

Deliverer Needed Series

“Achan from Sin”

Joshua 7

Introduction

- It's a little bit of reading, but would you stand with me if you are physically able and let's look at Joshua chapter 7
 - Crazy, crazy, crazy story
 - Israel is defeated before her enemies
 - A man is at fault and he and his entire family pay the ultimate price
- What is going on? Why did everyone in the family have to die and why are we talking about it today?

Well this story in Joshua 7 comes from a section of the book of Joshua which chronicles the events of the Southern Campaign

- Israel has moved into the promise land and they will spend seven years fighting battles for the land
 - The first few years in a southern Campaign for the area that now surrounds Jerusalem and then the last few years fighting the Northern Campaign for the cities in and around what we call today the sea of Galilee

And on Wednesday Night we will cover this first section in great detail, we will look at the battle for Jericho – how did those walls come down?

- We will consider this defeat at Ai, and eventually how they achieve victory over Ai – it will be a brilliant military strategy they receive from the Lord. Much to learn this Wednesday Night and at our home fellowship
 - But the main point this morning is what God tells Joshua in verse 12

“Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.” – Joshua 7:12

- Joshua you were defeated because there is sin in the camp
 - And you will continue to be defeated until you deal with this sin
- Joshua I want to deliver you – I want to fight for you and for your people – I want to be your deliverer
 - But you have a part to play in this delivering
 - You need to deal radically with sin and rebellion

Understand the situation they were facing

- again we will deal with this in great detail on Wednesday night and at your home fellowship, but God had given them a great victory at Jericho
 - they in obedience walked around the city 13 times in 7 days, gave a shout and God had those walls come down – how? – You got to come out on Wednesday!
- but it was a great victory
 - but now that they have had one victory in the promise land, now they are acting like experts in battle
 - they don't pray, they don't seek the Lord
 - they look at Ai, just a little town, don't send 600,000 soldiers, just a little fighting force of 3,000 should do the trick
- and the children of Israel get smoked, they get whooped

And Joshua starts crying out, you can tell what generation he is from, the generation that died in the wilderness because of their complaining – he starts crying – God why did you bring us into the promise land to die????

And I love the Lord's response in verse 10 of this chapter. Joshua get up, stop your crying, I haven't left you – there is sin in the camp and I am not going to bless you when there is undealt with, and unconfessed sin in the nation of Israel

- you see God had told the people before the battle for Jericho, the rest of the land, you can have the spoils of war
 - but with Jericho, I don't want you to take anything
 - I want you to leave it all for me

“And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.” – Joshua 6:18-19

- Every other city, you can take it all kids
 - But this first one is mine – don't take anything

The Word of God is clear

- but one guy, Achan, decides he is going to do his own thing
 - He takes a Babylonian garment
 - He takes a pound of gold and 200 silver coins, He takes them back to his tent and buries them

And then when the children of Israel face their next battle, they don't ask the Lord for a battle plan, they just do the rational and obvious thing, because obviously that is what they learned from marching around Jericho, God only works in real obvious ways, but they employ an obvious battle plan and they are defeated, not because God doesn't love them or has left them

- Because there is sin in the camp and God will not bless sin

Now why? – why does God often remove His hand of blessing when we have unconfessed and undealt with sin in our lives? – Why?

- I believe it is because God doesn't want us to get the wrong idea, the wrong idea that He is okay with that sin in our lives
 - The reason that is so important for us to properly understand is sin will destroy us and devastate us
 - And our Father in heaven who loves us – doesn't want us to get the wrong idea that He is okay with sin just being tolerated in our lives

He knows sin will devastate, He knows sin will destroy, sin will trip you up

- it reminds me of a story I heard about a man named Henry Mier

The St Petersburg (Florida) times reported a man was caught stealing sausages – the reason it made the news of the weird was the way he was caught – He walked into a butcher shop, saw the sausage and tried to grab one and put it in his pocket – he realized that someone was watching him so he ran. Problem was the sausage he had tried to steal was connected in a long string of sausages, in fact 45 feet of sausage. When Henry Mier saw what was happening he tried to drop the sausages and this feet got tangled up in the 45 feet of sausage, he slammed down to the concrete, split his head open and had to be taken to the emergency room for a skull fracture. Where he was arrested after he was released.

