

## “JOSHUA – Devastating Effects of Hidden Sin” (7.16.17)

Context | So how we got here this morning:

- ✚ God led his people into the promised land. Told Joshua to go walk in water which is at flood stage, Joshua obeyed & God stopped the water so they could cross.
- ✚ Little later, they encounter a BIG CITY w-a BIG WALL that was a BIG PROBLEM God gives them a crazy battle plan which they obey & have supernatural victory.
- ✚ Story after story of awesome/supernatural victories.
  - This is the time to be most careful = after spiritual victories and mountain top experiences is a very dangerous time.
  - When we are most confident we can handle any battle that comes our way is when we suffer our greatest defeats.
  - (Q) Proverbs 16:18, *Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.*
  - Confidence is a good thing **IBUT ONLY IF** our confidence is in the Lord.

Let's jump into the Book of Joshua:

### 1. The Battle of Ai (*unexpected outcome*)

A. ® Joshua 7: 1-5 or p. 171

1. Compared w/the great city of Jericho – the **small defenseless city of Ai** was hardly impressive. Spies = don't weary entire army!
2. Joshua consented & sent 3,000 men up to conquer the city of Ai.
3. Guess what happened – the **small defenseless city of Ai** totally routed the Hebrew army leaving 36 men dead.
4. v. 5 says the ♥'s of the Hebrew warriors “melted & became like water.”

B. ® Joshua 7: 6-9

1. Joshua instantly goes into 'WHY GOD WHY MODE' ...
2. When life hits hard we sometimes go into a WHY mode, straight to God.. they didn't look at themselves, they went straight to blaming and asking God why...
3. In crisis, one of the healthiest most critical questions to ask ourselves is "God what do you need be learn – what do you need me to change in my life."

I'm intrigued by God's direct answer (powerfully honest)

C. ® Joshua 7: 10-12

1. God is not to blame—we are to blame when there is sin that is present and needs to be honestly dealt with and cleaned up...
2. Prayer is always the correct response in times of trouble BUT please understand prayer will not avail UNTIL sin has been authentically dealt with.

✚ ® Psalm 66: 18 or p. 442

D. Have you noticed how we water-down (minimize our sins) as we refer to them?

- **Slip-up.** The floor was wet and someone slipped. Or they stepped on a grape in the floor and slipped and fell.
- **Area of opportunity.** It's not a sin at all, just an opportunity to trust Jesus more!
- **Hiccup.** Maybe you can drink some water while holding your nose and the problem will go away.
- **Misstep.** He was going up the stairs and he missed a step.
- **Blunder.** He's not sinning. He's just a blunderer, like the lovable grandpa on a bad sitcom.
- **Misguided.** He didn't sin. He was misguided. So he's a victim of an unnamed bad guide.

- **Lapse in judgement.** He didn't sin. His judgement lapsed. Did he forget to renew his Good Judgment software license?
- ✚ These terms don't fool anyone, least of all unbelievers. **Just say "sin" like the Bible says "sin."** *No one is surprised when sinners sin.* Christ died for sin.

**Bible defines sin** in these direct terms:

"Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it."

E. God's instructions for finding the guilty person (**can you imagine**).

1. ® Joshua 7: 13-15

2. Can you imagine what it was like for the nation of Israel as the night before?

✚ **So many praying...feeling of dread** being moments away from having to deal with hard things (*been there the night before church discipline was administered*)

3. I wonder what the guilty person did that night in his tent?

✚ ... was he sweating bullets and full of regret? Or was he justifying? It's only a few dollars, it's just a couple of items, after all I rushed in and did all the hard work, I'm not that bad, I'm a good person, I'm not like Rahab the prostitute and He saved her... it's just a few bucks, it's not like I am really cheating on him, it's not like I get drunk every night, but we really do love each other so it's ok...

4. **This is what I believe happened in the quietness of that tent:**

✚ **2<sup>nd</sup> guessing:** I'm pretty sure that man would have walked right past that stack of loot if he'd have taken the time to consider the fine print that was figuratively scrawled into the bottom of that gold brick. **But he took what he wanted without ever realizing that the true cost of his "purchase" would include his life and family.**

✚ **Satan is a master salesman:** He taps into our unbridled cravings and conceals the true costs. And too often, we choose to satisfy self-centered longings with His

promises of imaginary benefits. We sign on the dotted line, and before the ink dries, it's often too late to undo the damage.

