

Breaking Through Enemy Lines
Pastor Joe Oakley
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We're in a sermon series called The Necessity of an Enemy. Before this we taught on the Purpose of Temptation and the Power of a Problem. We saw that when we get a promise from God - between the Promise and the Promised Land - between the dream and its fulfillment - between the vision and the reality - there are times of temptation and testing, enemies to overcome and problems to solve.

How we respond to these temptations and problems determines whether or not we enter the Promised Land! But what I want you to know today is that even when you enter the Promised Land - even when your vision is accomplished - there will still be enemies in the land. So, I'm preaching today on Breaking Through Enemy Lines. And here's the good news - I can tell you exactly who those enemies are so you will be prepared to defeat them.

When I think of breakthroughs in the Bible one of the first things I think of is the children of Israel breaking through the walls of Jericho. God promised a land to Abraham and his descendants - the children of Israel. But in order to get to their Promised Land - they first had to break out of Egypt - then break through the wilderness that was between them and their promise - and then break into the cities ruling their Promised Land.

All of us have promises from God - but in order to obtain them - we must break out of whatever is holding us back - we must break through the Wilderness between us and our promised destiny - and then we must break into the reality of those promises.

The children of Israel had an enemy named Pharaoh and they could never get to their Promised Land until they got out of Egypt. So God send a deliverer named Moses to set them free.

We have an enemy named Satan and we will never get to our Promised Land until we get out of our Egypt - whatever is holding us back. So, God sent a deliverer named Jesus to set us free! But - Like Israel - when we arrive at the place of seeing our promises fulfilled, there will be enemies to subdue and strongholds to conquer!

When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, the very first thing they faced was a city called Jericho. Jericho was a military fortress - some believe it was the strongest fortress in the land of Canaan. It was built to defend the eastern approach to the land. When the Israelites arrived there, Joshua 6:1 says:

Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

The people of God had a promise from God – but they faced a big problem. Jericho had walls that were 6 feet wide and 30-40 feet tall. So – tearing down that stronghold city was a huge problem! In fact, it looked like an insurmountable problem.

And the same thing happens to us when we enter our Promised Land. When we finally get there – we find enemies that seem unbeatable. But God wants us to break through enemy lines.

So – I have two questions today: What’s your promise and what’s your problem? What’s your promised land and what’s your Jericho? What’s standing between you and your promise?

Many of us have visions and dreams and promises from God, but we are surprised when there are enemies in that land of promise. We hear stories about Promised Land and it’s great wealth, silver and gold, houses to live in without having to build them, vineyards to eat from without having to plant them, and a lack for nothing. And sometimes we think that all Israel had to do was cross over the Jordan and *everything was theirs*. Well not exactly.... *Everything was theirs*, but they had to fight to get it.

The Promised Land was everything they could hope for EXCEPT for the enemies who wanted to keep them out, and utterly destroy them. In Deuteronomy 1:8 God said: *See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land.*

That doesn’t mean you waltz right in without a fight. The Hebrew word for possess used here means “to occupy by driving out previous tenants and seizing their place.”

We forget that the entire Promised Land was occupied by enemies. The Children of Israel sent spies into the land before they occupied it. Listen to what the spies said in Numbers 13:31-33 when they returned:

We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.

Many of us get this same grasshopper mentality when we realize there are enemies to fight in life. But if our eyes are on ourselves or our enemy – we will lose the battle! Our eyes must be on the Lord God Almighty!

Think about this - during the conquest of The Promised Land the Children of Israel had to defeat 31 Kings and 7 nations. Deuteronomy 7:1-2 says:

When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations--the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you-- and

when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.

Israel faced enemies larger and stronger than themselves! But they were not larger or stronger than God! And the enemy may be stronger than you, but he's not stronger than God! God had a plan to defeat Israel's enemies and He has a plan to defeat your enemies!

Listen! God's plan promises God's participation. We have a part but we also have a partner. He is our mighty warrior, our strong tower, our ever-present help. He is the Lord of the breakthrough.

