

## Title: Are you a notable? - Joshua 6

**Purpose:** To consider the question of whether we are a NOTABLE or perhaps a \*not\* able! Here we consider three principles that we learn in how Joshua faced the GIANTS and how he showed himself as truly one NOTABLE.

## INTRODUCTION

### UK Referendum

Just this week the whole nation of voting adults has been mobilized, if you like, by way of a nationwide referendum to make a really important decision. (EU leave or remain).

Now HISTORICALLY, making national level decisions at crucial times has not always been handled this way. For example in France from the 1500's for a couple of centuries they had a body called "L'Assemblee des notables" (the assemble of notables) which the king would convene to advise on important matters.

Now for someone to gain the tag of **"Notable"** means:

That they are: **"Significant enough to deserve attention OR to be recorded in some way."**

### 38 years back

And 38 years back Israel had selected 12 of its most **"NOTABLE MEN"** to venture across the Jordan into the land and make a full assessment.

The 12 were selected and they have all gone down into the record of our Old Testaments.

Here we have the **"NOTABLES"** and we too can actually be in their class more easily that we might think.

You see the only difference between **"Notable"** and **"\*Not\* able"** is a space between the "t" and the "a".

In fact back in history, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, France had setup up an **"Assembly of Notables"**, comprised of **nobles, ecclesiastics** and **other high-ranking people** who would be called together to consult on matters of state.

Well, **Thomas Jefferson**, (the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States) **described them as the "\*not\* ables"!!**

These 10 men bad spies, we read about in the book of Numbers, not only convinced themselves they were **"\*not\* able"** to follow God's plan, but they also convinced the whole nation and threw them all into a downward spiral of unbelief and national failure.

These 10 are truly some of the most **celebrated losers** in all of the Bible!

Q. And why?

All because, **they essentially refused TO FACE THE GIANTS.**

They clung to the lie that they were definitively **"\*not\* able"**.

So making that a somewhat more applied matter - Q. Is that you this morning?

You see the simple truth is that: Every one of us that desires to be used by God - **WILL FACE THE GIANTS!!**

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century giants

Now we believers who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century may \*not\* have physical giants like **GOLIATH** OR like a **towering walled city such as JERICHO** - YET we still have **other GIANTS** that we cannot simply side-step - for example:

- There are **giant illnesses** --- **giant disappointments** --- **giant bouts of depression**
- There are **giant addictions** --- **giant financial problems** --- **giant redundancies**
- There are **giant family breakdowns** --- and **giant personal & moral failures**

### Wise Bible study leader

I recently read about a wise and experienced Bible Study leader who once posed his weekly men's group a very down-to-earth question.

He simply asked them :

**\*\*\* Q. What they thought was THE GREATEST GIANT OF ALL in their lives? \*\*\***

Well they weren't slow in coming up with some suggestions:

- **Pride! - Lust! - Pornography! - Guilt! - Regret! - Failure!**

After a bit the leader interrupted the flow of responses and said,

“Yes - those are very good answers—very wise answers—but they are all wrong.

**Q. What else have you got? Q. What is THE GREATEST GIANT OF THEM ALL?”**

(You know the real Big Daddy?)

So they thought for a while more and then other things began to slowly emerge:

- **Selfish ambition! --- Greed! --- The love of money!**
- **Multiple divorces! --- Growing up without a father!**
- **An ex-wife who degrades you before the children!**
- **Failing as a father! --- Fear!**

Well finally the study leader broke in once again - he said:

“I want to commend you for those answers. They aren't superficial, and they are "gut-level honest".

And those are all big giants. But once again they're all wrong.

Let me give you the answer. **The biggest giant of them all is: GOD.**”

### This morning

As we turn over to Joshua chapter 6 this is where the confidence of our **TWO TRUE NOTABLES** - **Joshua & Caleb** are going to be put to the test.

I want to use a **simple breakdown** for the 20+ verses of this chapter which I have stolen from the helpful American

Pastor and Commentator Warren Wiersbe:

- Before the Challenge
- During the Challenge
- and then finally After the Challenge

## **1] BEFORE THE CHALLENGE**

I remember at **the last Men's Convention** sitting on the back row listening to **Rico Tice** the evangelist and he was asking us to discuss amongst ourselves WHAT IT WAS THAT HOLDS US BACK FROM DOING EVANGELISM.

And then, after a couple of minutes discussing with the person next to us, he asked us to shout out our answers - and **probably the top answer was FEAR** - people were afraid of losing acceptance with other people.

