

The Sin Of Achan

- *Joshua 7:1-26*

- **We have begun a New Year & we had a great time Wednesday night just talking about the blessings of God & how He has proven Himself over the past year.**
- **And of course, this has been on my mind for a couple weeks now, and I want God to continue to bless & continue to open doors in 2015, Amen?**
 - One of the great things about a New Year is it is like having a clean slate, a fresh beginning, a new start if you will.
 - One of the challenges & things that many avoid doing is bringing anything negative into the New Year, hence many people make resolutions for the coming year to make some significant changes in their life.
 - Well as we begin a New Year, I want us to examine ourselves this morning & allow God to search our heart and as the Psalmist says, and “See if there be any wicked way in me.”
- **A couple months ago, I preached a sermon to you about Conquering the Jericho in Your Life, and we walked through the miraculous deliverance of Jericho in a most unique way.**
 - God showed His people that with God on their side, NOTHING was impossible. God gave His people the plan for them to put in motion & God expected them to follow in complete obedience; and when they did, God wrought the victory.
- **If you will remember, towards the end of chapter 6, God spared the life of one woman of Jericho by the name of Rahab, but everything else was to be completely destroyed & put to death.**
 - Every inhabitant was to be destroyed.
 - Every valuable thing was to be given back to the Lord. They were not to keep anything for themselves.
 - It was a custom that when an army conquered a land, they would take of the spoils of the land as their payment, this was their reward for victory if you will.
 - But not in this case. God was specific that nothing should be taken for personal gain b/c this victory was not at their hands, it was at the hands of God.
 - After everything was recovered, then the city was to be burned.
 - If this law was broken, the entire nation of Israel would suffer.
 - This is where we pick up in our scripture this morning.
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
- **In the very first verse of chapter 7 the Bible tells us that Achan committed a trespass in taking of the accursed thing & God was angry with Israel. The thing is, nobody had a clue that Achan had taken anything or that God was angry. But soon, both would be revealed.**
- **The Bible goes on to say that Joshua sent out men from Jericho to scout out a little country called Ai as they sought for their next victory.**
 - Now Ai was at the top of a mountain & was very difficult to get to ... especially with a large group of people. This country was nothing compared to Jericho, so the spies recommended that most of the troops remain behind & rest.
 - The Bible makes quick work of the people of Ai because it says that the men of Jericho went up, and then they fled, less 36 men who were killed.

- Joshua could not understand how God had brought them to this point & then such a small country would be allowed to overthrow them. That's when God delivered the message that there was sin in the camp & it must be destroyed.
- **After a unique process of determining who was guilty, Joshua carried out the punishment for Achan & his family.**
 - They took Achan and his family and his livestock to a place called Achor-which comes from the same root and means, "a place of trouble" and Israel executed God's justice. After stoning Achan and his family-who had certainly helped him conceal his sin-they and their possessions were burned in accordance with God's command. Then their graves were marked by memorial stones so that no one would forget.
 - Does Achan's sentence shock you? Does it seem extreme? Well, remember, there were 36 widows in camp because of this one man's disobedience.
 - God defines sin, not us. He sets the standard, not our culture. All sin is against Him, and with this incident He was teaching His chosen people this vital principle. We too can learn from this principle today.

1. Sin Is A Process

- Achan didn't just walk in and steal those things on a whim no more than we do some of the things that we do. Typically there is a process that takes place that leads to a downward spiral to sin.

a. His Sin Began With Being Dissatisfied

- i. God had promised His people that He would lead them into a new land of great wealth & provision. This would be a place where each family could take of their own land & have their own place.
- ii. But they were not there yet & Achan became dissatisfied & impatient in waiting for the promises of God.
 - 1. God had kept His Word & had provided for His people all along the way.
 - 2. He had provided manna for them each & every morning.
 - 3. The Bible specifically says that God even kept their clothes from wearing out.
- iii. And though God met their needs, for Achan this wasn't enough.
- iv. The ironic thing about the situation is this, what was Achan going to do with the things that he stole?
 - 1. v.21 - : When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them;"
 - 2. What is he going to do with a Babylonian garment? If he wears it or is even seen with it, the people are going to know where it came from.
 - 3. The silver & gold that he took was a small amount compared to what God was prepared to give them in the next battle.
- v. What God wanted from Achan, and what He still wants from us today, is to seek Him first, and all the other things will fall into line. But Achan thought that God's will could wait.
 - 1. Like Adam & Eve of old, he became discontent with the provision of God & wanted more. Their desire for more led them to disobedience and sin.

b. Then It Led To Coveting What Was Not His.

