

Third Presbyterian Church  
Midweek Bible Study  
Miracle Series – Sin of Achan  
Lesson 34 – What's under your tent

Joshua 7:1-26 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel. <sup>2</sup> Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai. <sup>3</sup> When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there." <sup>4</sup> So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, <sup>5</sup> who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

<sup>6</sup> Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. <sup>7</sup> And Joshua said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!" <sup>8</sup> O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? <sup>9</sup> The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?" <sup>10</sup> The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? <sup>11</sup> Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. <sup>12</sup> That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

<sup>13</sup> "Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: That which is devoted is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it.' <sup>14</sup> "In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe that the LORD takes shall come forward clan by clan; the clan that the LORD takes shall come forward family by family; and the family that the LORD takes shall come forward man by man. <sup>15</sup> He who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel!" <sup>16</sup> Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was taken. <sup>17</sup> The clans of Judah came forward, and he took the Zerahites. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was taken. <sup>18</sup> Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. <sup>19</sup> Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me." <sup>20</sup> Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: <sup>21</sup> When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylon, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath." <sup>22</sup> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. <sup>23</sup> They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the LORD. <sup>24</sup> Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup> Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today." Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. <sup>26</sup> Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since. .

1. Achan's problem was a refusal to give God what belonged to God.
  - a. In thinking about this today....what belongs to God that we give God?
  - b. When we refuse to give God what we have promised in our covenant with God, what are the results in our life?
2. Response to the following statement: Matthew 6:21 (NIV) - <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
  - a. Where there is no financial sacrifice for God, there is no relationship with God because our heart is not present with God.
  - b. The sermon says the curse for refusing to give God what belongs to God is **DISTANCE FROM GOD**.
    - i. What does distance from God look like in our lives?
    - ii. What then is our ability to stand on the promises of God?
    - iii. How does this distance impact our worship, fellowship, study and prayer life?
3. Why can't time and talent be substituted for financial giving?
4. The sermon speculated that one of the reasons God would not allow them to take any of the spoils of war was because they were not ready to possess them.
  - a. How does that make you feel that God has the power to bless us with riches but we may not be ready to possess them?
  - b. What does ready to possess them mean?
5. Why don't we have to be afraid of confessing our sin to God?
  - a. If we don't have to be afraid, then why is confession of our sin to God so difficult?
  - b. Why is confession of our sin to God necessary if God knows everything?
  - c. How do you respond to the truth that **"WE EVEN WORSHIP GOD IN OUR CONFESSION OF SIN?"**
6. What does this story tell us about the power of greed?
7. How do we ensure nothing but "Dirt" is under our tent?
8. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

## **The Failed Assault at Ai (Achan's Sin): Spiritual Defeat Because of Sin, 7:1-26**

(7:1-26) **Introduction:** all kinds of human emotions are felt by people who experienced failure. There are the emotions of discouragement and depression, of being distressed and downhearted, of feeling down and being treated like an outcast, of being sad and crestfallen, of being disheartened and demoralized.

Sadly, these emotions become serious problems for some people. For example, people by the millions wrestle with the problem of depression and discouragement, living defeated, unsuccessful lives. For many people, life is like a roller coaster with peaks and valleys, being up one day and down the next. Life becomes like a wave of the sea rolling in and out, swaying to and fro. Sometimes there is progress, but there is also regression. Gains are sometimes made, but losses are also suffered. From time to time there is victory, but there is far too often defeat. There are occasional conquests and triumphs, but there is more often the experience of being overthrown, a sense of being routed and trounced by the events and experiences of life.

But listen: there is a glorious message of hope, the message of Holy Scripture. The Word of God declares that all these emotions that discourage and defeat us can be conquered. We can live a victorious life, a life that conquers and triumphs over all enemies that seek to defeat us as we walk throughout life.

Remember that Joshua and the army of Israel had just experienced the glorious conquest of the fortress at Jericho. Joy and rejoicing were flooding their hearts, for they had witnessed the power of God acting in their behalf. They had seen the walls of Jericho crumbling under the miraculous power of God. The future looked bright, for it seemed as though God would be with them as they marched forth to conquer the promised land. But then it happened: when the army launched an attack against the second city of the enemy, the soldiers were routed and soundly beaten. Defeat was now staring the Israelite army in the face. And through this experience, a strong warning is issued to succeeding generations: sin will always lead to defeat in spiritual warfare. This is the subject of this important passage of Scripture: *The Failed Assault at Ai (Achan's Sin): Spiritual Defeat Because of Sin, 7:1-26*.

