PREPARING FOR BATTLE

Text: Joshua 5:13-15

Key Word: Prepare
Key Thought: How Do We Prepare Top Overcome the Struggles We Have in Life

Before Joshua and the children crossed the Jordan River they had to prepare for the battles ahead. The land of Canaan was not going to be a land of rest until the enemies of God were driven from it.

All the men of age 21 and older were circumcised at Gilgal. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant (5:2-8). Once the circumcision was completed the Passover was re-established (5:10). God would not allow the uncircumcised to partake of the Passover. Once the Passover was taken, God allowed the people to eat the food of the land in place of the manna.

You would think that this was enough preparation for battle! But it wasn't. A very significant event had to take place in order for Joshua to precede and succeed in battle. A further preparation was required.

How Did the Israelites Prepare for Their Battles?

I. A RATIONAL HARMONY
II. A RADICAL HUMBLENESS
III. A RADIANT HOLINESS

I. A RATIONAL HARMONY

"Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' 14. 'Neither,' he replied, 'but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.'"

Joshua 5:13,14

God knows how to surprise us with the unexpected. Joshua needed this event to take place. He was scouting out one the most impregnable fortresses in all of Canaan. This was the first well fortified city that he faced in battle. To the human mind the city of Jericho appeared as invincible.
If Jericho was lost in battle the land of milk and honey would never be penetrated. **God knew the importance of preparing the mind of Joshua for battle. Many battles are lost in the mind before any weapon is raised.**

God does not expect the Jericho's in our lives to be taken without our minds at ease. Joshua knew that he had no battering rams, catapults, ramps, or moving towers. His army was made of untrained soldiers equipped with slings, arrows and spears.

Joshua asked his first question and received his first answer.

"Are you for us or for our enemies [adversaries - KJV, AMP, NASB]
14. 'Neither,' he replied, 'but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.'"

*Joshua 5:13,14*

Joshua **had to understand not which side were God's forces on but rather which side his own forces were on.** God was on and always will be on the winning side of righteousness.

Joshua **had to choose which side he would be on.** Was Joshua going to fight on God's side or not? Joshua had to realize that the battle was the LORD'S. **He had to come into a rational harmony with God.**

This truth stayed with him to the end of his leadership when he challenged the people.

"Now fear the LORD and serve him with faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.
15. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. **But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.**"

*Joshua 24:14,15*
I. A RATIONAL HARMONY (Contd.)

Abraham came to the same conclusion under the Oak tree at Mamre (Genesis 18); Jacob was confronted at Peniel (Genesis 32:22-32); Moses had his burning bush (Exodus 3); Elisha chose God's fiery chariots at Dothan (II Kings 6:8-17); Jesus knew that 12 legions of angels could be summoned for His defence (Matthew 26:53). Do you have a rational harmony with God that can defy the odds of battle?

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In June, 1920, the people of Shansi, China were warned that bandits were coming. The villagers quickly made what preparation they could.

One lady missionary kept about 40 girls in a mission school. How was she to protect them from these lawless men? There were not enough soldiers in the village to offer effective resistance.

She called all the girls together into the classroom, explained the danger, and calmly asked them all to kneel and commit themselves into the care of their Almighty God.

"Oh, God, our heavenly Father," the missionary prayed, "we have no might but in Thee. Please send some guardian angels to protect us this night."

Hardly had the blanket of night fallen over the village when it seemed like all hell let loose its terrors. Wild shouts pierced the air as armed men roamed the darkened streets at will.

There were sounds of splintering wood as doors were broken in, and cries for mercy from helpless men and women. Crackling fires started here and there, with their flames lighting up the darkened sky.

Occasionally, a rifle shout acknowledged its message of death. Toward the morning the sounds died down to a whisper. The bandits had overrun the entire village. Yet they had never attempted to enter the missionary compound where the 40 girls were sheltered.

The missionary went out to offer help to the victims in the village who had survived the ordeal. The horror's of the night were evident everywhere you looked.

