

Joshua 7:10-26

“A door of hope in the Valley of trouble”

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I. Intro

In 1 Cor. 10:11 we read that with regards to the stories in the O.T. that, *“all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”* The lessons of Joshua as we are as dependent or even more so upon the Lord after a great victory as we are after a great defeat. Any victory in our life is solely based upon the presence and power of God on our behalf. With that truth in hand we realize that Israel was as guilty of touching the accursed things as was Achan in as much as they had slipped into thinking they were some how responsible or entitled to the victory. Both touched the glory of the Lord Achan grieving the Spirit Joshua quenching the Spirit. Our sin is not hidden we are just running at of room as Paul wrote to Romans 2:4 *“do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”*

An examination of this section with a broader view to all the Old Testament reveals a very unfortunate pattern:

- a. First came God’s abundant unrestrained blessings upon an undeserving people. He shows Himself strong and gracious by pouring out His goodness upon His people.
- b. But then His blessed people think that they don’t need Him any longer and turn aside to their own sinful pursuits which bring forth His judgment, which turns them back to His grace.

Sin will never be tolerated by God in our life and this story is as much a proclamation of hope as it is judgment. Sin brings judgment but with confession it brings the hope of restoration and the outpouring of God's grace.

II. Vs. 10-15 Get up

Vs. 10-11 **The truth was God had not failed the nation but the nation had failed God.** That may not seem to be good news but it is for if it was God who has failed us then there is nothing we can do about it and of course God can not fail us. And sense it is us who has failed Him and He is desirous to restore us this is an easy fix if we are willing. “*Josh, get up*”, God says. Why? Because we don't need to grovel and beg Him to do what His heart is all along and that is to **restore, repair and renew** that which has separated us from receiving His love. **Friends listen up we often think when things aren't going right that we need to pray to change God's heart but the truth is that what needs to change isn't God's heart it is our heart.**

“**They**” sinned God said not just Achan as a little leaven had leavened the whole lump. **Israel's sin was that they tolerated Achan's compromise, as did the rest of the tribes.** To get a picture of this all we need to look at is our own society in which though we may not practice specific sin we tolerate them as a society. Achan had taken the things that were dedicated to the Lord for his own personal consumption. According to Leviticus (22:14, 27:15, 27:19, and 27:31) if you wanted to keep something that belonged to God, you had to pay a 20% (one-fifth) penalty which interestingly enough was the same amount required for restitution in a theft according (Leviticus 6:4-5).

There are a lot of folks who are like Joshua here as they lay face down in their problems instead up getting up and fessing up to them. God tells them that until they deal with the sin in their camp they won't be able to stand before their enemies because God won't be standing with

them. That's the nature of sin, be that the sin that grieves the Spirit or quenches the Spirit you can bet on the fact that such compromise will result in the loss of two things:

1. **Our ability to over come the enemies of our faith.** We have three enemies of our faith, satan, the world system and our flesh.
2. **We won't sense His presence around us.** He won't be around us anymore until we deal with that which his grieved or quenched His Spirit.

There is no quicker way to lose God's presence and power in our lives then to not deal with those things that have removed us from His presence and power. So many relationships and Churches wonder why they are no longer sensing His presence and power in their service towards Him and instead of asking the Lord, "*Father, are we in some way grieving you by our actions and attitudes? Dad is our arrogance and pride quenching the work you desire to do in and through us?*" **They see some program as a way of attracting the people to supersede the effects of grieving or quenching the Spirit,** "*Oh we aren't grieving the Spirit, were not quenching Him, see look at all the numbers of programs and people we have.*" Let us not fall into thinking that but rather humbly ask ourselves, "*Lord is there anything in my life that is hindering the Your presence and power in my life.*" The difference between a neighbor kid and your own child, is we don't let our children get away with the stuff the neighbor kids get away with because you love them! **God' hold's back His presence, power and provision in our lives so that we would recognize that we have grieved or quenched His Spirit and seek to restore our fellowship with Him.**

Vs. 12-13 In chapter 6:27 we were told that "*The Lord was with Joshua*" now 13 verses later we are told that because of this sin that the Lord won't "*be with them anymore, unless they destroy the accursed from among them.*" **Nothing ought to grip our heart more than the loss of the**

presence of God in our hearts from grieving or quenching the Spirit. The hope and fate of the nation hinged upon the word “**UNLESS**” which was a door of hope in a valley of trouble! They must rid themselves of the idols of the people of Jericho; God is no respecter of persons he judges fairly. Self deception leads us to believe that we can enjoy the idols of this world with out it affecting us as it does the rest of the world?

Notice that Israel could not fight in God’s power and presence unless they walked in obedience to God and neither can we. **It is sobering to realize that a body in sin has no power before their enemies.** But it is wonderful to realize that once the sin has been dealt with, God’s power can again flow in our Christian life.

Vs. 14-15 Five times in these verse God in telling Joshua uses the word “accursed”. The nation had sanctified themselves prior to crossing the Jordan in 3:5 before they faced Jericho but now they found out that there was an enemy in their own camp. Achan had stole from God then lied about it, something that we see in Acts chapter 5 with Ananias and his wife Saphira when they keep back a part of the proceeds of from selling their land but acted as if they had given it all to the Lord. **We can never obtain all of God’s inheritance as long as we are going after the forbidden pleasures of sin for a season!** I wonder upon hearing this if Achan got any sleep that evening as they were preparing themselves to meet with the Lord for the purpose of discovering hidden sin?