1. The cause of the failed assault: sin (v.1).
2. The consequences of sin upon God's people (v.2-5).
3. The remedy for sin and defeat: a confrontation with the LORD (v.6-26).

**1. (7:1) Sin, Results— Theft, Results— Stealing, Results— Responsibility, Corporate— Corporate Responsibility— Community, Duty— Society, Duty— Society, Corporate Responsibility, Flesh, Aim of:** the cause of the failed assault against Ai was sin, terrible sin. A soldier had stolen some things that had been given to the Tabernacle, that had been set apart and devoted to God and His service. The soldier's name was Achan. His very name means "trouble," and he is known as the man who brought trouble upon Israel (Joshua 7:25). The trouble he caused had far-reaching consequences: his sin affected the whole community of Israel. It caused the first military defeat of God's people.

Note this fact: all Israel was charged with the crime, not just the individual man. There was a *corporate responsibility*. Therefore there was *corporate, community guilt*. God looked upon the community as one body of people who should love, care for, and look after one another. Israel was one body of people, one nation, one community of people who were to build up one another and build a strong, righteous, moral, and just society.

The point is striking: within communities, neighbors are to look after one another and take care of one another. In God's plan and purpose for Israel (and for all other peoples), neighbors are to love one another and be responsible and accountable for one another. Therefore, when Achan committed the sin of stealing from God, the whole community of Israel became guilty before God. Consequently, God charged the Israelites with *corporate, community guilt*. As a community, they were corporately responsible for one another; therefore, there was corporate guilt. God charged the Israelites with committing a "trespass" (Maal), with being unfaithful to him. The word means to cover up, to act in secret, to act treacherously; to be unfaithful; to break faith; to break or violate a trust.

One man had trespassed against God; one man had been unfaithful to God, broken the trust with God. But the man did not live in isolation; he was not an island unto himself. He lived within a community; therefore,

what he did affected the community as a whole. His sin had a devastating affect upon the Israelites: it caused the assault against Ai to fail. His sins separated the whole community from God, from His holy Presence and guidance. Therefore when Israel went into battle, God was not with them. Their sin had separated them from God. Sin had cut them off from God; consequently, when they went into battle, they fought in the *arm of the flesh*, not in the power of God. And they were defeated. All because of sin. Sin always causes failure and defeat when fighting the enemies of this world.

**Thought 1.** There are two strong lessons in this point for us.

1) Sin always leads to failure and defeat when fighting against the enemies of this world. Enemy after enemy confronts us, enemies such as...

- disease
- accident
- broken relationships
- financial difficulty
- loss of job
- natural catastrophe
- misunderstandings
- discouragement
- depression
- family problems
- work difficulties
- disappointments
- tension and stress
- loss of loved ones
- lack of purpose and fulfillment

Such enemies will defeat us if there is sin in our lives. God cannot dwell in the midst of sin. God is holy; therefore He can dwell only where there is righteousness and purity. His presence and guidance are not available where there is sin. We stand alone to struggle against such enemies if there is sin in our lives, and the only help available to us is what help man can give us. Supernatural help—God's presence and power—is available only as we live holy and righteous lives before God. Sin separates, cuts us off from God and His help. Sin causes failure and defeat. Sin causes us to live lives that are weak and wavering before God, lives that ebb and flow like the waves of the sea. Listen to what God declares about sin:

**"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8).**

**"Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men" (Psalm 66:18).**

2) There is a *corporate, community responsibility* for one another. This corporate responsibility is true among all of society, but it is especially true among God's people. The first and greatest commandment is for people to love God with all of their hearts, minds, bodies, and souls. But the second and greatest commandment is that we love one another. Every human being is to love his or her neighbor, love every other human being upon this earth. God expects us to love and care for one another, looking after and taking care of our neighbors. We are responsible for our neighbors; therefore we are held accountable by God for one another. When one of us joys, we are all to rejoice together. When one of us hurts, we are all to hurt together. When one of us needs help, we are to help that one. When one of us sins, it affects the whole community. When a person is murdered, a community is responsible for that blood and held accountable to see that justice is done.

The point is this: there is *corporate responsibility* and *corporate accountability* within our communities, and especially within the church. Righteousness affects our communities, and sin and evil affects our communities. Righteousness builds us up; but sin tears us down and eventually

destroys us—both individually and corporately (within our communities). This is exactly what Scripture declares:

**"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).**

**"So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5).**

**"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9).**

**2. (7:2-5) Self-confidence—Flesh, Arm of—Consequences, of Sin—Anger, of God—Defeat, of the Believer—Defeat, of Israel—Israel, Defeat in Warfare—Discouragement, Caused by—Defeat, Caused by:** the consequences of Achan's sin were far-reaching and most tragic, for the consequences fell not only on Achan but also upon all the Israelites. There were three serious consequences of sin upon God's people.

