

“Joshua fit da Battle of Jericho” it’s the song I remember most from my junior choir days, and it always comes back to me every time I hear any part of the Joshua story from Scripture. But the song had such a catchy up-beat tune to it. Quite honestly, Ann Schuster, our director, did more to reel us into a Bible story than any of our Sunday school teachers, including my own mother. Who knows? If you’re able to find just the right catchy song, you may not only hit a goldmine in getting children to read the Bible more, but maybe you’ll hit a jackpot to put all lotteries to shame: to find a song as a mere starting point for young people to get more interested in church altogether, keep singing in the adult choir for starters, and maybe even crazier odds to sign-up and be a council member at some point. Who knows? You might even pull off a miracle to rival the Resurrection itself: that one of those very young people bellowing out, “and the walls came a tumblin’ down,” albeit incredibly out-of-tune, but that one singer might turn out to be a pastor, in the end.

It’s heart-warming to think of all such possibilities looking years back at all those young and, well, let’s be honest: naïve choir members; but the unfortunate reality is that all those young and naïve choir members have to grow up and, perhaps, mature and read the same story from Joshua through a,

hopefully, more well-rounded human-being perspective. That we have to realize such stories were not meant to be fables, of sorts, that could be retold with such catchy Sunday school tunes to make everything seem so nice and cute. But, when “the walls came a tumblin’ down,” there were actual human lives lost in the process, and no matter how we have re-told that story for generations upon generations; those lives were absolutely cherished by God too.

It’s not that we are trying to undercut the Scripture that we Christians were shaped to appreciate all the way back from those precious Sunday school teachers and junior choir directors. We are not even trying to make things “politically correct” in this age of immense contention. We are simply reading the story as is: that when humanity gets involved in this world, there are going to be clashes over land, over money, over food, over sheer power to yield against another. The Joshua story is not so nice and cute, after all. It’s sad. It’s heart-breaking. It’s reality that continues to rear its ugly head to this day: battles still raging on long after the one at Jericho.

Then, again, the Joshua story, and those like it throughout Scripture, is not meant to drive us into this deep cynical depression, worried non-stop

about this world filled with so much bad news instead of the Good News we appreciated hearing from those Sunday school teachers and junior choir directors. Instead, such stories serve as a reminder of the ultimate battle that was fought not by any army of human beings against one other in the recorded annals of all military history.

No, the essential battle, with absolutely everything in all eternity on the line, was between our Lord, Jesus Christ, against sin and death itself. That's the battle with implications that we cannot even begin to realize. And that is the battle that has already been won on our behalf, and on behalf of all those who are on the other side of any wall we human beings try to put up, whether that be around our own homes, in the workplace, in the daily life of social interactions, including those entrenched in our own hearts. God does not care whatsoever, because God will go on the other side too without even caring to ask if it's okay with us first.

Come to think of it, there's something rather catchy about that, even catchier than an upbeat Sunday school tune that sticks with us decades after we sang it. There's something rather catchy about this God who's going to love us in spite of all the times we mess up, in spite of our selfish obsessions,

in spite of us just being us. That no matter how bad the news may get about all the battles that continue to rage on amongst us human beings; there's just something so incredibly powerful knowing that the Greatest News still applies: that Jesus Christ went in with love and life in abundance and reigned victorious over sin and death to their max. Death tried to put up a wall, to somehow stop, even slow down, Jesus' eternal march for the sake of all humanity, and it stood absolutely zero chance.

So, there's no reason for us to try fighting off this catchy Great News applying across the universal board, because no matter how hard we may try to limit where this God can reach, we stand absolutely zero chance. We're going to get caught up into serving this God, just like the story of Joshua so went that we heard this morning: serving this God for those near and far, including those on the other side of any wall that may reach even the depths of our heart. No worries, because God knows how to more than scale all of it; for there are no limits to where this God has already been and always will be for the sake of the whole world that God still so loves, and will forever. And for that Greatest News of all, we give thanks to God indeed! Amen.