In Numbers 32:23 God spoke through Moses saying, “*If you have sinned against the Lord; be sure your sin will find you out.*” We can fall into the trap that thinks that we can hide our sin form the Lord but we fail to remember that the Lord God is all knowing and every where present. **The only place we can hide our sin is in the tomb of Christ so His blood can wash as white as snow!** As each tribe came forward, then each family of the tribe, then each household of

the family and finally each man in the family. What this suggests to me was that there were far more folks that the Lord revealed were innocent than the Lord defended than the “Old trouble” that was found with the accursed things. We don’t need to defend ourselves the Lord will do that for us as He unveils the hidden things of the heart.

III. Vs. 16-21 Time to get right

Vs. 16-18 Achan was “*taken*” because he had taken! Can you imagine watching this whole scene if you were Achan as the tribe you are from is chosen then the family in that tribe, then the household and finally your name is called out? **We get a good picture of Achan’s heart here as he didn’t volunteer his confession he waited until his sin found him out.** Achan wasn’t sorry for his sin he was sorry he was caught which is not repentance. Taken the accursed things felt good with Achan but he didn’t weigh the consequences; they didn’t seem worth it after he was found out. In Hebrews 11:25 speaking of Moses the author writes that Moses “choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin”. Sin is always pleasurable but it is only for a season and the end always leads to death. In Jeremiah 17:9-10 we read that “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart; I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.*” Then we are told by the Lord in Jeremiah 23:24 “*Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?*” says the Lord; “*Do I not fill heaven and earth?*” says the Lord.” In Jeremiah 16: 17 the Lord says, “*My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from Me, nor is their sin concealed from My eyes*”.

As Achan stood before Joshua he didn’t say, “***You idiot, you trouble maker***”! No he called to him “My son”. If we could only hear our Lord call out to us in our sin and failure with the words “My Son, My daughter” not you stupid idiot, perhaps we would like the prodigal come

running to our Father's love and willingness to forgive all our sin. This is the picture of a grieving God who longs for us to come back to Him. In Achan's response we see his attempt to justify his actions by calling the garment, gold and silver as "*spoils*" he is saying that I only took what in any other circumstance would have been ok to have. We are all prone in changing the name of our sin to make it sound a little better aren't we? "*I'm not gossiping, why I'm just sharing my opinion!*" And like all our sin Achan's began when he saw and didn't deal with his own heart in what he saw and chose rather to take and then hide what he took. That is always the nature of sin isn't it, we see, take and then hide. According to a report by Cambridge university 60% - 70% of all crime is done so between the hours of 4 PM to 4 AM. the reason for this is that folks think that if it is dark they can hide what they are doing. John tells us in 1 John 2:16 that "*all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.*" Did you notice that it is the "*lust of the eyes*" and that what Achan **SAW** he took? Our society seems to be becoming more and more enamored with what our eyes see and less with what our ear hears. Churches have picked up on this and have offered more dramatic presentations instead of simple teaching of the word. Romans 10:17 tells us that "*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" And then Hebrews 11:1 says that "*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" We need to get back to becoming a people who learns to listen and not just be entertained by watching?

Vs. 19-21 How valuable was that Babylonian garment, silver and gold when compared to the 36 men that died because of Achan's sin? The same is true when you weigh the price of sin's pleasure with the loss of life. That drink, that drug, that adulterous relationship placed opposite upon the scales of the families and lives it has destroyed. **Oh if we would only feel as bad about the sin prior to committing it as we do after we have done it!**

IV. Vs. 22-26 The Valley of trouble

Vs. 22-26 As we saw when we seek to cover up our sin rest assured it will always be found out but that's not all. When you seek to cover your sin you can bet it will cause those close around you "trouble" (Achan) as well.

Twice in these final verses Joshua references the "*Valley of Achor*" (verses 24, 26) or the literally the "*Valley of trouble*"? The trouble that old "troublesome" Achan brought upon himself, his family and His nation became a monument of stones. If you cross reference the Valley of Achor you will find some interesting things. In Isaiah 65:10 we are told that the "*Valley of Achor is a place for herds to lie down, for My people who have sought Me.*" And in Hosea 2:15 we are told that in Israel "*the Valley of Achor will be as a door of hope; She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth*". **The place of trouble becoming the place where herds lie down, a place where God's people seek Him? A place of trouble becoming the door of hope where fresh worship is heard?** How does a troubled place where we were "rocked" because of our sin become such a place where we find rest, seek the Lord, a door of hope and a place of worship? I suggest it is to be found when we stop trying to hide our sins and start confessing them. Listen to how John put it in 1 John 1:8-9 "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" Isaiah said as much to a rebellious nation when in Isaiah 1:18-19 the Lord said "*Come now, and let us reason together, Says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land*". The hope of repentance is truth of forgiveness where by peace will flood your heart and you will experience a renewed worship.

The heap of stones in the valley would remind the people of two things:

1. The holiness of God and what happens when people don't heed God's word.
2. The love of God that he would restore those who have fallen if they will be turn from their sins.

When you surrender to the Lord, no defeat is permanent and no mistake is beyond remedy. Even

the “*Valley of Trouble*” can become a “*door of hope.*”