1. The sin of Achan aroused the LORD's anger (Joshua 7:2). Sin had been committed; therefore the justice of God had to be executed. Keep in mind that God's judgment was falling upon the Canaanites because of their terrible sin and evil, because their "cup of iniquity" had been filled to the brim. (Genesis 15:16. See DEEPER STUDY #1—Joshua 11:20 for more discussion.) The Canaanites had sinned beyond repentance, beyond ever returning to God. The Canaanites were facing the judgment of God because of their evil. Now, God's people had sinned; consequently, they too must be judged. God shows no favoritism or partiality to any person or people; justice must be executed against sin. Sin arouses the anger, the justice and judgment of God; consequently, the anger of the LORD burned against the Israelites. The arousal of God's justice and judgment is the first consequence of sin.

2. The second consequence of sin was that of being defeated by the enemy (Joshua 7:2-5). Note this fact: Joshua and his officers were totally unaware that Achan had stolen some items from the Tabernacle. He and the army, in fact, all the Israelites were rejoicing over the great victory over Jericho. The LORD had given a great victory over one of the strongest fortified cities of the Middle East. The walls of Jericho had crumbled before the very eyes of the Israelite army, crumbled by the miraculous power of God. A spirit of joy and rejoicing and revelry was bound to fill the camp of the Israelites. They knew beyond question that God was with them and was going to give them victory over the enemies of the promised land.

- a. Note that in preparing to attack Ai, Joshua acted without seeking the LORD's presence (Joshua 7:2). He sent several men to spy out Ai which was near Beth Aven just east of Bethel. There is no reference to Joshua seeking the counsel and guidance of the LORD. Apparently, he acted entirely on his own, beaming with self-confidence because of the great victory over Jericho.
  - b. The spies reported back in the arm of the flesh, also being full of self-confidence (Joshua 7:3). They reported that Ai had only a small army, suggesting that only two to three thousand soldiers were necessary to conquer the city. Again, note that the report of the spies was full of self-confidence. The men were resting upon the arm of the flesh, the strength of the army itself to gain the victory. There is no mention whatsoever about the LORD and the need for His presence, guidance, and power. Joshua and the officers plainly did not seek the LORD. This is clear, for we shall soon see that God's strategy was to send the entire army against Ai, not just a few thousand soldiers (cp. Joshua 8:1).
  - c. Joshua sent three thousand troops that were immediately routed, soundly defeated (Joshua 7:4-5). The Israelite soldiers retreated and were chased from the gate of Ai as far as Shebarim, which means the *stone quarries*. Thirty-six soldiers lost their lives in the retreat.
3. The sin resulted in terrible, devastating discouragement. A demoralized, paralyzed spirit struck the people. Their hearts melted with fear and their courage became as liquid as water.

**Thought 1.** There are two strong lessons in this point for us:

- 1) Self-confidence, acting in the *arm of the flesh*, will lead to failure and defeat. A person cannot stand by himself in this life and conquer the serious trials of life, not trials such as paralyzing accidents and

deadly diseases. And no person can conquer all the temptations of life and the inevitable confrontation with death—not in the *arm of the flesh*. Self-confidence collapses before the temptations of life, and self-confidence never conquers death. Joshua and the Israelite army were defeated because of self-confidence, failing to place their trust in God. Scripture warns us against the danger of self-confidence:

**"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matthew 26:33).**

**"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:16).**

**"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2).**

**"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Galatians 6:3).**

2) When God's people sin, He chastises them. He disciplines and corrects them just as a father disciplines and corrects his child. Chastisement or discipline is necessary in order to save the child from harming himself. So it is with God. God chastises or disciplines us to keep us from harming ourselves by sinking deeper and deeper into sin. Without the chastisement of God, sin would run rampant and destroy us. Just imagine what kind of world this would be if the sins of lawlessness, brutality, violence, immorality, lying, stealing, and the host of other sins were given free reign and allowed to run unrestrained upon this earth.

Sin must be chastised, corrected, and disciplined by God or else the whole human race would become engulfed with a spirit of lawlessness upon this earth. Evil would run rampant, even among some of God's people who walk in carnality, living lives of immorality. This is the clear purpose for chastisement (discipline, correction): to save us from harming ourselves. Chastisement is one of the consequences of sin.

