

JERICHO TUMBLED

God conquered Jericho but spared one family by His grace.



THE STORY: JOSHUA 4:15–5:1

MONDAY

The people of Jericho melted with fear

The people of Jericho melted with fear. When the spies met with Rahab she told them that the people of Jericho melted in fear when they heard that God had dried up the Red Sea and allowed Israel to travel through it (see Joshua 2:10). Even though the Jordan River, which separated the Israelites from Jericho, was at flood stage, they feared it could not stop a God who parted the Red Sea. If the people of Canaan were afraid before, it is no wonder they melted with fear when they heard that God had dried up the Jordan to allow Israel to cross over (see Joshua 5:1).

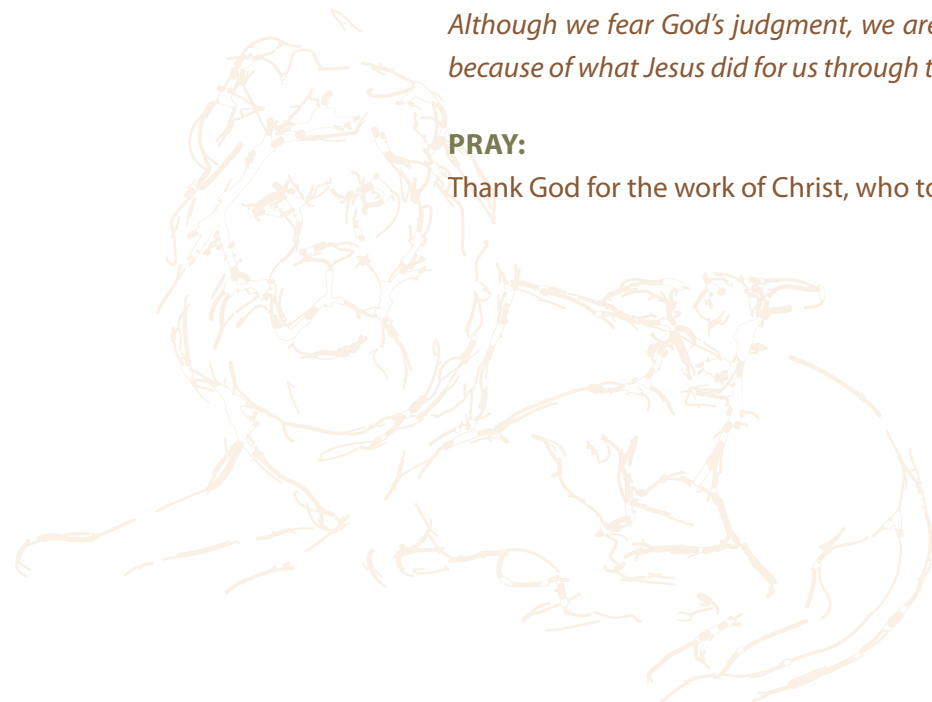
TALK ABOUT IT:

Why do you think the people of Canaan were so afraid when the Israelites crossed the Jordan? *(The Jordan river at flood stage (see Joshua 3:15) would have been impossible to cross. The people of Canaan were already aware that the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea so when God dried up the Jordan, they were truly afraid. Remember, the Canaanites worshipped false gods who did nothing for them. The Israelites had a living God who could do mighty wonders.)*

Should we be afraid of God when we read this story? *(Yes, we should have great fear of God's judgment and power; however, that fear should drive us to Jesus who received the judgment that we deserve. That is why Jesus' sacrifice is so precious to Christians. Although we fear God's judgment, we are able to bow and worship Him without fear because of what Jesus did for us through the cross.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for the work of Christ, who took God's wrath for our sin upon Himself.





God affirmed His care and leadership of the people

God affirmed His care and leadership of the people. Upon crossing the Jordan there were three affirmations of God's covenant with His people. First, the young men were dedicated to the Lord through circumcision. Second, the people of Israel celebrated the Passover meal to commemorate their salvation from Egypt and deliverance from death. Finally, in a remarkable demonstration of God's authority in the battle, the pre-incarnate Son of God met with Joshua before the battle of Jericho. In a meeting reminiscent of Moses' meeting with God in the story of the burning bush (see Exodus 3), the commander of the Lord's army instructed Joshua to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground (see Joshua 5:13-15).

