

Joshua 7-8 From Failure to Victory

But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.

2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. 3 And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few." 4 So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. 5 And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! 8 O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?" 10 So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? 11 Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. 12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs 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.

When I was a Sr in HS while attending CCCM – New Youth Pastor – little Italian guy – Richard Cimino

A) Summer Camp – Talent show – the Skit

B) Angry – confused – ready to be done – church hurt blog

C) All things lawful.... Expedient or helpful

1) If you would have prayed – I would have said – No

D) That unfortunately was not the last time that I got myself into trouble for not praying.

E) In this chapter – See Joshua and the Army of Israel – also in trouble – stemmed from not seeking the Lord

We have noted in our study that the Land of Canaan – the Promised Land has been referred to as Heaven
A) Not accurate – Canaan was a land that was filled with enemies of God – None of those in heaven

B) Canaan was a land of battles and obstacles – none of that either

C) So Canaan is NOT A picture of heaven – BUT of the Christian life – of the spirit filled life

D) A life that is full of hills and valleys, not just MT tops, a life that involves battles with a real enemy and obstacles that we face

So last week we saw how Joshua and the army of Israel followed this crazy battle plan of God

A) Walls of Jericho came crashing down – It was a great Victory

B) Chapter 6 ends on a high note 27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

C) However The 7th chapter of the book of Joshua opens w/ an Ominous BUT
PAY ATTENTION TO THE WORD BUT IN THE BIBLE –

D) Ephesians 2 – Man's Depravity – and plight – doomed – BUT GOD!!!

Up to this point it has been a story of success but Chapter 7 reveals a horrible defeat
A DEFEAT THAT DIDN'T NEED TO HAPPEN

The problems: #1 Sin in the Camp

A) We read here in the beginning of Chapter 7 that this guy Achan did what the Lord said not to do – took of the spoil

B) He did the very thing that God said not to do – took of the spoil

C) Notice two things here: V.1 so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.

1) V.11 ¹¹ Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them

Why is the Lord angry at Israel and why does he say that Israel has sinned when – the only culprit was Achan

A) The Lord an important principle here – we are all linked together

B) 1 Corinthians 5:6 – A little leaven leavens or spoils the whole lump

C) One man's sin affected the whole nation – Israel sinned and because of their sin they couldn't stand before their enemies

Now why didn't the Lord want the people to take of the spoil – I sure there was so good stuff in Jericho

A) The Lord was setting up a principle of first fruits with his people

B) This was the covenant the Lord had established - with his people.

C) Look back at Chapter 6:24 ²⁴ But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

D) Jericho was the 1st city in the land to be conquered- In the first city the Lord was instilling this principle that the first of everything belongs to him

E) Achan broke the Covenant and his sin affected everyone else

Now in spite of Achan's sin there were some other things that led to their defeat.

A) Problem #2 V.3 Self Confidence among the men of Israel !

B) Joshua once again send out spies – following a pattern that He set up in Ch.2

1) Now Ai= small heap /hill top city 1700 ft above sea level/ It was a small & insignificant city especially in comparison to Jericho !

C) Because of the smallness of the city the spies come back v.3 they tell Joshua the city is small – we don't need everyone –

It was logical & rational thinking – But it was all wrong

D) In a Subtle way it assumed that they had something to do w/ the battle at Jericho –

1) I think it is very possible an attitude had developed of we just wiped out the mighty city of Jericho why waste the whole armies time on this little city

E) But we need to note this because there is a tendency in our lives to get over confident after a great spiritual victory !

“Mark this lesson well in your Christian life: there is no experience in Christian living so full of Danger as the Flush of Victory. There is no moment so perilous as when for the first time a man has experienced deliverance from sin. At such times there is the tendency to be filled w/ pride & boast in our ARM that has saved us.” Redpath

A) This is one of the Problems w/ the “ Christian self help programs “they are prone to self confidence” *Look what I did/ I overcame “*

B) But a major point of Christianity is in realizing that I couldn't do it but look what God has done for me/ in me & through me !

C) Paul said –*Not Confidence in my Flesh* – but Confidence in my God !!!
So this was the first problem self confidence !

Problem #3 is the by product of the #2 – Lack of Prayer

A) When I am self confident the first thing to go is my prayer life .

B) That can often happen when we find ourselves in a situation that we perceive to be small / that I think I can handle or take care of !

1) We have to be so careful not to speak / launch out / offer counsel / until we have first prayed & listened to the Lord !

C) I suggest to you that if Joshua would have sought the Lord – the way he did before Jericho – if he went looking for his Commander
He would have been told – there is sin in the camp –
Don't proceed until it is dealt w/

D) But Joshua forgot to Pray: Prayer is a mark of our Dependency

E) Our leadership here: We will spend weeks – sometimes months in prayer and fasting before we make a decision on something.