**"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2).**

**"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:30-32).**

**"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:5-6).**

**3. (7:6-26) Sin, Remedy to— Defeat, Remedy for— Intercession, Results of— Word of God, Duty— Exposure, of Sin— Judgment, Caused by:** the remedy for sin and defeat is a confrontation with the LORD. As soon as the retreating, defeated soldiers returned to camp, Joshua took immediate action. He did exactly what he needed to do: he confronted the LORD seeking the reasons for the defeat. Four remedies to sin and defeat are gleaned from what happened.

1. The first remedy for sin and defeat is intercession (Joshua 7:6-9). Joshua was stunned, bewildered, confused, shaken, utterly dumbfounded over the shocking defeat of the soldiers he had sent out against the enemy. He and the leaders immediately went to the Tabernacle and sought the LORD in prayer. Note that they fell face down before the Ark of the LORD and remained there until evening. Joshua acknowledged his utter dependence upon God, addressing God as "Sovereign LORD" (Adonay, Yahweh). Joshua was perplexed, dumbfounded. He asked God, "Why?"

⇒ Was Israel now to be destroyed by the Amorites?

⇒ Should they have stayed in East Jordan? Some commentators interpret Joshua's words here as saying that he actually wished he had kept Israel on the east side of the Jordan River. However, this is most

unlikely, for Joshua had held the hope of the promised land throughout his life. He was simply seeking the face of the LORD for the answer for the defeat. He was asking God if he had misread the will of God, if he had perhaps moved the people across the Jordan too soon.

⇒ What could Joshua now say to the people? Was he to continue as leader?

Note that Joshua's major concern was the honor of God's name (Joshua 7:9). He feared that the enemy would soon wipe out Israel and ridicule God's name. They would call the LORD weak, powerless, unable to save and deliver His people and to fulfill His promises to them. God's great name and His reputation were at stake. Therefore, above all else, Joshua begged God to protect His own name, to protect the strong witness of the LORD before the peoples of the earth.

**Thought 1.** Intercession is the answer to sin and defeat. When we sin and suffer defeat, we must seek the LORD in prayer. If we seek the LORD in prayer, He will hear us and meet our needs.

**"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).**

**"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).**

**"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13).**

2. The second remedy for sin and defeat is that of hearing the Word of God (Joshua 7:10-15). By seeking the LORD until evening, Joshua proved his sincerity and earnestness, that he was totally dependent upon God to conquer the enemies of the promised land. Thus the LORD confronted Joshua and met his every need.

- a. The LORD encouraged Joshua by telling him to stand up, questioning why he was lying down on his face (Joshua 7:10). The confrontation was straightforward and direct: it was now time to act, to arise and begin to handle the situation.
- b. God then launched a charge against Israel, a charge of sin (Joshua 7:11). Throughout this charge, note the corporate, community responsibility and guilt. Note how God builds up charge after charge against the people. They had committed sin after sin: God's covenant had been violated by the people. They had stolen some of the things given to the Tabernacle, things that had been set apart, devoted to God. Moreover, the people had lied about the theft by secretly hiding it among their own belongings.
- c. God then explained the defeat of Israel by the enemy: they were defeated because the sin had doomed them to destruction, had alienated them from God (Joshua 7:12). And note the warning of God: He would not be with them anymore until they destroyed the things among them that had been set apart, devoted for destruction.
- d. God then commanded Joshua to go and tell the people to sanctify or purify themselves (Joshua 7:13-15). Three actions had to be taken for sanctification or purification:

⇒ The people were to seek out the sin and sinner and remove the accursed thing from their presence (Joshua 7:13).

⇒ The people were to present themselves before the LORD in the morning: tribe by tribe, clan by clan, family by family, man by man (Joshua 7:14). As the people appeared before the LORD, He would identify the guilty person.

⇒ The people were to execute the guilty person and destroy all his possessions (Joshua 7:15).

**Thought 1.** One remedy for sin and defeat is that of hearing the Word of God. When we sin, we must listen to the Word of God and do exactly what He says. It is the Word of God that tells us how to deal with sin and defeat, that tells us...

- how to approach God
- how to receive the mercy of God
- how to receive forgiveness of sins
- how to repent and be restored to God

- how to dedicate and recommit our lives to God
- how to renew our covenant with God

We must hear the Word of God and do exactly what God tells us. Obeying God, heeding His Word is the remedy for sin and defeat.

**"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).**

**"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).**

**"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).**

3. The third remedy for sin and defeat is that of uncovering and identifying the sin (Joshua 7:16-23). As this point is studied, note how the sinner remained silent throughout the entire investigation. He was unwilling to confess his sin unless it was discovered.