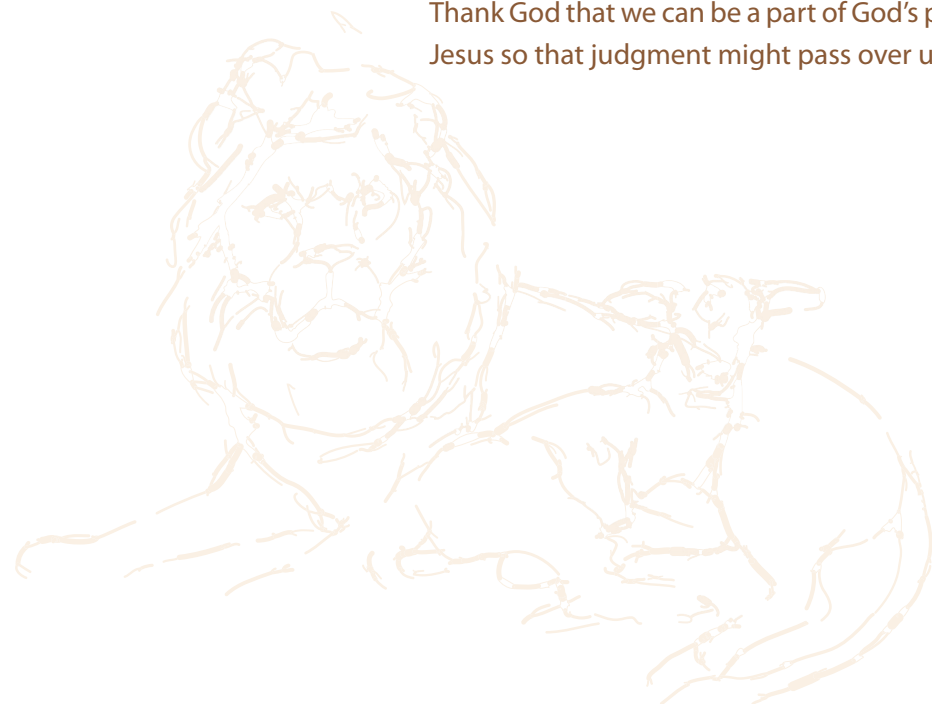
TALK ABOUT IT:

Why do we keep seeing the Passover celebration mentioned in the Bible stories of Israel? *(God instituted the Passover to be a lasting ordinance that is celebrated every year. Through this celebration, we see the clearest picture of the way God saves. The blood of the lamb on a doorpost reminded God of the sacrifice of His Son and allowed Him to pass over without judging the people inside that particular house. One day this feast would even be celebrated by Jesus.)*

What did circumcision do for the Israelites? *(Circumcision marked the people of God and pointed forward to our salvation in Christ—when our hearts are circumcised (see Romans 2:29).)*

PRAY:

Thank God that we can be a part of God's people, if we trust in Jesus, and for sending Jesus so that judgment might pass over us.





Where is Jesus?

When the commander of the Lord's army appeared to Joshua, he responded by falling on his face in worship. In Revelation 19 we read that this same commander of God's army will return for the final battle. This commander is the Son of God—the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There is no mistake about who conquered the Promised Land for the Israelites. Though Joshua and the Israelites marched around Jericho, it is the Lord Jesus who made the walls collapse. How is this possible? Although Jesus had not yet been born into our world, the Son of God is eternal with His Father in heaven. Here, the Son appeared as the commander of the Lord's army. Later in history, he laid down His sword and was led like a lamb to the slaughter, taking our sins upon Himself on the cross. When He returns, He will take up His sword again (see Revelation 19:15).