And then I distinctly remember what he said next:

"Write this down,' he said - 'We work FROM ACCEPTANCE \*not\* FOR ACCEPTANCE!"

Q. You know what?

I did write it down - in my **notebook** & in the **notebook of my heart** where it has struck a lasting chord.

And I think there is a powerful principle that we need to soak ourselves in and that is:

\*\*\* "That similarly - we fight FROM VICTORY and \*not\* FOR VICTORY" \*\*\*

The reality that we need to be clear about is that God is simply:

- CONSOLIDATING HIS VICTORY
- and \*not\* GAINING HIS VICTORY

Think about what I mean:

- Jesus takes on **Satan** for 40 days and comes out the victor
- Jesus takes on an entire **Legion of demons** (which would be around 5,000 if based on the concept of a Roman Legion) and the outcome is a rather dramatic conquest - the demons enter a large herd of pigs and they all rush headlong into the lake where they are not to be seen again!
- OR that place where **Satan** gets **the greatest thrashing of all:**

at **Skull Hill & the Empty Tomb** - I'll put it in the form that we read it in Colossians 2 Verses 13-15:

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having **cancelled the written code**, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, **nailing it to the cross**. And **having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.**"

Q. So if we have already won, what should that mean?

- it means that ==> **the confidence should be on our side and not theirs**
- it means that ==> **their's should be the fear and the insecurity, not ours**

Let's see what Moses preached to the people just before they crossed the Jordan:

Deuteronomy 2 verse 25 "This very day I will begin to put **the terror and fear of you** on all the nations under heaven. They will hear reports of you and **will tremble** and **be in anguish** because of you."

Deuteronomy 7 verses 23-25 "But the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, **throwing them into great confusion** until they are destroyed. He will give their kings into your hand, and you will wipe out their names from under heaven. No one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them."

#### A Fact & then an Imperative

Now the chapter starts with a **FACT** and then an **IMPERATIVE**.

The **FACT** is in Verse 1 - and that is the reality that Jericho was closed up - no-one was going in, no-one was coming out. It was in a complete state of lock-down!

The **IMPERATIVE** comes in Verse 2 and if you hadn't recently had the text of the chapter read to you it would be interesting to see if you could have guess what God would command Joshua to do at this point.

The **IMPERATIVE** is this little word **SEE** - God is commanding Joshua to **LOOK** or to **BEHOLD**.

God says: "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men."

Within this command is an implied invitation to believe the promise of God - see the tense there- "I **HAVE** delivered Jericho into your hands...".

So along with the promises that God had made to them via Moses - Joshua must lay hold of them and stand.

Victorious Christians are people who have learned to place their full weight upon that which God promises in the Scriptures.

Now clearly we are not, as NT Christians standing on OT promises to deliver up Jericho, lock, stock & barrel - no, we stand on appropriate NT promises against our present day enemies.

Q. So who do we have to face? Q. What are the basic giants we come up against from day to day?

Well, it is that evil trinity that you have probably heard before under the title of:

- the world
- the flesh
- & the devil

Q. So do we have "past tense" deliverance from these?

Q. Are we able to work FROM victory and \*not\* FOR victory?

Well a resounding YES!!

Regarding the world - the final verse of John 16 says this:

(John 16 verse 33) "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. **But take heart! I have overcome the world.**"

The **NRSV** puts it like this: "But take courage; I have **conquered** the world!"

Now this doesn't mean that Jesus has fought His own battle and now we must simply follow suit and win our own victory. No! The pressure is well and truly off when you know that the final outcome is settled.

So in Tennis, if you were 2 sets down, but **KNOW** that the final outcome is that you **WIN** 3 sets to 2 - then you can play on with quiet confidence that you will prevail, even if you should lose some games here and there.

### Standing on God's wisdom

Another thing that helps us to fight from God's **VICTORY** is the fact that we are not fighting or perhaps should not be fighting, as the world fights.

If Joshua had adopted this viewpoint he would probably have reasoned to himself that they were no in for a fairly long process of siege warfare.

We know from Archaeology that the ancient city of Jericho (and it is actually one of the oldest cities in the world) covered an area of about 7 acres and that boasted 2 outer walls about 10 metres high. The inner wall was the thickest about 4 metres thick and the outer wall about half that.

Now one of the problems with building big walls is that with time, as the city expands, they become something of a limiting factor. And so quite possibly they built dwellings on top of these walls (hence the location of Rahab's house).