- I mention this to you because Henry Mier's story is such a great picture of what sin does – it leaves you hurting, it leaves you in fact Achan – Achan from sin
 - You see precious ones sin is not bad because it is forbidden, it is forbidden because it is bad and there is a serious difference

It is not that God was in heaven thinking how can I make man's life harder, I know I will create rules to bum him out and make life boring – that is what we think – but in reality the Bible tells us God is a Father, a good Father – He knows what will hurt us, rip us, and tear us up and as a good Father He says – avoid these things son, turn away from that daughter – These things will hurt you, I don't want that!

If sin is so bad for us, then why do we do it in the first place?

- well this story of Achan teaches us a lot about that
 - if you look at chapter 7 with me we see the effects of sin in Achan's life, and they are the same effects in our lives as well

The effect of sin in Achan's life – Joshua 7

#1 – It bound him – Joshua 7:1

- Achan knew the command of God – leave all the stuff for me
 - I want the first fruits of the land
 - And Achan no doubt understood the commandment

But when he saw this Babylonian garment, the thought must have popped into his mind

- That is so wonderful – imagine how I would look and feel in that experience
 - And then I'm sure came the justification – we are the ones who are fighting the battle, surely it is our right, surely God will understand
 - And the thought turned into a desire and the desire took hold of Achan, and he would not let go, and the sin would not let go of him

I know this is the process Achan went through, because the Bible says it is common to all of us – James says in the first chapter of his letter, verse 14, “each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” – James 1:14-15

- You see it was true of Achan, it is true of you, it is true of me, that sin's desire is to bind you up in its grip and not let go, and to get you to not want to let go

It's funny, it's not just a human problem – you know how they used to catch monkeys in South America, then you need to watch more discovery channel – anyway – they drill a hole, clean out a coconut and then put some marbles inside the coconut. The hole they drill is big enough for a monkey to reach in, but once the marbles are in its hand, it won't be able to get it out

- So little monkey comes by, what's that – picks it up shakes it – I must have that – and once it is his grip, oh I can't get my hand out and this coconut is tied to that tree, no worries, and yet the monkey will not let go, and the hunters come and find them unwilling to let go - the only thing holding that monkey there, the only thing bringing its demise, is its unwillingness to let go

And I bring that up because that is exactly what sin does to us

- We know what is right – but we have entertained the thought long enough, or we have given in so many times
 - That now sin has become a bondage to us
 - And we need to see this, this isn't an isolated case with Achan, you are not the only one facing that
- That is sin's desire for you – to hold you in its grip so that even you don't want to let go
 - And God our Father, knowing we are like this, it is why He has us surrender things to him
 - Knowing we have the tendency to become in bondage to so many things – He declares in His Word the need to surrender
- Whether it is with money – the first part is mine – whether it is with this city for Israel – the first part is mine

Or whether it is with a part of your life – it's time to surrender and be free from that bondage – because that is exactly what it is

- Achan did not, could not – because he was bound by sin
 - But that wasn't the only effect...

The effect of sin in Achan's life – Joshua 7

#1 – It bound him – Joshua 7:1

#2 – It blinded him – Joshua 7:20-21

- when Achan is caught, he explains what happened
 - He knew the commandment – but when he saw that garment, and all the gold around it, he had to take it
 - And you have to understand this Babylonian garment was the item of the day – it was the thing to have – and no one in Israel had such a garment – “I must have it”, Achan said
- But that is just the point – how blind, how dumb

Achan – where are you going to wear this garment?

- If no one in Israel has one – and you start sporting it
 - Where did you get that Achan – ah, Macy’s – no, I don’t think so
 - Achan thought, I know this is wrong but it is going to be great, I will be the toast of the town
- But it shows He is blind

He is blinded to what sin really produces –

- it never fulfills, we see that – He has to get this garment, hidden under his tent – he wasn’t the toast of the town – Sin never fulfills
 - oh the Bible says sin is pleasurable for a season – but the end there of is destruction – it promises wonderful things, but never fulfills – but it blinds us into thinking – oh maybe it will

And you know, just a side note – we know sin is pleasurable for a season, and so often again we are blinded we think that holiness is un-pleasurable – but what a lie

