the same place where Reagan threw out his challenge, when he declared: "Ich bin ein Berliner!" {"I am a Berliner!"}

Just two years and four months after President Reagan's speech was delivered the Berlin Wall was torn down.

THE FOREBODING WALLS OF JERICHO

Last week we saw Joshua surveying the walls surrounding the city of Jericho--primary city in Canaan. Historians tell us that there were two massive stone walls surrounding Jericho.

...the outer wall was 6 feet thick and about 20 feet high

...the inner wall was about 12 feet thick and about 30 feet high

...in-between the walls was a guarded walkway about 15 feet wide

Joshua was somewhat overwhelmed at the task before them when he is confronted by a man with a drawn sword whom Joshua addressed as "My Lord!"

Joshua asked this man, "What message does my Lord have for His servant?"

{5: 14b} and ...God had promised to give this land to His people, the Israelites

...God had promised Joshua that he would give him "every place where you set your foot."

...He proved that when He provided a way for them to cross the flooding Jordan River--on dry ground--once they got their feet wet Joshua needed a message from God...

...what were they to do now?

...what should they expect?

...what about these walls--they seemed impregnable?...!

...what was the plan?

"Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout, then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in!'"

...the Lord promises to deliver the city of Jericho into Joshua's hands--He carefully

outlines the plan

...but, for this to happen it would require OBEDIENCE to His game plan

...it would test Joshua's FAITH...AND...the FAITH of the Israelites both in Joshua and their God!

...it would take great COURAGE to follow this plan without deviating from it in any way

...it would require ENDURANCE for it was not going to happen instantaneously

...the plan required seven {7} days to complete

...marching around the city thirteen [13] times

You know what happened...following the last lap on the seventh day of marching around the city the people were commanded to "SHOUT, for the Lord has given you the city!" And we read...

"When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city {and} they devoted the city to the Lord....!"
{6:20-21a}

Obviously, God could have done this without Israel's help at all; however, He wanted them to be part of His work...as He wants us to be part of His work today!

...think of what this did for Joshua

...for the Israelites

,,they saw walls come tumbling down after they demonstrated their...

...allegiance

...obedience

...faith

...courage

...endurance

FOREBODING WALLS WE FACE

We, too, face foreboding walls--many of which have overwhelmed us.

Before us are huge walls of...

...racism

...sexism

...insensitivity to the needs of others

...walls of addiction

...walls of pride

...strife

...walls that divide

...walls of anger

...hostility

...grudges

...walls of lifestyle that are designed to separate people

...walls that create boundaries

...walls of stubbornness

...walls of unforgiveness

These foreboding walls MUST come down!

Some have deliberately erected incredible walls around themselves attempting to declare who is in and who is out...a wall of exclusion...walls of exclusivism!

...there are walls that separate individuals in this room

...and only God can knock down some of these obstacles

CONCLUSION: TEAR DOWN THAT WALL

There's yet another wall and that's the wall of circumstances...that's the wall that

keeps you from confronting your walls that need to come down!
...“if only” the circumstances were different you’d make an effort
...“if only” you were in a different setting, things could be made right Dear ones, we need to leap over those circumstances and face those walls that divide...that eat away at us...that keep us at arms length from God.

...we need to acknowledge those walls exist

...we need to move beyond the denials

...then we need to face it head on...confront them

We need to ask: “What message does my Lord have for me, His servant?”

We need to be about tearing down walls...and we need to build bridges between individuals...not erecting more walls and chasms.

Let me offer some suggestions on how to tear down walls that divide...

...we need to reconnect to our roots

...read through the Beatitudes...the Sermon on the Mount

...hear again Jesus’ words...

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.’

But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you...

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others?

Do not even pagans do that. Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect.

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift.

“Settle matters quickly with your adversary...!” {Matthew 5:23-25a; 38-48}

...ask God for help!

...admit your inability to deal with it without Him

...repent from your stubbornness in refusing to face that wall

...be bold

...have faith

...be courageous

...envision a world without walls...

...and tear yours down first.

Carol Cymbala wrote that wonderful song that we sing occasionally...

“Make us one, Lord, make us one Holy Spirit, make us one.

Let Your love flow so the world will KNOW we are one in You.”

We become one...ONLY when the walls come down...

...between one another

...between ourselves and God!