We know too that they had large concrete grain bins within the city which would keep them in food for some long time during a siege.

But now Joshua is willing to understand that common sense is not always the route that God takes and that he **MUST NOT** lean on his own understanding.

**Warren Wiersbe** puts it like this:

"Whether it's **Joshua** with **trumpets**, **Gideon** with **torches and pitchers** (Jud. 7), or **David** with his **sling** (1 Sam. 17), God delights in using weakness and seeming foolishness to defeat His enemies and glorify His name..."

### Joshua careful to stick to God's pattern

You notice that Joshua is pretty careful to stick to God's pattern - at no point does he get a bit impatient with the speed of things.

And he makes sure that the people keep exactly in line with the pattern that God has set by His own wisdom:

**Verse 10** Joshua says to the people: "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, **do not say a word** until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!"

We also notice that it is, if you like, a "Perfect pattern". Q. Now why do I say that?

Well, clearly it is perfect because it is God's pattern, but also we can't help but notice how many times this number seven turns up in this chapter - it comes **no less than x12 times**.

### Significance of the number 7

We have been talking a little bit about this number 7 at house group of late because of the fact that we are working our way through the book of Revelation - and just now we have started into 3 series of 7 seals, 7 trumpets & the 7 bowls.

So let me just point out some of the richness and some of the echoes that you hear in this approach that God is detailing with regard to experiencing VICTORY as the end result.

- here with regard to Jericho - we have 6 days the same and then a 7<sup>th</sup> that is different. The 7<sup>th</sup> day is different and also special in that it brings completion, it also is a day fuller than the others and more victorious.

The creation pattern is the same with the Sabbath (or Christian Sabbath for us who are on the NT side of history) completing things.

- the Passover involves 7 days of unleavened bread
- the Pentecost festival comes 7 weeks further on
- in the 7<sup>th</sup> month they have the concluding festivals of the year - trumpets, day of atonement and the feast of ingathering
- after 7 years they declare liberty for slaves
- and after 7x7 years they have the year of Jubilee and it is then when they blow the ram's horns to declare "liberty throughout the land" (Lev 25v10) which includes release from debts and the return of property that had been sold due to falling on hard times.

One thing interesting about this passage is that the trumpets here in Joshua 6 are not the silver ones but are detailed as horns and specifically Ram's horns.

Q. Now why do we care about that?

Well this word used of Ram's horn (which in the Hebrew of Joshua 6 gets mentioned 5 times - the NIV only preserves it once!) is the word in Hebrew jobel (jo-vale) which is the same root, the same word that is used for the 50<sup>th</sup> Year Jubilee.

Q. Do you know when the Ram's Horn is sounded for the Jubilee? Day 10 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month (perfection of perfection (combining both numbers 10 and 7)). Q. And what day is that do you think? Well - surprise surprise - it is the Day of Atonement. Which is the only day in the year when the High Priest enters behind the veil with the blood of the sacrificial offering.

So as we have been seeing the only sound that was really of significance was the long blast on the jo-vale signifying \*NOT\* WAR \*BUT\* VICTORY - LIBERTY - THE RECEPTION, THE RECOVERY OF THEIR INHERITANCE.

So then Joshua was NOTABLE before the challenge of Jericho because he worked FROM Victory and \*not\* FOR Victory. Now, what about #2:

## **2] DURING THE CHALLENGE**

And here's another working principle by which we can truly be NOTABLES and that is:

\*\*\* We work **FROM FAITH** and \*not\* **FROM FEAR** \*\*\*

Now this story of Jericho, it might surprise you to know, gets a mention in the NT and it is there in that great FAITH

Hebrews 11 verse 30 says "**By faith** the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for 7 days."

It clearly was **\*not\* going to be by SIGHT** that they were going to conquer Jericho because it was one of those cities that had big walls and when God told Joshua to SEE Jericho - it was still standing strong!!

And maybe your giants have big walls as well that you feel that you cannot climb or get around.

That, you may remember, was how the 10 **"\*NOT\* ABLES"** looked at things.

Moses in the opening chapter of **Deuteronomy**, speaking to the new generation that we about to do what their fathers should have done - rehearses the sad history - he says:

**(Deuteronomy 1 verse 26-32)** "... you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. You grumbled in your tents and said, 'The LORD hates us; so he brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us. Where can we go? Our brothers have made us lose heart. They say, 'The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.' Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, and in the desert. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.' In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God,..."

#### Things that HELP/HINDER faith

The truth is there are things that help faith and also things equally that hinder faith.

