

Monday - Overview of Joshua 7

Review:

Today, we are all going to read through Joshua chapter 7. It shouldn't take too long. Just give yourself time in a place where you can remain focused. It is a tragic story, but our God loves redemption and He can use a story of tragedy to grow us, instruct us. What's more, He can show us how to put the pieces back together in our lives after tragedy befalls us. Before you begin to read, ask God to open your eyes to a deeper level and see things in the passage and in your own life that you would not be able to see without His help. He loves to answer that prayer!

Read: Joshua 7

Reflect:

- a) Choose one or two verses that stand out to you the most because they: teach a truth, express a powerful emotion or for any other meaningful reason. Underline the verse(s) in your Bible.
- b) Why did you pick the verse(s) you did? What is the deeper truth it points to?

Relate:

Pray that this week, God would make this story come to life for you and that it would help you grow and be more devoted to Jesus!

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Tuesday - Defeated

Review:

Today we will focus on the first five verses of Joshua chapter 7. Before we read 7:1-5 again, consider a couple of background notes:

- a) Israel had just witnessed the conquest of the mighty Jericho into their hands by a miraculous act of God! Their spirits and confidence were sky-high and they were ready to move forward into the Promised Land. But just as soon as success arose, defeat broke their spirits.
- b) Go back and read Joshua chapter 6:15-19. In that passage we see that Joshua had delivered God's orders directly to his people. His orders were: everything in Jericho was to be given to God...not one thing should remain. Even the precious metals would be gathered by the priests and not kept by the people (this "devotion" of items to God was made complete by their destruction...this would prevent the Israelites from worshipping the gods of the Canaanites).

Read: Joshua 7: 1-5

Reflect:

- a) What error did Joshua make in this passage? What did he neglect to do? Might Joshua 6:27 have anything to do with this?
- b) By all accounts, the Israelite soldiers should have been able to defeat Ai. Why didn't they? Was this God's doing or the Ai soldiers'?
- c) Even in your life, is it possible for God to allow you to be defeated in order to teach you or grow you? Can you remember a time when this has happened in your life?

Relate:

- a) Stop for a moment of prayer. Give God your week. Ask Him to prevent you from being like Joshua in this passage – assuming God was behind him because he felt self-confident.
- b) Intentionally ask God to give you direction and victory this week, and to protect you from being overly confident in and of yourself.

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Wednesday - Sin in the camp

Review:

- a) In ancient Israel and the Middle East, it was common to see someone experiencing deep sorry and despair make a public display by **tearing their clothes, covering their heads with ashes and even wearing clothes made of very uncomfortable sackcloth material**. The fact that Joshua and the leaders of Israel made such a scene in today's text, demonstrates their deep anguish at their defeat and the death of their soldiers.
- b) The Israelites, both individually and collectively, had entered into a "**covenant**" with God. This was a binding agreement that He would be their God and protect them and give them all that He had promised them, if (and only if) they worshipped and served Him alone. Any breaking of this covenant was equivalent to a spouse being unfaithful. So when they violated the covenant and disobeyed Him, God often times called it "unfaithfulness" or even "adultery".

Read: Joshua 7: 6-15

Reflect:

- a) Isn't it remarkable how quickly Joshua and the elders thought God had forgotten them? And equally remarkable how they thought God had somehow suddenly lost his power?
- b) What is the point of 7:10? What is the little message God sent Joshua in that verse? How scary is verse 12b? Yikes!

Relate:

- a) God commands us to make choices that will allow us to have a heart that is pure and holy before Him. Stop and confess anything or any person that is in the way of your complete obedience to Jesus today. If you are willing, tell Him you will turn away from that person or thing now. He will set you free!

Research:

- a) God made it clear in verse 1b and vs. 11-12 that he was holding all of Israel responsible for the sin of the one man. Compare this to the reality that we have all sinned through the sin of one man (Adam) and also how forgiveness of sins could be offered through the death of one perfect man (Christ): see Romans 5:12-18. How does this concept strike against our American ideal of rugged individualism, if at all? What does this say about God's system of justice?