- David wrote in psalm 16:11 – **“in your presence is fullness of joy – at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” – Psalm 16:11**
 - We forget that – because sin blinds us
 - It blinded Achan to what sin produces

Maybe you don’t see the effect of your sin

- you have made excuses for it
 - it is really not that bad
 - the effects are really not that great
 - I don’t see what you are talking about Jason
- Yeah – exactly – you don’t see
 - You are blinded to sins effects
 - Because that is what sin does
- Why would I want to sin if it is really so bad
 - Because it binds you and holds you to it
 - and blinds you to the effects and ramifications
- but you need you to see it, because after sin binds you and blinds you, if not repented of, it will...

The effect of sin in Achan’s life – Joshua 7

#1 – It bound him – Joshua 7:1

#2 – It blinded him – Joshua 7:20-21

#3 – It burnt him – Joshua 7:22-26

- we read this story and honestly my first reaction as I’m sure is your too is, wow, that’s a little harsh
 - I mean he stole something – yeah he caused the death of 36 men, maybe he deserves to die, but his family, his kids?

We need to understand a few things

- first of all in reality, most bible scholars believe these were adult children who were in on the crime

- Deuteronomy 24:16 makes it clear...

“Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* children, nor shall children be put to death for *their* fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.” –

Deuteronomy 24:16

- The law was clear, kids are not put to death for the sins of their parents
 - So most bible scholars believe these were adult children who were in on the plot
 - Its kind of hard to burry something under your tent without your family being in on it

But even with that, understand the fact the whole family was killed is not something we really want to think about it, its not something we like to dwell on.

- After thinking about this quite a bit this week – I’m convinced the reason I react that way, the reason we are tempted to react that way, is we really don’t understand how deadly sin is
 - How serious its effects are
 - And how it offends the heart of God

What are you saying Jason?

- that if I sin, God is going to kill me???
- That He is going to kill my children??
- Oh don’t you see, don’t you get it
 - God is not going to kill you, or your kids
 - But sin did take the life of His Son

It was for my sin and your sin that Jesus was ripped apart

- it for our indiscretions that He hung upon that tree
 - it was for my little slips – that He was separated from God the Father
 - Jesus became Achan for me – Endured the pain of sin for me, for you
- That is the gospel

The good news that I am free from the penalty of sin, not because of what I have done, but because of what He has done

- Amen – Hallelujah!

But maybe you’re thinking - Well Jason, then I am so glad He did that, but then why are we still having this study – Jesus paid for my sin

- True, He paid for sin but that does not mean your sin will still not have consequences to your life
 - by the blood of Jesus, your sin may not condemn you to Hell
 - but by our own stupidity sin will still bind us, it will blind us and yes it will burn away at our lives and the lives of our families

We need to see that

- because there is a part of our sinful hearts that says, I can take it
 - I will say I’m sorry and God will forgive me, and if there are consequences, I can take it
 - Oh friend – sin has you blinded – it is not just you that will take it, but your wife, your kids, your family
- It will burn you – and that is why we need to repent! When we find ourselves in the place of Achan, we need to run to our deliver
 - We need to repent!

How do I do that?

- well it starts by confessing
 - call your sin what it is ‘sin’
 - in this day and age we are so good about renaming sin and rebellion
 - we call it disease or sickness or blame it on our parents
- And it isn’t just this generation, did you notice in verse 21 what Achan said...

“When I saw among the spoils...” – Joshua 7:21

- He said, when I saw among the spoils, wait a second Achan

The word “spoils” – “reward for the victor”

- What exactly did Israel do to gain victory over Jericho, I know we haven’t covered this yet, but you know the story – walking around the city 13 times over 7 days in silence and then shouting
 - Does that make them the victor?