Q. So what **HELPS** faith?

Well one thing is having **that knowledge or sense that God is with you.**

Notice in Joshua 6 that the Ark of God is once again very prominent. The Ark of the Covenant was there 16 times when we were crossing the Jordan in chapters 3&4 and here now it is mentioned no less than 8 times.

God maybe invisible to the naked eye, but He is not invisible to the eye of faith. You see God often leaves behind His fingerprints or footprints if only we will take the care to look.

This can be those various tokens of His providence - just the way that he causes things to happen. Just the way He causes certain verses to crop up numerous times so that we get a clear view of what He is saying to us.

Q. So what **HINDERS** faith?

Well clearly **FEAR** does. FEAR tends to maximize the problems (or things that appear to be problems) and at the same time it minimizes the things that God is doing.

FEAR generates DOUBT and DOUBT breeds inaction, it cause our FAITH to leak away.

FAITH on the other hand generates TRUST, it draws strength from God's faithfulness in the past, strength from the promises of the word - and leads to us taking STEPS, moving forward with God.

Another thing that can challenge FAITH is having to exercise patience.

Frequently we are in a hurry and we struggle when things seem not to be happening.

Perhaps the Israelites might have been tempted to grumble a bit when it seemed like nothing at all was happening. Q. Why all this waiting around? Q. What's the use of just walking around the city and then going home day after day!!?

As [Hebrews 6 verse 12](#) says we are to "...imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

I guess another thing that is quite corrosive to faith is **the lack of self-control**.

I read a book a while ago about self-control - it wasn't actually written by a Christian but one of the interesting observations that it made was that children that had a good mastery on self-control at an early age were usually the ones that would go on to be the most successful in life.

As the [Proverbs](#) says:

(Proverbs 25 verse 28) "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control."

I imagine that it must have been really hard for the people to not be able to make even one small shout or anything - the only permitted sound was the blowing of those ram's horns.

So we must learn to work from FAITH and \*not\* from FEAR

Lastly #3:

### **3] AFTER THE CHALLENGE**

And from here I want us to notice, by way of conclusion, that the end section of this passage details what they have to do - you can see it there from [Verse 17 through to 19](#):

- the city and everything in it is to be DEVOTED to the LORD
- the only exception is Rahab and her family that are found in the house situated on the wall with the scarlet cord tied in the window
- no living thing is to be spared
- no loot or plunder is to be taken
- the gold, silver, bronze and iron are sacred and must all to be given in to the LORD's treasuries

So a third key aspect to what makes us truly NOTABLE is that we learn to operate:

**\*\*\* We learn to operate from LOVE TO OBEDIENCE and \*not\* OBEDIENCE TO LOVE \*\*\***

Q. Now what do I really mean by that?

Well as we all know OBEDIENCE is \*seldom\* a walk in the park.

Yet Jesus makes our OBEDIENCE an identifying mark of LOVE - he says in John's gospel that if we love Him then we will obey Him.

He also makes our OBEDIENCE a primary goal in our walk with Him. Christ-likeness is paramount in God's thinking and God's planning for our lives. And so God exercises His sovereignty in such a way that He progressively, over time, achieves this primary end.



Now you might easily conclude that the order of these 2 things (**obedience AND love**) is that **obedience** comes first AND **love** is that which follows after. But that logic is a bit too quick.

What we have to ask is:

Q. Where do I truly get the power to obey?

And the answer to that, in its simplest form, is from that fount of God's love to us - because God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that He has given us (Romans 5 verse 5), because God has chosen to set his love on us even while we were still sinners (Romans 5 verse 8).

We find that this melts our hard hearts and out of RESPONSIVE LOVE we begin to walk more and more by obedience to His commands.

Let me conclude.

## CONCLUSION

You might, in your walk thru life, show that you are NOTABLE for no other reason than you are self-defined as "**\*NOT\* ABLE**"!!

That you distinguish yourself by your unwillingness, by your inability to face the giants!!

YET - Joshua and Caleb were **\*NOT\*** men like that, they properly stood the test of time and were truly "**NOTABLES**":

- for they FOUGHT From VICTORY & **\*not\*** For VICTORY
- for they WORKED From FAITH & **\*not\*** From FEAR
- & they OPERATED From LOVE to OBEDIENCE and **\*not\*** vice versa

YET all-in-all - the most deep-rooted principle of all for them was that God was & always will be , at least for them, the **GREATEST GIANT OF THEM ALL!!**

AMEN - God be praised!!