

“The Battle of Ai – The Battle of the ‘Little’ Things” Joshua 7-8

Open:

- Joshua 7 – Defeat
 - The *Sin* of Israel. **vs. 1** – Achan takes the accursed thing.
 - The *Stupidity* of Israel. **vs. 2-3** – Israel listens AGAIN to the word of a spy instead of asking God how they should proceed.
 - The *Slaughter* of Israel. **vs. 4-5** – Israel’s sin and pride causes them to suffer a humiliating defeat.
 - The *Sobering* of Israel. **vs. 6-12** – God does not let them sulk; He instructs them on how to succeed.
 - The *Sanctifying* of Israel. **vs. 13-26** – Israel’s relationship with God was to be restored before they had victory on the battlefield.
- Joshua 8 – Victory
 - The *Command* to Israel. **vs. 1-2** – God gives clear direction on how to attain victory.
 - The *Complete* obedience by Israel. **vs. 3-15** – Israel decides obedience is better than sacrifice.
 - The *Compelling* victory. **vs. 16-29** – Victory came as a result of a restoration of a relationship and a return to an obedience to God’s Word.
 - The *commemoration* by Israel. **vs. 30-35** – Israel learns from past mistakes and gives glory to God for the victory and reviews the outlined by which they succeeded (God’s Word).

Tran:

- We must recognize that sin in our life eliminates God’s ability to bring victory into our life.
 - Because of our sin nature, it is important that we keep our record short and our account with God in good standing. **I Cor. 5:6-7a** “*Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?[7] Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.*”
 - **II Tim. 2:21** “*If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.*”
- Victory in life is enjoyable, but if it is to be repeated one must repeat what brought victory the first time.
 - Do not abandon what brought success the first time because it seems outdated or overused. There is a reason it worked the first time; don’t change a winning lineup. **II Cor. 10:3-4** “*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: [4] (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*
 - **Eph. 6:12** “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*”
- Victory in life never comes by the word of man. We must learn to consult God about how He wants us to proceed before devising our own plan for victory.
 - We will not be successful as soldiers if we abandon the source of victory. **Heb. 4:12** “*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”
 - **Prov.14:12** “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*”

I. We all face the same temptations... It is your choice to yield or to obey.

- **I Cor. 10:13** *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*
- A. We are all made of the same sinful flesh. **Is. 64:6** *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*
- B. We all have access to the same victory. **I John 5:4** *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”*
- C. We all have the same opportunity to make the right choice.
 - i. **Rom. 13:14** *“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*
 - ii. **Eph. 4:24** *“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”*
 - iii. **Eph. 6:11** *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*

II. Sin is not singular...It effects those around us. Joshua 22:20

- **ILL:** *The 10 spies faithlessness, Korah’s Rebellion, and Achan’s trespass.*
- Achan threw his life, and the life, of his family away for approximately \$20,000.
 - Takes a Babylonian Garment
 - 200 shekels of silver (1-shekel values \$17 today) = \$ 3,400
 - Wedge of Gold weighing 50 shekels (.25 oz. per shekel – 12.5 oz.) = \$16, 500
- A. What we say affects those around us. **Ps. 19:14** *“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”*
 - i. **James 3:8** *“But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”*
 - ii. **Jer. 9:8** *“Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.”*
 - iii. **Prov. 18:21** *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”*
 - As goes the tongue, so goes the ship. **James 3:4** *“Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.”*
- B. What we do affects those around us.
 - i. **I Cor 8:9** *“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours {**conscience**} become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.”*
 - ii. **Lam. 3:36** *“To subvert {**to destroy the foundation; to turn away from truth**} a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.”*
 - iii. **Rom. 14:13** *“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.”*
 - We should live our lives in recognition of how our actions affect others. **Lk. 17:1** *“Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!”*

III. **Do not allow victory to go to your head...It did not come by your hands.**

- **I Cor. 15:57** “*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
- **Ps. 3:8a** “*Salvation belongeth unto the LORD...*”

A. Pride caused Israel to be blinded to the fact that it was not their own hands that wrought a great victory, but God’s.

- i. The approach to battle before defeat – They had pride in their hearts after the previous victory.

Joshua 7:3 “*...for they are but few.*”

- ii. The approach to victory after the battle – They recognized by Whose hand victory came.

Joshua 8: 30-31 “*Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, [31] As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel...*”

- Notice how victory in battle is directly related to adherence to God’s Word.

B. Complacency caused God’s people to become lazy towards the work of God which caused casualties in the work of God.

- i. The approach to battle before defeat. **Joshua 7:3** “*...Let not all the people go up...*”
- ii. The approach to battle before victory. **Joshua 8:1** “*...take all the people of war with thee...*”

C. Convenience in the work of God should never dictate the path taken towards victory.

- Doing what it takes to gain victory is never convenient; but it builds the character by which God can bring victory.
- i. The approach to battle before defeat. **Joshua 7:3** “*...and make not all the people to labour thither...*”
 - ii. The approach to battle before victory. **Joshua 8: 26** “*For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.*”

Close:

- Do your best to stay as far away from sin, but when faced with a temptation, predetermine you are going to obey God’s Word instead of following your emotions.
- Live your life in the light of eternity and not the temporal. Recognize that every decision you make will affect you and others in ways you could have never imagined.
- Stay in recognition of where victory, success, and prosperity come from in life.

Prov. 10:17

“He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.”