- i. Look at how quickly sin can take us from a thought to changing our attitude.

- ii. I don't know what kind of man Achan was, but I know that just a few days earlier he was a part of the group that marched around the city 7 times when God brought down the walls.
 1. He had seen the promises of God revealed.
 2. He had been a witness to the miraculous power of God.
 3. But somewhere along the line, following God was not enough.
- iii. While all of the rest of the army was careful to follow every command of God, Achan is sneaking around hoarding possessions for himself b/c he desired the possessions more than he did God's will.
 1. What a tragedy that for many people today, they are more concerned with what they can attain today rather than obeying the will of God.

c. And Then We Have Achan's Act of Stealing From God.

- i. He stole and then tried to hide his sin. This is the way sin always works.
- ii. The act of sin in our lives is a process which takes us farther than we ever anticipated going.
 1. James 1:14-15 – "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 2. David's sin with Bathsheba did not just happen on a whim. The seed was first planted in his mind, & like Achan, he saw, coveted, took, and hid.
- iii. Because Achan had seen the power of God, b/c God had proven Himself over & over, Achan should have been seeking God's direction instead of his own treasures.

2. Sin Will Be Revealed

a. Sin Is Not Secret

- i. There are several passages of scripture that comes to mind here in regards the secret sins:
 1. Numbers 32:23 – "be sure your sin will find you out."
 2. Psalm 139 reminds us that God knows EVERYTHING about us. He knows not only when we sit & when we rise, but he knows our thoughts and even our intentions.
 3. Psalm 90:8 – "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."
- ii. There is no such thing as a secret sin. Sooner or later our sins will indeed find us out, and often it doesn't take that long for sin to be exposed.
- iii. Achan had plenty of time to confess his sin before God & before Joshua; but instead he continued attempting to hide his sin. Because of this, his punishment would be great.

b. Sin And Its Consequences Are Not Private

- i. Does it surprise you this morning when I tell you that sin can & often harms innocent people?
 1. Ecclesiastes 9:18 – "Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good."
- ii. Sin may take place in a private manner, but it is never isolated. It always affects others.

1. Sin can ruin friendships.
 2. It can devastate marriages.
 3. And it can disrupt an entire ministry.
- iii. We are living in a time where people are extremely selfish when it comes to their sins & they spend little time thinking about the consequences that their sin will have ... on them, and on others.
1. Teenagers, your choices have consequences. I want you to start off this year making the right choices so that you, your parents, or your friends don't have to worry about the consequences.
 2. Adults, the sins that we commit today will be passed down to the next generation if we don't confess it now & abandon that way of life.
 - a. God said that Israel had sinned, not just Achan.
 - b. This is a reminder that we all pay the price for sins.
 - c. This is why Achan's punishment was so severe. This is why Achan ended up in Achor, this valley of trouble-to help Israel learn this lesson so that generations to come would not suffer.

➤ **You say, "Wow! What a way to start off the New Year. Warning us about sin in our lives."**

Well, hang on. I know this has been a pointed message, but this is also a message of hope.

- In Hosea 2:15, the Bible says that the valley of Achor will become a door of hope.
- In Isaiah 65:10, the valley of Achor is referenced as a place of rest for those that seek Him.
- How in the world could such an awful place ever become a door of hope or a place of rest? In a sense the valley of Achor is pointing us once again to the cross.
 - In taking the punishment for our sin, Jesus was troubled for all mankind. Jesus went down into that dark valley of judgment and died in our place.
 - Through an awful place called "the place of the skull", Jesus provided a "Door of Hope" to all who would trust in Him.
- When you & I confess our sins, God forgives us and because He does, no defeat is permanent and no mistake is beyond remedy.
 - I John 1:9 – "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

➤ **One reason God recorded this incident in His word was to help us learn that we need to regularly ask God to show us our sin.**

- Our sight is often impaired by sin & by the things of this world. Let me ask you. Have you separated yourself from God due to some sinful stash of your own? Has some hidden sin taken the joy out of your salvation and made you weak and powerless? Remember. A holy God cannot and will not tolerate sin. God designed the human heart to beat in unison with His. When it does we experience a deep and satisfying peace and He empowers us to make a real difference in this world. We live truly victorious lives-abundant lives! But when our hearts don't beat in unison with God's-when we ignore His laws, we cut ourselves off from fellowship with Him. We would be wise to remember that uneasiness is the companion of hidden sin. It's an indication that we need to examine our lives and repent.