1) Can do more than pray – shouldn't do anything until we've prayed

Question: Why are men in particular so prone to not pray?

Well after this defeat - Joshua is distraught – He is like Lord how could you allow this to happen?

Abandoned us

A) I love the Lord's response to Joshua here - v.10 *So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face?"*

B) Kids – My dad - Stop your crying before I give you something to Cry about –

1) Lesson: Time to CRY – TIME TO ACT –

C) This was a time to Act – This was a time to do something – Deal with the sin.

1) God says get up – Tell him the problem and how do deal with it

¹¹ Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. ¹² Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs 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.

God says there is sin in the camp that needs to be dealt with

A) Your sin will always find you out – The Couple – Surprise wedding shower

B) Achan's sin is being exposed – Can't hide it from God – Numbers 32:23 Your sin will find you out.

C) God doesn't expose because of grace – time to repent – but know this – if you don't YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT

D) God says there is sin in the camp that needs to be dealt with – here is how we are going to EXPOSE IT AND DEAL WITH IT

¹³ Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.'" – Before moving forward – have to deal with the sin

God will say the same thing to us – Stagnate place in our lives – Area of sin that needs to be dealt with – Sin of Commission = doing what know ..wrong

A) Sin of Omission – Not doing what you know is right – To him who knows the right thing to do sin

B) Can't move forward in an area – until you take that step of faith in obedience to the Lord - sto

¹⁴ In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. ¹⁵ Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.'

So the Lord institutes the plan.

¹⁶ So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. ¹⁷ He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. ¹⁸ Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

How did this happen? Not told for sure.

A) It's possible that Joshua or the high priest used the Urim and Thummim (Exodus 28:30).

B) It is commonly thought that the Urim and Thummim were stones drawn from a pouch, one indicating "yes" and the other "no."

C)By asking, “Is this the tribe/clan/family/household?” and receiving a yes or no answer, an individual from all Israel could be identified.

¹⁹ Now Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me.”

Joshua says something interesting here: Give glory to God by confessing the Sin

A)The confession of sin brings glory to God in several ways.

- **Confession of sin recognizes God’s omniscience.**
- **Confession of sin recognizes God’s righteousness.**
- **Confession of sin recognizes God’s authority.**
- **Confession of sin recognizes God’s judgments.**
- **Confession of sin demonstrates a desire to be in a right relationship and fellowship with God.**

B)Interesting that in times of Revival – when God’s spirit is moving powerful over a church or community –

1)A readiness in Confession of sin is usually one of the characteristics

C)So Joshua tells Achan to Confess V.20

²⁰ And Achan answered Joshua and said, “Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: ²¹ When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”

At the root of Achan’s sin was Covetousness – wanting something that didn’t belong to him – and then taking it.

Question: How does our Western Culture in USA contribute to the sin of Covetousness? How do you avoid falling into that trap?

²² So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it.

²³ And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. ²⁴ Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his

oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

Answer a couple of questions before we move on
A)#1 If Achan Confessed – why was he killed?

B)He didn’t confess until he was caught – which showed his hardness of heart.

C)Imagine the long process as each tribe was brought forth – Yes – no / Yes no

D)Then his tribe – then all the families in that tribe – then it was his family that was singled out

E)How did he stay calm through all that ?

“The confession he made was complete, but it was worthless. The reason of its worthlessness lay in the fact that it was never made until there was no escape.” (Morgan)

2nd Question: Why such a harsh punishment?

A)Principle of first precedence – Sometimes in the history of the people of Israel and the History of the church

B)God would use a situation to set a precedence – New Land – new era – New time – I want obedience and Purity

C)NT in the Early Church Ananias and Saphira – Lied to the Holy Spirit – struck dead – GOD NEVER DID THAT AGAIN

D)He doesn’t do that today. Ever made a promise to God you didn’t keep?

I have more than once – Still here right?

3rd Question: Why was his family punished too?

A)Two answers to that – One thought is they no doubt knew what he did and where it was hidden

B)A spoil that big buried under the tent – too large to Hide- SO God would be totally justified for Killing them – being complicate in his sin

1) Complicity in hiding his sin

C) But I don't think they were killed- I think they watched as Achan was stoned to death and the spoil was burned –

1) Notice the text again on the screen -and notice the singularity to the punishment

²⁴ Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; Note that – they stoned him

But wait you say: and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

A) The question is who or what was burned and stoned – Some commentators think the them is in reference to his stuff and animals – not his kids

B) Others think – it is all of the above: Including the kids – they were killed as well for being complicit in his sin

C) But notice the last verse: V.26 ²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day.

