Prayer Walk October 8-14, 2018



The Story of Jericho

Introduction

The focus in this booklet on the story of Jericho came as an idea from a member of Christ Memorial Church and was supported by the prayer team. The intent of this prayer walk is to encourage and enable people to pray for the church. This tool, created by the Discipleship Team, could also, however, be used to pray for homes or cities or nations - quite broadly, the hope is to simply spark a conversation with God.

Here is an opportunity for you to spend time with God and with others in prayer. Use the prompts in this book to serve that end. You are welcome to walk in groups or alone, and you are free to pause (for thinking or reading or listening or praying) at any point on the walk, before or after it, or even to pray without walking. God still hears our prayers. Blessings!

Rev. Ross Dieleman
Pastor of Discipleship

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

~ Ephesians 6:18 ~

Day 1 - Humility & Confession

1st Prayer Prompt: Begin by recognizing God as present and yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for who God is, tell God what's on your mind, and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). If you are at a loss for words, try this reflective and listening prayer: Almighty God, strong and loving, here I am. And you are here too. Here we are together. (Pause) Tell me, God, please, who am I? (Pause)...And who are You? (Pause)...Who are we together? (Pause). Father, let these next few moments together in prayer be exactly what you intend for them to be. In Jesus, Amen.

Joshua 1:7-11: 7 "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." 10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11 "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own."

2nd Prayer Prompt: Pray back to God what you are hearing in the text today - insights, hopes, fears, confessions, questions, praise.

Reflection: The command to Joshua is compelling: be *strong and courageous!* It is easy to quickly place ourselves in Joshua's shoes and to make our project the Jericho project, then believing that the command of God to us is to "be strong and courageous" according to our own selfstrength. But the point of the command (and the whole book of Joshua) is not about Joshua's strength...it is about God's. God's people are to be strong and courageous because God has made promises and God will keep His promises. More than 50 times in the book of Joshua we are reminded that the land is a "gift" - it is God's to give. God's role in this story is to make and keep promises. Joshua's is to be "strong and courageous" in trusting that God will do as God promised and to thereby obey God's Law. Today it is important to remember that Old Testament descriptions are not 21st century prescriptions: hopefully, in marching around the church, no one actually intends for the building to fall down! But we do still trust God to be a promise making and promise keeping God - and our role is still to be faithful in trusting God in all things. As God's Law was a guide to Joshua, so today we too obey God's Word as a guide for good living...and we make confession whenever and wherever we come up short.

Today's Prayer Focus: Use the Ten Commandments (found on the next page) to guide silent prayers of confession. Here we stand in humility before God. Tell God what you think each commandment means. In confession, focus not on someone else's sin but your own. Consider not only the act itself but also the heart that might motivate it. Pray also for courage in obedience.



Closing Prayer: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared...O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all her iniquities (Psalm 130).

Day 2 - Friendly Strangers

Ist Prayer Prompt: Begin by recognizing God as present and yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for who God is, tell God what's on your mind, and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). If you are at a loss for words, try this reflective and listening prayer: Almighty God, strong and loving, here I am. And you are here too. Here we are together. (Pause) Tell me, God, please, who am I? (Pause)...And who are You? (Pause)...Who are we together? (Pause). Father, let these next few moments together in prayer be exactly what you intend for them to be. In Jesus, Amen.

Joshua 2:1-4, 8-15: 1 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. 2 The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." 3 So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land." 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. ...8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. 10 We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. 11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. 12 "Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign 13 that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them - and that you will save us from death." 14 "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land." 15 So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall.

2nd Prayer Prompt: Pray back to God what you are hearing in the text today - insights, hopes, fears, confessions, questions, praise.

Reflection: What a story of surprise! A prostitute among the "enemy" people is friendly - and faith-full. Rahab articulates a faith in God (vs. 9-11)! The spies become friends with a stranger and that stranger becomes part of God's salvation story - a person of exemplary faith and hospitality (Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25). One of the dangers of the Jericho story today is the way it too easily lends itself to "insider" and "outsider" thinking. This story blurs the lines. Rahab literally lives in the wall that will come tumbling down. Things are not always as they seem - and God is a God of great surprises!