F. **Don't be caught off guard** – schemes of the devil are very obvious:

1. When General George Patton counter-attacked Field Marshal Rommel in World War II, Patton is reported to have shouted in the thick of battle, "I read your book, Rommel! I read your book!" He knew the German leader's strategy and planned his moves accordingly.

2. **We can know the same about the Devil.**

✚ **® II Corinthians 2: 9-11 or p. 883**

- ✓ **We know Satan will attack weak spots first.** Watch for his tricks. You can know what to expect. Expect to be tempted by the Devil. Forty days of fasting left Jesus famished, so Satan began with the topic of bread. Jesus' stomach was empty, so to the stomach Satan turned.
- ✓ **Where are you empty?** Are you hungry for attention, craving success, longing for intimacy? Be aware of your weaknesses. Bring them to God before Satan brings them to you!

Let's finish the biblical story:

G. **® Joshua 7: 19-21**

✚ **Here's a hard reality that Achan had to learn first hand:**

God's timeline is always better than ours.

✚ **® Joshua 8: 1-2**

- ✓ *If he would have waited just a day or two*, he would have gotten so much more. When we start telling God what we want and when we want it, **it takes the control out of His hands and we take it on ourselves.**
- ✓ Achan had watched many God moments and blessings but he still chose to do it his way.
- ✓ How many of you have called out to God about a job, relationship, financial decision, but when your answer doesn't come through the way you want, you decide to do it your way anyway, to do what you need to do to make it happen.

God's timeline *is always better* than ours.

## II. Two Tips (to keeping your life clean before God):

### A. 1<sup>st</sup> tip = UNCOVER IT

1. Keep it hidden and it will keep control. Find someone you know love and trust and respect, and who will help you get through it.

 Pastor and author John Ortberg (writes of the power of no-secret friendships):

One of the most important moments of my spiritual life was when I sat down with a longtime friend and said, "I don't want to have any secrets anymore."

I told him everything I was most ashamed of. I told him about my jealousies, my cowardice, how I hurt my wife with my anger. I told him about my history with money and my history with sex. I told him about deceit and regrets that keep me up at night. I felt vulnerable because I was afraid that I was going to lose connection with him.

Much to my surprise, he did not even look away.  
I will never forget his next words.

"John," he said. "I have never loved you more than I love you right now." The very truth about me that I thought would drive him away became a bond that drew us closer together. He then went on to speak with me about secrets he had been carrying

2. ® Proverbs 28: 13 or p. 50
3. Achan confesses his sin, **but does not repent from it.** He only confessed after he was caught. Like other men in the Bible who confessed their sins but not in real repentance; Pharaoh, Balaam, Judas.
  - a. God's way to handle sin is not to cover it up but to be honest and open and to confess them to the Lord. God wants us to tell Him the truth He already knows. God can bless a person who handles their sin biblically.
  - b. The person who hides his sins will never prosper, but will face God's judgment.
  - c. TRUTH IS: we'll all confess our sins one way or another...
  - d. ® Philippians 2: 9-11 or p. 901

## B. 2<sup>nd</sup> tip = **GET RID OF IT-DESTROY IT**

✚ Deal with it. If it is anywhere in your life, it will still tempt you, call to you. It isn't enough to just confess it. Have to deal with it. You can't keep it in the dark corners of your tent, house, or heart.

- ✓ Denny in Tucson (over 250,000 pornographic materials down-loaded)
- ✓ He burned his hard drive

✚ ® Proverbs 26: 11-12 or p. 500

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✚ ® Ephesians 4: 20-29 or p. 897

- ✓ I spent time with a brother this week who decided to get rid of his cable **(wasting too much time)** he smiled and said, I started enjoying scripture at night when I was mindlessly watching tv.

Fruit of repentance – redeeming your life from sin.

Hosea 2: 15 or p. 680

Valley of Trouble (Achor – Achan) was transformed to a 'Gateway of Hope.'