

Thought for the Day for Saturday June 6th by Angela Birkin.

Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho

Reading: Joshua 6.1-20.

While we have been coping with the world-wide Covid-19 pandemic other problems have not gone away. There is still a climate-change crisis, there is still poverty and hunger, and there is still racism, prejudice, injustice and cruelty as the death of George Floyd at the hands of white police officers in Minneapolis has demonstrated.

In our reading from the book of Joshua, the Israelites march around the walls of Jericho carrying the ark of the covenant and blowing rams' horns on six successive days. On the seventh day they march around the walls seven times blowing the horns, and then give a mighty shout causing the walls to collapse allowing them to capture the city. It would sound like a jolly tale except that if you read on to verse 21 you discover that everyone in the city, men, women, children, animals, were killed by the sword excepting only Rahab and her family who had assisted the men sent by Joshua to spy on the city.

What are we to make of this story today?

In the 19th century, Africans enslaved on the plantations in the United States identified with the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt and found hope in the story of their liberation by God, and their eventual settlement in the promised land. We call the songs they composed and sang 'Spirituals' and many are still sung today.

As we listen to the wonderful Gospel singer and civil rights activist Mahalia Jackson, who sang at the March on Washington in 1963 in front of 250,000 people before Dr Martin Luther King Jr. made his 'I have a dream' speech, let us pray for hope and justice for all people enslaved by racism, prejudice, poverty and injustice, and for the courage to work to that end.

"And the walls came tumbling down!"

<https://youtu.be/BHFGRI51yDg>