Today's Prayer Focus: Yesterday we prayed prayers of confession, particularly personal confession. Today we want to pray for the well-being of others using the Beatitudes as prompts. Below is a list of profound statements Jesus made at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. Pray for whatever God brings to mind in regards to each of the following beatitudes...

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Closing Prayer: Most righteous and most gracious God, in Jesus Christ you have welcomed in the most unexpected people - including me - to your kingdom party. Give us eyes to see the good in others too - even and especially in the ones we least expect to see it in. And may the blessing you pronounced be true among us too. In Jesus name, Amen.

Day 3 - The Joy of Trials

1st Prayer Prompt: Begin by recognizing God as present and yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for who God is, tell God what's on your mind, and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). If you are at a loss for words, try this reflective and listening prayer: Almighty God, strong and loving, here I am. And you are here too. Here we are together. (Pause) Tell me, God, please, who am I? (Pause)...And who are You? (Pause)...Who are we together? (Pause). Father, let these next few moments together in prayer be exactly what you intend for them to be. In Jesus, Amen.

Joshua 3:2-3, 14-17: 2 After three days the officers went throughout the camp, 3 giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. ...14 So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. 15 Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, 16 the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. 17 The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

2nd Prayer Prompt: Pray back to God what you are hearing in the text today - insights, hopes, fears, confessions, questions, praise.

Reflection: Consider this: the priests step into the Jordan River at flood stage before the water stops flowing. This is no small thing. The water, at flood stage, would not be a mere ankle-deep, gentle trickle. This was likely a waistdeep step of faith into rushing waters. And then they stood in the middle of the would-be rushing river until all had crossed on dry ground. Consider the fact that it probably wasn't fun to be the first ones to step into that rushing water. Doubt was possible. Fear was likely present. But it is often in this kind of crucible that faith grows the most - trusting God to do the thing that needs most to be done but that humans cannot do themselves. Appropriately, like the crossing of the Red Sea in the Exodus, the crossing of the Jordan is reminiscent of baptism - the great act of God to do for humans what we cannot do for ourselves.

Today's Prayer Focus: The joy of trials...Sounds about as fun as stepping into the Jordan River at flood stage. Read the following passage (see next page) from the Book of James three times - speak and listen to God in prayer as you consider this passage first personally, then locally, and then globally.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

James 1:2-4 New International Version (NIV)

Closing Prayer: God, thank you for the sure confidence we have in your providential care - knowing that you work in all things for the good of those who love you and are called according to your purposes. Nothing can come between or break apart your love for your people. Please give us what we need to break fresh ground with you. In the name of Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Day 4 - Leaders Remember

Ist Prayer Prompt: Begin by recognizing God as present and yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for who God is, tell God what's on your mind, and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). If you are at a loss for words, try this reflective and listening prayer: Almighty God, strong and loving, here I am. And you are here too. Here we are together. (Pause) Tell me, God, please, who am I? (Pause)...And who are You? (Pause)...Who are we together? (Pause). Father, let these next few moments together in prayer be exactly what you intend for them to be. In Jesus, Amen.

Joshua 4:1-9: 1 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, 3 and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." 4 So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, 5 and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, 6 to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7 tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." 8 So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. 9 Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

2nd Prayer Prompt: Pray back to God what you are hearing in the text today - insights, hopes, fears, confessions, questions, praise.

Reflection: Never look back...at least that seems to be the advice of the modern world. It is not, however, the practice of our ancestors in faith. In the Joshua story, the people stacked stones to serve as a memorial of God's past faithfulness - a tool for telling children about what God has already done in the world and on behalf of the people. Similarly, in one of the most commonly recited passages in the Old Testament (the *Shema*), the people are very specifically instructed, when they finally do enter the promised land, to "take care that you do not forget the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:10-12) because we are so easily prone to forget. Remembering God's faithfulness in the past fuels our faith in God in the present.

Today's Prayer Focus: Count CMC's blessings, particularly remembering the past. Consider all elements - children, youth, adults, worship, care, missions, volunteers, staff, past initiatives, God's faithfulness, etc. If possible, end today's prayer walk in a group or sub-groups gathering near CMC's standing stone (the big rock by the Gathering Place). In that place, after having circled the building in prayer, take a few minutes together to count blessings outloud.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Closing Prayer: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...we have 10,000 reasons to give thanks to you, O God! Thank you, Thank you, Thank you! Amen.

