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Joshua 6:12-21 – Divine Shock Wave

1. Prepare/Enrich discount this week, brochures in the back.
2. Paint a picture of where we are right now in the story of God
 - a. **Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob**
 - i. Promised to be the ancestors of a favored people/nation and given a special land for settlement
 - ii. Jacob and his family went to Egypt during the famine when Joseph was in power . . . and the people had babies and more babies
 - iii. End of Genesis and beginning of Exodus – Jacob dies and so does Joseph and his generation
 1. new ruler that knew nothing of Joseph comes to power in Egypt and makes the Israelites Egyptian slaves
3. Moses is born and in a God-controlled series of events he ends up being raised by the Pharaoh's daughter
 - a. **Moses grows up and has a run-in with a burning bush**
 - i. God says, **"I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."** Exodus 3:10
 - ii. Exodus then is about the plagues, then what John discussed last week, the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and into the desert
 - iii. Israelites make their way through the desert under Moses' guidance and God gives them the law starting with the 10 Commandments in Exodus all the way through Leviticus
 - iv. In Numbers, we hear more about the Israelites' journey through the desert – moving towards the Promised Land ever so slowly
 - v. The same throughout Deuteronomy
 - vi. Moses leads the Israelites across the dessert and to the banks of the Jordan; After 40 years, he is a river away from the land that God has promised for generations and God tells him, **"You shall not cross the Jordan."** Deuteronomy 31:2
 - vii. **Moses sees the land from the top of Mount Nebo and then he dies at the very end of Deuteronomy**
4. **We thus arrive at the book of Joshua**
 - a. Joshua was Moses' aid and he is to be God's leader to finish the journey
 - b. At the beginning of the book of Joshua it says, **"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you (Joshua) and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give them – the Israelites."**
 - c. Joshua sends spies over to scope the situation out. Eventually, the Israelites walked up to the Jordan, the water stopped flowing and they crossed it.
 - d. So there they now stand in the land promised them . . . but before them is the highly fortified city of Jericho
 - i. Jericho was likely surrounded by a two layer wall to keep invaders out
 - ii. Intimidating sight before them – possibly 5ft thick and 15 ft tall

- a. stopped in wilderness, new generation needed circumcised (Josh 5:2-5)
 - b. identified them physically as descendants of Abraham and as “signers” to the covenant
 - 2. celebrate Passover . . . (Josh 5:10-12) - REMEMBER**
 - a. remembers the events proceeding the Exodus and how God rescued them . . . and the angel of death “passed over” the homes of the Israelites
 - b. NOT about the past, but about the present and future – we RECOMMIT
 - b. **Second** . . . the Israelites LISTEN to the crazy instructions of God
 - i. Joshua has a Moses’ experience, but instead of a burning bush he gets the commander of the army of God in Josh 5:13-15
 - 1. **“take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.”**
 - 2. God says to Joshua in 6:2, **“I have delivered Jericho into your hands.”**
 - 3. Joshua then gets the bizarre battle plans (Josh 6:3-5)
 - a. Not the military plan that we would expect
 - 4. And the Israelites follow them . . .
 - 5. We get our plans and instructions from the Word
 - c. **Third** . . . the Israelites FOLLOWED the crazy instructions of God
 - i. The Israelites participated and invested in the work God told them he wanted to do
 - ii. Josh 6:20, **“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.”**
- 9. God teaches us to recommit to his work . . . to listen to His unique frequency amidst all the noise of our world . . . and then to resonate with it through our words and actions in partnership with Him**
- a. This does not mean we will always get what we want, but that in whatever our circumstances are we will be working in concert with God
 - i. **Ex. Moses . . . he worked in concert with God but never got into the Promised Land . . . but had peace in his disappointment**
- 10. I want to briefly mention verse 21 too. “They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it – men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.”**
- a. This does not sound like the God of second chances and of love
 - b. I can’t explain this, but I think I can help provide some context to understand it
 - i. **In the story of God, God seems to use different methods in different times depending on what he is trying to accomplish**
 - ii. Here God has one primary goal, to raise up a people who are his followers and to provide for them a place to live so that everyone may see through them . . . Himself
 - 1. The people of Jericho are preventing this from happening . . . they are worshiping other gods and have the potential to deceive the Israelites
 - 2. God will not let this happen and the city is destroyed because they will not follow Yahweh.

3. They would be spared, though, if they would honor God and adhere to his law
4. One of my seminary professors argued that **“Joshua reflects two aspects of God’s nature, his righteous anger against opponents and his mercy and compassion toward those who turn to him.”**

11. Let me return to the lessons for us from the Israelites and what we can accomplish through God

- a. **Imagine pushing a friend on a swing:** after one big push, the swing slows down, but continues oscillating for a while with a given frequency. If you impart randomly timed pushes to your friend, you are unlikely to get her moving very much. But if you carefully time your efforts so you administer a small push at the same point in each cycle, your efforts can add up and your friend’s amplitude (height) will increase a bit each time
- b. **It is the same with the sound of your voice.** The sound of your voice administers hundreds of tiny pushes each second to everything around you . . . including the inner workings of other people’s ears. If the timing of those pushes is right, the energy of the pushes can add up, leading to a stress on a glass strong enough to break it.
- c. **God is moving and speaking in our world. And life makes it hard to tune into his frequency . . . but when we do through Committing or Recommitting to Him, Listening to His Voice through His Word, and Following it or matching it with our lives . . . our power builds because it is God’s . . . AND THE WALLS IN OUR LIVES START TO FALL.**

May we be people unafraid to go against cultural wisdom so that we may participate in the sometimes strange . . . but very very good work that God desires to do in our world, in our day and our time.

Sources Consulted:

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Hubbard Jr., Robert L. The NIV Application Commentary: Joshua. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (2009).

Wangerin, Jr., Walter. “Jericho.” Word & World 17, no. 3 (Summer 1997).