

“The Accursed Things”

Joshua chapter 7

Scripture Ref: Joshua 6:18-19; 1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 9:6-8; 1 Cor 5:6; John 8:36

1. **PAY ATTENTION: What was revealed....**
 - a. ... about God?
 - b. ... about yourself?
 - c. How will you apply what you learned?
2. **One of the biggest questions that Christians deal with is sin in our lives...**
 - a. If you sin – do you go to hell? Well, we live in this age of grace and we believe that our sins are forgiven...
 - b. So – is there any real repercussion to our sin?
 - c. Tonight, we'll find out...

Josh 6:27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

(Summarize the account – to Joshua mourning... pick up @ v6)

7:1 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?"**

The intense scene of mourning here is not that thirty six men died...

- d. **The sense of grief and concern is that God had abandoned them**
 - e. **Fact is – if God was not with them, there was no way that they could successfully complete their missions**
 - f. **Jericho had been a tremendous victory – a supernatural victory**
 - g. **And on the heels of this tremendous victory, came a stunning defeat by a smaller and weaker people.**
 - h. **That would be like stepping into a ring and knocking out Evander Holyfield – then getting tanked by Pee-Wee Herman.**
3. **Something had happened – Joshua knew it – God had withdrawn His presence from them - and he did the exact right thing as a leader – he took it to the Lord.**

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**

4. **Now we need to stop right here and pay attention – when we are defeated, when we are whipped, trampled by the enemy,**
- a. **Do we look at God and say “how could you let this happen?”**
 - b. **There is something that we need to understand -**
 - c. **The problem was not with God – the problem is NEVER with God...**
 - d. **the problem was with Israel.**
 - e. **God removed his protection – God removed His power – but He did it because of a transgression on the part of Israel.**
5. **Achan’s sin: He did this because Israel had taken some of the accursed things**
6. **Remember that the spoils of Jericho were to be consecrated or set apart for the Lord...**

Josh 6:18-19

18 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. 19 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."

7. **We should understand what this sin was... #1...**
- a. **Someone in Israel took things that were devoted to God, devoted either by their giving to His tabernacle, or by their complete destruction.**

- b. One man stole from God, in the same way we steal from Him when we do not give Him what he directs us to give.
 - c. The New Testament teaches us in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 that giving should be *regular and proportional*
 - d. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8....that it should be generous, purposeful, and cheerful
 - e. When we don't give as God directs us, we must regard it as sin and repent of it
8. #2 - Secret sin
- a. The example is a man who coveted, took something, and hid it, and it had an impact on the whole operation.
 - b. The application for us – is there some secret sin in our life...
 - c. Something we covet – something we know is accursed, we know is sin, yet we really want it.
9. What is it?
- a. Might be taking something that does not belong to us
 - b. Man: Looking at pornography
 - c. Woman: Cultivating relationships with other men on the internet – or coveting another woman's husband
 - d. That is secret sin – something that our eyes or our flesh really desires... we want it –
 - e. we know it's wrong – but maybe we can hide it and no one will know!
10. But the thing is, you can't hide anything from God... And Joshua knows this – so he asks God – **SHOW ME! For your names sake!**

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.**

11. If you are experiencing some defeat, if the enemy is conquering you, if you are being beat up and driven back down the mountain...
- a. Maybe it's time to look at our lives and ask ourselves – “Am I hiding an accursed thing”
 - b. Maybe it's time to ask the Lord – “Lord, show me! For your names sake!”
12. Difficult thing to realize – the sin of one man (and his family) affected the whole nation...

1 Corinthians 5:6 *Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*

(so God says...) **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."**

13. Major point – “you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you”

- a. **Translation: We cannot expect to walk in the power of God, and stand before our enemies, when we are walking in disobedience to God!**
- b. **But this is not a permanent status – “until you take away the accursed thing from among you”**

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."**

14. What is God telling us? If there is sin in your life – deal with it! Confess it... Remove it!

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 Zarahites; and he brought the family of the Zarahites 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. **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."**

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." **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.

15. This may seem like a harsh punishment, but in truth the very survival of the children of Israel was at stake.

- a. **Joshua hit the nail on the head – once the other nations heard that the Lord was no longer with them, they would come after Israel and destroy them.**
- b. **In order for the power of God to be restored in their midst, the sin had to be dealt with and Achan judged.**
- c. **(Note: It's debatable whether his family was also stoned, or only brought to the valley to observe the judgment)**

16. To me this is one of the most difficult things for man to accept –

- a. **That there is right and wrong**
- b. **That God is the one who determines what is sin and what is not**
- c. **that we are accountable to God for our actions**

17. For the person who rejects God – there will be an accounting at the Great White Throne

- a. **But for the Christian – we have to come to terms with the fact that we cannot have the power of God in our lives if there are “accursed things” in our life.**
- b. **Some Christians struggle with this fact, and try to rationalize it away, and attempt to ‘covet accursed things’ while seeking to outwardly appear to live for God.**
- c. **Friends – God knows it's there – HIS FAMILY knew it was there...**
- d. **God will expose it. Usually at an inopportune time!**
- e. **Not because He wants to hurt you – on the contrary – God knows that accursed things will bring you nothing but pain and suffering**
- f. **He wants to free you!**

John 8:36 *Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*