Day 5 - Unity & Wisdom

Ist Prayer Prompt: Begin by recognizing God as present and yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for who God is, tell God what's on your mind, and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). If you are at a loss for words, try this reflective and listening prayer: Almighty God, strong and loving, here I am. And you are here too. Here we are together. (Pause) Tell me, God, please, who am I? (Pause)...And who are You? (Pause)...Who are we together? (Pause). Father, let these next few moments together in prayer be exactly what you intend for them to be. In Jesus, Amen.

Joshua 5:13-15: 13 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." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" 15 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.

2nd Prayer Prompt: Pray back to God what you are hearing in the text today - insights, hopes, fears, confessions, questions, praise.

Reflection: Notice the power of a straight answer in the form of a basic word: "neither." There are at least two profound instances in Scripture in which people try to

organize life into overly simplistic categories of "us and them" or "cause and effect" (Joshua 5 and John 9). In both instances, when presented with this kind of "either/or" thinking, God's spokesperson responds with a definitive "Neither." In this Joshua story, it may be a bit jolting - most would surely expect God to be on the side of the Israelites and therefore against their enemies. But remember, from the beginning Israel was "blessed to be a blessing." God is for Israel because God is for the world. And God is not against any one people group in particular but is against evil anywhere and everywhere. So, when asked to pick a side - being "either for us or for our enemies" - the messenger of God rejects the categories. God doesn't pick a side, which begs the question: Should we ever claim God for our side anywhere? Maybe not, unless we are on God's side first...but then, of course, it'd be His side, not ours.

Today's Prayer Focus: What if we spent less time trying to get God on our side and more time seeking to get ourselves on God's side? Today's prayer focus seeks to do just that with help of Philippians 4:4-8. The passage begins by encouraging us to *Rejoice in the Lord always. I'll say it again, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to all. The Lord is near: do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, let your request be known to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

And then this is where it tells us to focus: (spend time praying each of these things)...

Finally, brothers, whatever is UE whatever is HONORABLE, whatever is whatever is whatever is Lo whatever is if there is any COMMENDABLE, EXCELLENCE if there is WORTHY OF PRAISE think about these things. Philippians 4:8

Closing Prayer: Most holy God, we stand in your presence on holy ground. Help us to live with you as the organizing center of our lives. And teach us to dwell on the things that are of you. In all of our thinking and all of our living, please give us the kind of wisdom and unity that only comes from aligning ourselves with you and your things. As the psalmist once said, so now we pray, "Lead us in paths of righteousness for your name's sake." Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Day 6 - Hearing & Doing

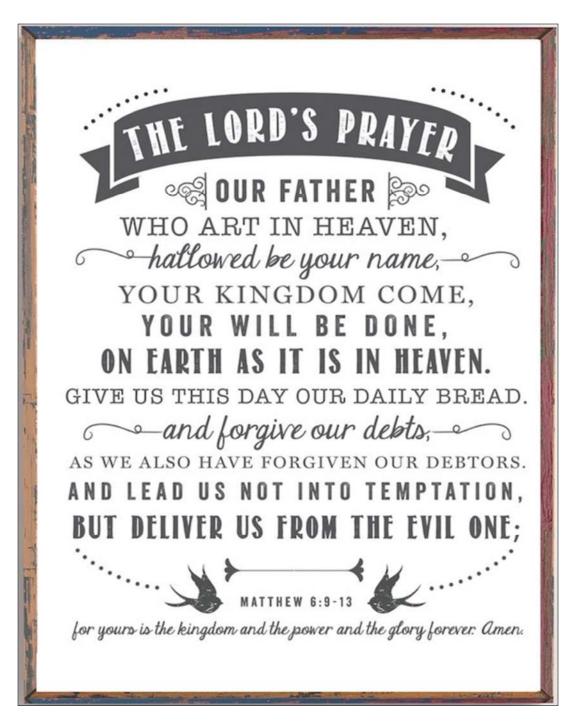
Ist Prayer Prompt: Begin by recognizing God as present and yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for who God is, tell God what's on your mind, and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). If you are at a loss for words, try this reflective and listening prayer: Almighty God, strong and loving, here I am. And you are here too. Here we are together. (Pause) Tell me, God, please, who am I? (Pause)...And who are You? (Pause)...Who are we together? (Pause). Father, let these next few moments together in prayer be exactly what you intend for them to be. In Jesus, Amen.