No – it was God that fought the battle for Jericho, and it was God who was due the spoils

- but Achan makes his sin sound better, by basically saying I took the reward for the victor
 - no – you stole what God told you not to touch

We must confess our sin, but repentance isn’t just about saying some words and this is so important to understand

- when Achan says in verse 20 I have sinned against the Lord he becomes one of seven men that says that phrase in the scripture

7 Men who said, “I have sinned”

#1 - Pharaoh – Exodus 9:27

#2 - Balaam – Numbers 22:34

#3 - King Saul – I Samuel 15:24

#4 - King David – II Samuel 12:13

#5 - Shimei – II Samuel 19:20

#6 - Judas – Matthew 27:4

- now look at that list with me, in reality only a couple of those people actually repented and walked with God
 - and I point that out to you – because repentance is more than just saying, “I’m sorry”

“Repentance” means to turn and go in the opposite direction

We need to confess – Lord what I did, what I am involved in, it is sin, it is harmful to me and my family and you told me the truth about that

- I am agreeing with you, I am confessing, but Lord I don’t just want to say words
 - I want to turn and go in the opposite direction
- I don’t want to fill my mind with images of lust and depravity, I want to fill my mind with your Word and the worship of your name
 - I don’t want to speak evil of people anymore in gossip and bitter speak – I want to bless people and encourage them in your Word
 - I don’t want to take that which does not belong to me anymore – I want to give to you

We must repent and deal radically with our sin, we need to run into the arms of our deliverer before sin burns any more of my life and the life of my family – Lord I want to run to you!

- Well Pastor Jason, I hear you on this, it’s passionate, I get it, but I am reading the same story you are and can I ask a question?
 - Achan repented and it didn’t end up good for him?
 - He ends up being stoned to death and then burned in the, what was that, the valley of Achor
- Which my study bible says, that means the Valley of Trouble
 - **“Anchor” means “Trouble”**
 - That doesn’t sound good – why do I want that?

When sin is revealed and dealt with it feels like the valley of Achor – it just seems like a valley of trouble – so it seems better just to keep sin covered – but consider one more thing with me before we go our way

The valley of Achor is mentioned 2 other times in scripture

“The Valley of Achor will be a place for herds to lie down. A place for my people who have sought me to rest” – Isaiah 65:10

“The Valley of Achor will be a door of hope. She (repentive Israel) shall sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the days when she came up from the land of Egypt. And it shall be in that day that I will take from her mouth the name of the idols and they shall be remembered by their names no more.” – Hoses 2:15-17

- God speaks prophetically about this very place where Achan’s sin was dealt with radically, this valley of trouble
 - And God says – this same place will become a place of rest
 - It will become a door of hope
 - Where I will take the name of idols that have for so long troubled the nation of Israel and I will make them forget those names, and the idols, the bondages will no longer have a hold upon them

You see precious ones – we can look at Achan’s end and think I don’t want a valley of trouble in my life, so I am just going to keep this hidden

- but that is just the problem – it won’t stay hidden

“Be sure your sin will find you out” – Numbers 32:23

- it is not that God will find you out, He already knows and He is hunting you down
 - it is that sin will find you out – the sin will seek to be uncovered, the sin will seek to destroy
 - your sin will find you out

It reminds me a true story I heard about a man who was vacationing down in South America, and he so loved the tropical birds, but knew there was no real way to purchase them back in the States and so he took some eggs, hid them in a sock and then stuffed the sock in his boxers for the plane ride home – he avoided customs, leaving the country, no problem he was home free

- but what he didn’t realize is the body temperature of a man is similar to the temperature of a mother bird sitting on her eggs
 - and so mid flight the eggs started moving, in his boxer mind you
 - and then hatching, then chirping
- The flight attendant noticed and he was arrested and the chicks were confiscated at the airport
 - Because this guy didn’t know – be sure your sin will find you out

God loves you too much to let your sin stay covered forever – so it is time, this morning – to confess it to Him

- Lord this is sin, it is wrong, and I am tired of it blinding me and burning my family
 - I want it gone
 - But not just with Words

- Friend it is time to turn and go in the opposite direction into the arms of your deliverer

And what you find is He will take the Valley of trouble and if you give to Him, if you surrender it to your deliverer, He will make it place of rest

- oh thank you God I am free from that – rest, peace
 - and more than that

- Your deliverer will make it door of hope – where you can go to others who are struggling and speak hope in their lives – the enemy wants to keep you where you are at

Your deliverer wants to deal with the Achan from sin – He wants to turn that valley of trouble into a valley of rest and a door of hope for many in the future

- Are you willing to turn to your deliverer this morning!