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Thursday - Sin and its consequences

Review:

a) Frequently, when desiring to determine God's will, the Israelites would use determinants such as the "Urim and Thummim" (Numbers 27:1, Deuteronomy 33:8) or they would use the "Ephod" of the Lord. But most often, they would "cast lots" which would single one person out among others. This is most likely the method used to, tribe by tribe and then family by family, determine that Achan was guilty of sin. Imagine how squirmy he must have become as the options dwindled fewer and fewer and then he was the only one remaining!

Read: Joshua 7: 16-26

a) Achan's sin was coveting. Coveting could be defined as wanting what someone else has, but God has not given you. This always takes our eyes off of God and on to our wants and desires.
b) Read James 1:13-15. God is never responsible for our sins, or the sins of others against us. Achan followed the pattern of James 1:13-15: He **saw** the plunder, then he **coveted** the plunder, then he **took** the plunder.

Reflect:

a) Take a second look at Joshua's words to Achan in 7:19. What is the spirit with which he speaks Achan? What does this say about how a leader should address someone who has been caught in sin?
b) Achan's sin was coveting. You may call coveting "the second-look sin". That is: every one of us looks at things everyday that we might find attractive, appealing or enticing. That isn't sin. Sin is taking the "second look" and the linked attitude of deeply desiring it. What thoughts must Achan have wrestled with as he took the "second look" at the "treasure" he had found?

Relate:

a) Fortunately, through Jesus (1 John 1:8-2:2) we know that His death on the cross will atone for or "cover" our sins and allow us to be forgiven...no matter what. Nonetheless, we must take our sins very seriously. Ask God to give you a very keen and sensitive ear to hear His voice today and to turn away from any coveting desire or the dreaded "second look".
b) Applicable verses as to the "second look": Job 31:1, Matthew 5:27-30.

Research:

a) James 1:13-15 shows us how simple desires can grow into deadly sins. Look at Eve in Genesis 3:6 and King David in 2 Samuel 11:1-5. Compare each and how the seeds of sin (when nourished) give birth to death.

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Friday - Bringing it all together

Review:

- a) As we have studied Joshua Chapter 7 this week, we have observed that Achan sinned by coveting, and that sin infected the entire nation and brought them defeat at the hands of the soldiers of Ai. Subsequently, God made it clear that the whole nation would continue to suffer defeat until they removed the sinner and the devoted items from their midst.
- b) The deep truth is this: when one member of a community sins, it affects not just them, but the entire "body" of the community. This was true for the nation of Israel, and is true for the Christian Church (spiritual Israel).

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Reflect:

- a) As Christians, we are all of the same tribe: the Church. We each have been given gifts, abilities, passions and experiences that help the whole body. Basically this means: we need you! We need your skills, abilities and energy. And we also need the body to be healthy. Just as the whole human body suffers when one part is unhealthy, so we all suffer when one of us is unhealthy.

Relate:

- a) There are a number of good leadership lessons to be gleaned from Joshua chapter 7. One of them is that, like Joshua, we need to always give every new venture (campaign, concept) for our lives, families, schools and businesses to God. Ask Him for success and ask Him to identify anything within you or your team/family/association that He needs you to repent of or turn away from.
- b) This has been a busy week for you...admit it! Before it is all said and done, stop and thank God for the good and bad this week. Ask Him if anything is out of balance or needs correcting - perhaps a damaged relationship needs some mending.
- c) For Impact Church to be healthy and free to have victories in our region, we all need to do our spiritual housekeeping! Pray that we would be brought together by our unified study of Joshua this summer.

Research:

- a) Read Acts 5:1-11. How did the sins of Ananias and Sapphira compare/contrast to those of Achan? How should the manner in which we respond to sin in our "camp" be balanced by Galatians 6:1-10 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-13?

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August 8 - 12



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