Joshua 6:1-5, 15-17, 20: 1 Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. 2 Then the Lord said to Joshua. "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. 3 March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 4 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. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on 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." ...15 On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. 16 The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! 17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. 20 When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city.

2nd Prayer Prompt: Pray back to God what you are hearing in the text today - insights, hopes, fears, confessions, questions, praise.

Reflection: It is interesting to consider...what exactly was "the battle at Jericho?" If there was a battle at all, it seems to have been mostly a "battle" to hear God's voice and to trust His Way - which, in this famous story, was the odd practice of walking around a city once for six days straight and then seven times on the seventh day. Surely, back then, someone must have thought there was a better way to take the city than to simply walk around it and blow trumpets. But that's what they did. And today it is tempting to think that there are easier or quicker ways to change the world than prayer. But God called the Israelites at Jericho to walk, and God still calls his people today to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). A wise and pastoral friend once said that prayer does sometimes change our circumstances...but it always changes our experience of those circumstances. Why? Because prayer puts God between us and our circumstances - which changes the view and the experience. The "battle," then and now, is to hear and trust and obey...and it begins as we pray.

Today's Prayer Focus: Pray the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray. Here is a prayer on which to build all prayers. This is a prayer that teaches, with each of its phrases, that God is present, pure, powerful, providing, pardoning, and protecting. Spend a few minutes with each phrase, praying it and any details that come to mind before moving to the next line...



Closing Prayer: Lord, listen to your children praying. Lord, send your spirit in this place. Lord, listen to your children praying...send us love, send us power, send us grace. Amen.

Day 7 - Fresh Fruit

Ist Prayer Prompt: Begin by recognizing God as present and yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for who God is, tell God what's on your mind, and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). If you are at a loss for words, try this reflective and listening prayer: Almighty God, strong and loving, here I am. And you are here too. Here we are together. (Pause) Tell me, God, please, who am I? (Pause)...And who are You? (Pause)...Who are we together? (Pause). Father, let these next few moments together in prayer be exactly what you intend for them to be. In Jesus, Amen.

Joshua 24:14-18: [Joshua retells the story of what God has done and then says: 14 "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates 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 ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." 16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! 17 It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18 And the Lord drove out before us all the nations. including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God."

2nd Prayer Prompt: Pray back to God what you are hearing in the text today - insights, hopes, fears, confessions, questions, praise.

Reflection: Who do you serve? Three quick thoughts... Notice first that some of the possible "gods" of counterfeit kingdoms are specifically the ones that God's people previously served ("the gods your ancestors worshipped" vs. 14). John Calvin once said that the human heart is a factory of idols. Evidently, one of the first steps toward serving God is to put away the false things we previously built our lives around. What "gods" were/are propped up in your heart? Notice second that there are other tempting "gods" in the land ("the gods of the Ammorites, in whose land you are now living" vs. 15). Just as every human heart manufactures idols, so does every culture. 21st century American culture idolizes some things that are blatantly bad and others that are seemingly godly but deceptively so. We who dwell in the land are not immune to the lure of these "gods." Can you distinguish between God and the gods? Finally, notice third that the descriptive word for those committed to God is serve ("choose this day whom you will serve...but we will serve the Lord" (vs. 15). The central posture of the citizen of God's Kingdom is service. We reject the "gods" we were previously tempted to follow and we reject the "gods" that others now shove in our face. Despite pressures all around us and within us, with Joshua, we say, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Today's Prayer Focus: One of the evidences of God's people living God's way in the world is the Fruit of the Spirit ripening among them. There's nine fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and today's walk is set for seven laps.

Pray the Fruit of the Spirit - one fruit per lap, with two of the seven laps focusing on two fruit (so that within the seven laps you cover all nine fruit). You can't do it wrong, but I suggest the following...



Closing Prayer: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above the heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.



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