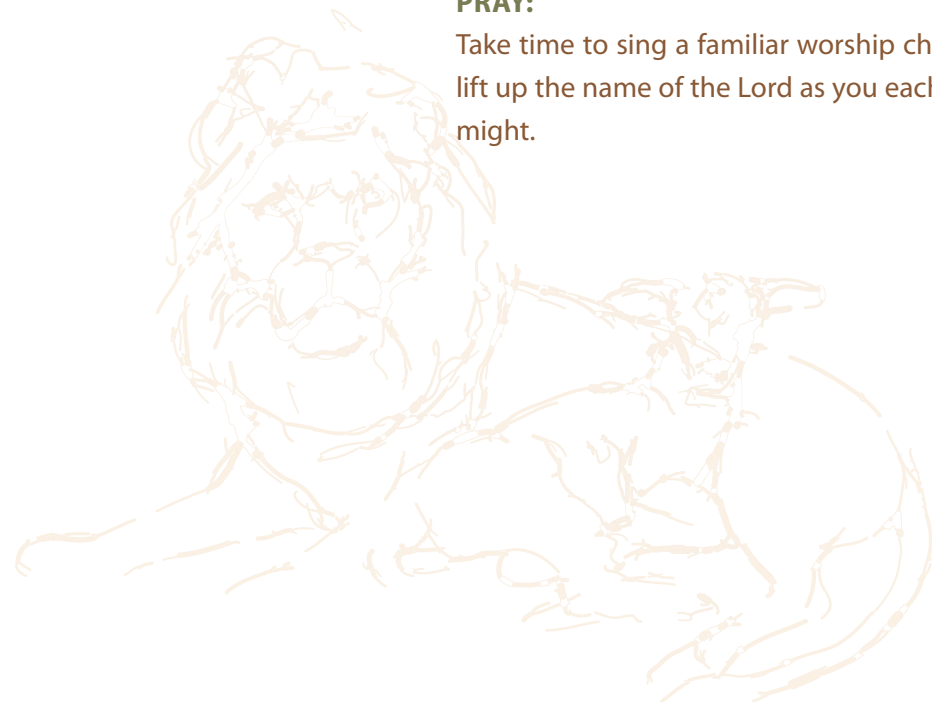
TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is it important that we remember that Jesus is the commander of God's army who will come to judge the earth? *(We can sometimes forget that Jesus is Lord, a fierce warrior who will judge the earth. Although it is important to remember that God is merciful, we must also remember to fear His mighty judgments and respond to Him with faith. A day will come when those who have not believed in Jesus will be severely judged for their sin.)*

What was Joshua's response in meeting the commander of the Lord's army and how should our response be similar? *(Joshua immediately fell on his face and worshipped the commander. We are similarly called to worship the Lord. Let us not become so familiar with Jesus that we lose sight of His mighty power; let us worship the Lord!)*

PRAY:

Take time to sing a familiar worship chorus which exalts the Lord. Or, take time to lift up the name of the Lord as you each speak about His deeds, His power, and His might.





Jericho fell under the power of God

Jericho fell under the power of God. After marching around Jericho once per day for six days without a sound, Israel marched again on the seventh day but this time they marched around seven times. The people of Jericho must have been filled with fear and confusion. Imagine their reaction when the Lord's army began to shout with the sounding of the ram's horn! Then the walls tumbled to the ground and the army of the Lord advanced to destroy the people of Jericho. In a picture of the mercy of God and an expression of His promise to reach the nations, Rahab and her family were rescued from the collapsed city. God remembered her and rewarded her earlier efforts to save the two spies (see Joshua 2).

TALK ABOUT IT:

What caused the walls of Jericho to fall down? *(The walls fell on the seventh day when the people gave a great shout, but it was the Lord who truly brought down the walls and gave the city to Israel (see Joshua 6:16).)*

How are we like Rahab? *(Rahab was a sinner whom God saved from the destruction of the city. We are sinners whom God saves from the destruction of the world. Like Rahab, we deserve judgment but receive mercy.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for the mercy He extended to Rahab, which is a shadow of the mercy He has also extended to us.





On the road to Emmaus.

The passage mentions “The Lord the King of Israel is with you, never again will you fear any harm.” (NIV) Jesus is this wonderful King! It is through His work that our punishment was taken away and in the heavenly place He is preparing for us who believe we will never again fear evil.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What did Jesus do to bring an end to our fears? (*Jesus died on the cross to bring an end to the fear of judgment. In heaven, He will bring an end to all worldly fears (see Colossians 2:15).*)

What will happen to our enemies in heaven? (*God will destroy our enemies (see 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7).*)

How is the description of God in Zephaniah 3:17 similar to the description of the commander of the army of the Lord referenced in Joshua 5:14? (*Both the commander and God are described as being among us and saving us.*)

PRAY:

Thank God for fighting against our greatest enemies, sin and death, which were conquered by the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross.