Many homes were gutted and still in smoldering fires. Many doors were splintered as they were torn from their hinges. Dead bodies lay in the streets and cast over open doorways. Young girls were weeping in the arms of their mothers. Other girls were missing; carried away by the bandits. Grief and despair marked the faces of everyone.

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(Contd.)
I. A RATIONAL HARMONY (Contd.)

*** "God in His mercy spared us and our school girls," said the missionary.
"No wonder!" the villagers replied with awe. "The bandits did not dare molest you. On the corners of your compound walls, standing on guard, we saw four angels with drawn swords in their hands!"

Donald K. Campbell
"Joshua, Leader Under Fire"
(pp 45-46)

II. A RADICAL HUMBLENESNESS

"Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, 'What message does my Lord have for his servant?'" Joshua 5:14b

"Stay humble or stumble."

"No garment is so becoming to a Christian than the cloak of humility."

Joshua quickly recognized that one greater than himself was before him. No one should enter spiritual warfare without this truth embedded into their hearts. To approach spiritual warfare without humility is a recipe for failure. Joshua fell prostrate before the "commander of the LORD's army." The word used for "commander" is better "prince" (Genesis 12:15; Numbers 22:13).

It seems like he was the Angel of the LORD. Joshua recognized him as "my Lord" which is a recognition of superiority but it lacks respect shown to deity. I believe that the Angel of the Lord allowed Joshua's worship to be directed to Yahweh. Oriental reverence is still paid superiors without worshipping them.
II. A RADICAL HUMBLENESS (Contd.)

*** Corrie ten Boom was once asked if it was difficult for her to remain humble. He reply was simple, "When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey, and everyone was waving palm branches and throwing garments on the road, and singing praises, do you think that for one moment it ever entered into the head of the donkey that any of that was for him?"

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Michael Green
#696

III. A RADIANT HOLINESS

"The commander of the LORD's army replied, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so."

Joshua 5:14

No Brahmin enters a pagoda; no Moslem enters a mosque and no Grecian priest enters a temple without first removing their sandals. Sandals were simply worn to protect their feet from dirt. They were not to defile their places of worship by bringing their dirt in with them. God has used this custom to teach anywhere that He is Holy.

Joshua was to radiate the HOLINESS OF GOD not the HARDNESS OF GOD to his enemies. Holiness will do more to conquer our enemies than any weapon we have. No one can stand before our Holy God.

We need to radiate His holiness when we enter spiritual warfare. Moses also was a witness to this truth in Horeb.

"'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take of your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Exodus 3:5

Moses could not stand before Pharaoh without a radiance of God's holiness any more than Joshua could before the armies of Canaan. It is not our holiness that we radiate but rather God's.
III. A RADIANT HOLINESS (Contd.)

Joshua never questioned the need to remove his sandals. Joshua was commissioned for service because he followed in the footprints of his predecessor, Moses. **There was never a man in the Bible who could compare with Moses in his understanding of God's holiness.** It was imperative for Joshua to learn this lesson.

**Do we go into battle with our holiness or God's?**

"You must distinguish between the common, between the unclean and the clean."

*Leviticus 10:10*

"*I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.*"

*Leviticus 11:44*

The Church in Canada is being equipped for its last battle. Hopefully we can see the need for and strive towards a . . .

**I. A RATIONAL HARMONY**  
**II. A RADICAL HUMBLENESS**  
**III. A RADIANT HOLINESS**

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Date: Nov 18/12  
Place: FCA  
Time: 10:30 Am

Song: G - Holy Ground (And I know that there are angels ...)

Fountaingate Christian Assembly  
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Warfare
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Moses had his burning bush (Exodus 3)
Elisha chose God's fiery chariots at Dothan (II Kings 6:8-17)
Jesus knew that 12 legions of angels could be summoned for His defence (Matthew 26:53)

Do you have a rational harmony with God that can defy the odds of battle?

II. A RADICAL HUMBINESS - Joshua 5:14b

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III. A RADIANT HOLINESS - Joshua 5:14; Exodus 3:5

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