We have an enemy who doesn't want us to possess our destiny. But God is bigger than our enemy. 1 John 4:4 says *He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.* God is greater than Satan.

But you must defeat the enemies in the land. Breakthrough starts with identifying your Jericho. What stronghold needs to come down? What miracle do you need to march around?

In Joshua 1:3 God told Joshua *I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.*

The promise was originally given to Moses. Then it was transferred to Joshua. In the same way, all of God's promises have been transferred to us via Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:20 says:

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.

Every promise of God has your name on it. The question is: how many of them have you claimed? But claiming a promise is not enough! Breakthrough always requires action on our part!

Yes, God gives promises – but they are not automatically received. We must possess them. And winning that battle is based on a word from God! You can't just arbitrarily pick anything you want from God – you must spend time in prayer – hear from God – then do what God tells you! In Joshua 6:2-5 The Lord said to Joshua,

"See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 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."

I'm sure that seasoned soldiers thought this plan seemed like nonsense.

So we're just going to march around the city? Why not use a battering ram? Why not scale the walls? Why not cut off the water supply or shoot flaming arrows over the walls? Instead, God told the Israelite army to silently circle the city. And their deliverance was based on their obedience!

Joshua didn't just hear the word of God – he obeyed it. He ordered the people to march around the city like God said to. For six days – they marched around the city once in silence. Joshua 6:16 says:

The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!"

After seven days of circling Jericho, the wall fell and God delivered on a 400-year-old promise. The fall of Jericho shows us several things: God's promises don't have expiration dates! The fall of Jericho happened 400 years after God promised Abraham his descendants would have their own land. God's pattern is for us to keep circling His promise in prayer and faith until He brings it to pass. In Luke 18:1 Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them *that they should always pray and not give up*. In all things – at all times – in every situation – always pray and never ever give up!

So with that in mind - let's take a look at the enemies in the land. Deuteronomy 7:1 says:

When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites,

Each of these nations represents an enemy in the Land of Promise that we must defeat. The Children of Israel had to defeat them and we must overcome the same enemies today. To defeat them we must understand them. To understand them we will examine the meaning of their names. Names in the Bible were symbolic of character so a study of these names will give us insight into how each of these spirits operates.

The first enemy is.... The Hittite Spirit. The word Hittite means "fear or terror." Fear so strong that it depletes people of their strength, courage or will to fight. Fear that paralyzes people.

Think about how terrorists operate today. They don't have to blow something up – they can just threaten to and entire cities are immobilized with fear. That's how the Hittite spirit attacks us today. It plants fear in our minds. And it might sound like this:

"I'll never receive God's promises."

"God isn't going to heal me."

"I'll probably fail if I step out in faith."

This spirit of fear attacks everyone when they begin to step out in faith.

When we started this church, I struggled with a fear of failure. We had planted a church years ago that died a long, slow, painful death and I only wanted to pastor a church that was already established. I did not want to start with nothing again.

However, Pastor Deborah believed that God was leading us to plant another church. She helped me face my fear of failure by asking, "What would you do if you knew you would not fail?" I responded, "Start another church." She said, "There's your answer."

I knew I had to face this fear that was telling me I was too old, not good enough, I had failed before and I would fail again. This is how the Hittite Spirit works. It uses fear to break us down so we give up. It wants us to break down in fear instead of breaking through in faith.

But I didn't give up. Instead, I turned to the word of God. Joshua 1:9 says:

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

It took courage for me to overcome this spirit of fear. To overcome that I had to trust God and do it afraid. I had to overcome fear with faith. And if I had not overcome that fear and taken that risk, Grace Fellowship Church would not exist today. So, breakthrough the spirit of fear by doing what you are afraid to do. Step out in faith! 1 John 5:4 says:

This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

What blessings are you missing because of fear? I encourage you today to face your fears and defeat the Hittite Spirit.

The next enemy in the Promised Land is: The Amorite Spirit. The word Amorite means comes from a root word meaning "to talk." Amorites are talkers. So, the Amorite spirit attacks with words.