D) They set up a memorial – of stones – a reminder – this is what happens to those who don't take the covenant of God seriously

So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

A) The Valley of Achor = the Valley of Trouble

B) Disobedience to God always results in trouble – in death to something or to Someone

C) Now in the next Chapter we are going to see that the Lord leads the children of Israel to another Valley – The Answer for the troubling

After dealing with the Sin – The Result is Israel experiences a 4-fold newness in their relationship with God.

1st New Confidence: Now the LORD said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I

have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. 2 And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king.

2nd New Blessings

Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves.

A) If Achan would have just trusted God and waited on God – there was blessings galore waiting for him in the promise land.

3rd New Direction

Lay an ambush for the city behind it 3 So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night.

A) God didn't tell them to march around Ai – no he had a new battle strategy

B) That is the Joy of following God – Jesus rarely healed people the same way twice. – Blind touched – another spit – another mud – another – spoke

C) Same is true in our lives – New seasons – New direction – God always seeks to keep us in that place – Antenna up directed by him

So God tells Joshua to set an Ambush – V.4- 17 tell us what happened

⁴ And he commanded them, saying: "Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready.

⁵ Then I and all the people who *are* with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them. ⁶ For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, '*They are* fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. ⁷ Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. ⁸ And it will be, when you have taken the city, *that* you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. See, I have commanded you."

#4 A New Obedience V.9-28

⁹ Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people. ¹⁰ Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. ¹¹ And all

the people of war who *were* with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley *lay* between them and Ai. ¹² So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. ¹³ And when they had set the people, all the army that *was* on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

¹⁴ Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw *it*, that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city. ¹⁵ And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. ¹⁶ So all the people who *were* in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. ¹⁷ There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel

So the city is left unprotected – vulnerable

¹⁸ Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Stretch out the spear that *is* in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.” And Joshua stretched out the spear that *was* in his hand toward the city. ¹⁹ So *those in* ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. ²⁰ And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.

²¹ Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. ²² Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape. ²³ But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

²⁴ And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. ²⁵ So it was *that* all who fell that day, both men and women, *were*

twelve thousand—all the people of Ai. ²⁶ For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. ²⁷ Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua. ²⁸ So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. ²⁹ And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones *that remains* to this day.

Complete Victory

What happens next is interesting and a beautiful picture

³⁰ Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, ³¹ as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: “an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron *tool*.” And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³² And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. ³³ Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

So Joshua has all the people assemble themselves in this Valley between these two MTs – Mt Ebal and MT Gerizim

A) Why did they do this- the Lord instructed Moses – Wrote it down in the book of Deuteronomy 27

When you cross over the Jordan travel to the Valley of Shechem and ½ the tribes were to stand before Mt. Ebal & the other ½ was to stand before Mt. Gerizim

B)Ebal = Mt. Of Cursing / & Gerizim = Mt. Of blessing

1)So all the people were assembled before these 2 Mts. & the Priest & the Levites stood in the middle of the valley w/ the Ark of God !

C)It was there that Joshua read from the law the curses that accompanied disobedience & the blessings that followed Obedience! Ch.27-28

D)The whole history of Israel would be summed up by this picture – times of blessing for obeying the law
1)Times of cursing for disobeying the law

E)Quite frankly their times of cursing far outweighed their times of blessing

But there is one element in this picture I don't want you to miss – the Lord was sending a message to them and us.

A)Now notice V.30 again – Where did Joshua build the Altar? Which MT? Ebal –

B)Was Ebal the MT of blessing? No it was the Altar of Cursing – the Altar pointed to sin – remedy of sin

C)Pointed to God's Judgment – the judgment for sin is death

D)But the Altar also pointed to God's provision for man's sin

1)Sin could be forgiven through a Sacrifice – Substitute for our sin

Notice V.31 An altar of whole stones – not chipped – not partial -not anything you can find – no specific – whole stones

A)Whole = purity – and perfection

B)Jesus would come as the Perfect and whole lamb of God – who would give himself as a substitute for the sin of mankind

C)Took the curse upon himself – So that we could be saved and forgiven

Also note v.31 it was to be an altar which *no man has wielded an iron tool.*"

A)The altar was to be untouched by any tool or human effort !

B)It was a simple altar not one that was decorated or designed by human hands

1)Once again it speaks to us of the Sacrifice of Christ

C)No human effort was to be associated w/ the sacrifice lest sinners think they had something to do w/ their salvation Eph. 2:8,9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

D)It was the complete Negation of all Humanism- A Complete denial of that thought that humans can do anything for it or add anything to it

Listen no one is going to be in Heaven saying *look what I did ! I made it ! I found it ! I conquered this or that !*

A)Instead all crying *Worthy is the Lamb!*

B)I love that on the heels of this chapter where there is the defeat because of sin

We are pointed in Chapter 8 to the one who would come pay the price

C)Blessings of MT Gerizim are not ours because of our obedience but because of His obedience

D)We rest in and rejoice in tonight – Amen