- Joshua began the investigative process early in the morning (Joshua 7:16-18). The clans of Judah were investigated first, the clan of Zerahite and the family of Zemri were singled out. Then the guilty man was singled out. The scene of soldier after soldier walking by Joshua and the leaders of the nation must have been a dramatic picture. Finally when Achan's turn came to appear before the court officials, God indicated that he was the guilty offender. Note the spirit of Joshua as he examined the defendant.
- Joshua urged Achan to confess the truth before God, that he no longer try to hide the terrible sin (Joshua 7:19). The sin had been committed against God; therefore, confession needed to be made to God. Achan needed to give glory to the LORD and humble himself before the LORD, for he had refused to step forth prior to being discovered. Throughout the entire investigation, Achan had attempted to hide his sin. It was against God and against God alone that the sin had been committed. The sin had been a violation of God's covenant; therefore the only conceivable way for the sin to be forgiven was for confession to be made to God.

c. Achan confessed his sin. However, keep in mind that the confession had been forced upon him. He had refused to step forth prior to the discovery of his sin (Joshua 7:20-21). Note that Achan took the very steps that lead to death and destruction:

- ⇒ He "saw" the plunder: a beautiful Babylonian robe, two hundred pieces of silver, and a bar of gold weighing one pound.
- ⇒ He "coveted" them.
- ⇒ He then "took" them.
- ⇒ He "hid" them.

Simply stated, Achan "saw...coveted...took...and...hid" the items in the ground inside his tent. These were the very steps that caused Eve to fall into sin and later David when He committed adultery with Bathsheba (Genesis 3:6; 2 Samuel 11:1-27).

d. Joshua sent messengers to gather the evidence from Achan's tent (Joshua 7:22-23). They quickly found the evidence and returned, spreading it out before the court.

**Thought 1.** Sin cannot be hid, not from God. We may be able to deceive people, commit sin under the cover of darkness, and keep it secret. But not before God. God sees every sinful act, even every single thought that crosses our minds. No sin can be hid from God. When we commit sin, the only remedy is to identify the sin and open it up to God. Confession needs to be made to God while there is still time, so that we can be forgiven our sins.

If we wish forgiveness, we must uncover and unveil our sins before the face of God. Only as we expose and confess our sin will God forgive us.



**"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2).**

**"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the LORD come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).**

**"For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Ephes. 5:12).**

4. The fourth remedy for sin and defeat is that of routing out and judging the sin and sinner (Joshua 7:24-26). What now happened was dramatic, a drama that stands as a great warning to Israel and to all succeeding generations of people.

- a. The judgment had already been pronounced: the accursed thing was to be destroyed (Joshua 7:24-25; cp. Joshua 7:12). In this case, the accursed thing was Achan himself. It had been his sin that had caused the judgment of God to fall upon the Israelites, a sin that had cost the lives of thirty-six soldiers. Just imagine how the family members of these thirty-six soldiers had felt during the investigative process. Standing there, the family members were bound to be wondering about the death of their loved ones. In some cases the soldiers had been husbands and fathers, and in all cases they had been sons. Hearts were broken and grief-stricken, and tears had flowed from the broken, grieving hearts of the families. A tragic, terrible evil had resulted from the sin of the soldier who had stolen items that had been set apart, devoted to God and His service.

The justice and judgment of God had to be executed. Achan and his entire family and all their possessions were taken out of the camp (Joshua 7:24). They were then executed (Joshua 7:25). Why were the family members executed along with Achan? Because they were accomplices in the crime: they knew about the stolen goods that were hidden in the tent. They were just as guilty as Achan in bringing the judgment of God upon the nation. Note that everything was burned. This was a symbol of purifying, cleansing the evil of the sin from among God's people.

- b. The result was dramatic: the LORD's anger was turned away from His people. The relationship between God and His dear people was restored (Joshua 7:26).
- c. The valley was renamed Achor which means "trouble." Thereafter, the valley was to stand as a warning against sin and its consequences.

**Thought 1.** Sin must be routed out, gotten rid of, removed, forsaken, turned away from. Only as we rout out sin and forsake it will God forgive us. To have our relationship with God restored, to have access into God's presence, to have our sins forgiven and cleansed, to be accepted by God, to renew our covenant and promises with God, to rededicate and recommit our lives to God—sin has to be routed out of our lives. For a relationship to exist between God and us, sin has to be removed, taken away from us. God is holy, and He cannot dwell in the midst of sin. Therefore, sin has to be removed from us in order for God to dwell with us. Favor with God, access into God's presence, comes by routing out the sin from our lives.

**"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephes. 4:22).**

**"Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thes. 5:22).**