Think of all the different ways that Satan attacks us. He attacks with deception, temptation, accusation, condemnation. Every single weapon our enemy uses against us involves words.

Satan's power is the power of words. When Satan attacked Jesus in the wilderness – he did not physically attack Him – he simply talked to Jesus. Satan's attack on Jesus was to use words to tempt Him to take a course contrary to what His Father wanted to keep Him from His destiny. And that's what this Amorite spirit does to us. It knows what to say and when to say it.

And you defeat that the same way Jesus did – by talking back to the devil. You don't ignore him and you don't debate him. You talk back and the words you use are the same words Jesus used – the word of God.

Jesus overcame the enemy by speaking the word of God. Over and over He said, "It is written." That defeats the enemy every time.

Now, the enemy is subtle and he does much of his talking through other people. In Matthew 16:23, when Peter tried to convince Jesus he didn't have to die for our sins, *He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan!"*

Jesus knew full well that it was not Peter who was suggesting that he avoid the cross: it was ***the devil speaking through Peter***. Satan works through other people – but we must remember our war is not with people, but evil spirits.

I wonder how many things people say to us every day that have their origin in the mind of the devil? Those who utter these words to us have no idea they are the mouthpiece of Satan! It could be your boss may have told you that you're the most worthless employee he has. It could be a parent or a spouse telling you you'll never accomplish anything.

If you are fighting with flesh and blood, you will argue with those people. But when you realize that it's not them, but it is the enemy who put those words in their mouths – then you resist the devil and he must flee!

You must train yourself to do what Jesus did when Satan talked to him: TALK BACK! When Satan spoke to Jesus and offered his suggestions, Jesus responded *with the WORD OF GOD!*

And you will only be able to do this if you have armed yourself with the Word. That means you are going to have to meditate on the Word - commit it to memory. This is how you "load your weapon."

By the way – Satan does not just use others to speak to us – we do much damage to ourselves by the things we say to ourselves about ourselves.

Although the Amorites were the largest enemy Israel had to conquer, Israel didn't realize it. As a matter of fact after spying out the land, Israel didn't think they needed all their forces to defeat the Amorites. So they only sent a portion of their troops to battle. But they were wrong. The Amorites chased them and struck them down.

A primary tactic of the Amorite spirit is to get us to underestimate it. It doesn't want us to realize the power of our words. It will convince us that what we say is not that *big of a deal*. But God tells us in Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Words have the power to hurt or to heal.
Words have the power to destroy or to build.
Words can kill or give life.

Satan does not want you to know the power of your words because he wants to keep you out of your Promised Land. But there is power in speaking the word of God. I'm not talking about positive confession; I'm talking about biblical confession! Romans 10:8 says:

The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming.

What are you proclaiming?

Are you speaking words of faith or words of doubt?

What you say is important! Yet the Amorite spirit wants to convince you otherwise.

Not only do our words impact others, but our words also determine our destiny. Did you know that you can know God's will for your life and never accomplish it because of the words of your mouth? Everything that Almighty God is trying to accomplish in and through us can be established or destroyed by what comes out of our mouths!

So now you know - to breakthrough into the Promised Land you must defeat the fear-based Hittite Spirit and the evil-speaking Amorite Spirit. Don't be naive, you are in a spiritual war whether you like it or not! But you do not have to fear Satan!

He's the one who fears spirit-filled Christians who are alert, armed for battle and who know the authority of Jesus' name. Demons tremble at the sound of that name and when we submit to God and resist the enemy, he must flee.

So I'm putting Satan on notice that he will not keep us from our destiny!

This church is ready to fight.

We're putting our armor on.

We're picking our weapons up.

We're sharpening our swords and we're coming after you because we have the promise of God that the gates of hell cannot prevail against us!

God has given us everything we need to overcome Satan!

God has given us spiritual armor to defend against Satan.

God has given us weapons to defeat Satan - weapons that are mighty through God to pull down strongholds!

And God has given us the authority of His name to defeat our enemies!

So breakthrough enemy lines today in the name of Jesus!!!