

June 15, 2008 (Father's Day)
"Hidden Sin"
Josh 7:1-19 NLT

But Israel was unfaithful concerning the things set apart for the LORD. A man named Achan had stolen some of these things, so the LORD was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, of the family of Zimri, of the clan of Zerah, and of the tribe of Judah.

Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the city of Ai, east of Bethel, near Beth-aven. When they returned, they told Joshua, "It's a small town, and it won't take more than two or three thousand of us to destroy it. There's no need for all of us to go there."

So approximately three thousand warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated... The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.

Joshua and the leaders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed down facing the Ark of the LORD until evening. Then Joshua cried out, "Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! Lord, what am I to say, now that Israel has fled from its enemies? For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe us off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?"

But the LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen the things that I commanded to be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them; they have also lied about it and hidden the things among their belongings. That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat...I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction.

"Get up! Command the people to purify themselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Hidden among you, O Israel, are things set apart for the LORD. You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things...

Early the next morning Joshua brought the tribes of Israel before the LORD, and the tribe of Judah was singled out. Then the clans of Judah came forward, and the clan of Zerah was singled out. Then the families of Zerah came before the LORD, and the family of Zimri was singled out. Every member of Zimri's family was brought forward person by person, and Achan was singled out.

Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don't hide it from me."

1. Result of Hidden Sin

What is the sin of Achan? Achan took a beautiful robe imported from Babylon, two hundred silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound and hid them. But his sin was more than stealing and falsehood, because he was hiding what he had done. He took what was accursed and meant for destruction, unholy things, that God did not mean for his people to possess. He had robbed God, for those things were to be set apart for God to destroy. Yet, the problem was even more than what he did, it was also the attitude of his heart. The sin (according to v1) was *unfaithfulness* (But Israel was unfaithful concerning the things set apart for the LORD.). Achan was unfaithful to God and so was all of the Israelites because of his sin.

Achan means *trouble* and he had become the “Troubler” of Israel.

One person’s sin affected others, the family, the community, the church, the nation. We have a responsibility to others, especially to our family, church, and our society as a whole; a responsibility to live right and to watch out for one another for the prevention of sin, because the sin of others may result in our damage. One man can infect a whole community and bring disaster to it. We don’t know how far our secret sin may reach, nor can we know how far our goodness can extend.

Note, while others did not know about Achan’s hidden sin, God knew. Others may not inquire about them but God will. He sees our hidden sin, it is never hidden from His sight. And sooner or later a secret sin will come to light.

Joshua sends some men to spy out Ai. They report that it is a small town, no need to sent the whole army there just a few troop needed to take it. So about 3000 troops were sent, that would have been enough, 300 would have been enough, *if* God were with them. Instead, they were soundly defeated and the report of it discouraged the Israelites and paralyzed them with fear. Defeat in our battles, fear / anxiety, and discouragement may be a sign of hidden sin. These are the results of hidden sin.

2. Response To Defeat

What is the response of the people and their leaders to their defeat in battle? “...but they were soundly defeated... The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.”

They were discouraged by their defeat, fearful, anxious, and in dismay (sadness and depression), and their courage melted away. Then Joshua cried out, "Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan River...? If only we had been content to stay on the other side!

Often when we have hidden sin the result to feel these same things, defeated, fear, depressed, and say, “if only...I should have been content to stay on the other side! Why did I even accept Christ... being a Christian is too hard. ‘If only we had been content to stay on the other side!’” We fail God, we don’t want to but we do, and we get

discouraged. We may even stop walking with God. We think, if we are going to keep failing, why keep trying. That's our response to defeat...discouragement / dismay. But...

3. *Remedy of God*

Our response to failing God and experiencing defeat in our battles is to get down and discouraged. But the LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen the things that I commanded to be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them; they have also lied about it and hidden the things among their belongings. That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat...I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction.

"Get up! Command the people to purify themselves...For this is what the LORD...says: Hidden among you... are things set apart for the LORD. You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things...

We get down because of failure, God says, "Get up! ...To purify yourselves"

"Get up, purify or sanctify yourself," is always God's command. "Lie down and be discouraged," is always our temptation.

To be sanctified or purified is to be made clean morally, by confessing sin, and consecrating yourself to God, to be set apart for God.

Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don't hide it from me."

The fact is, that the same moment that you become conscious of sin ought to bring confession and a consciousness of forgiveness. No separation from God should be tolerated, not for an instant. Don't focus on your own sin and weakness, but look continually to Jesus, moment by moment.

Josh 8:1 NLT: Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or discouraged. Take the entire army and attack Ai, for I have given to you the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.

As soon as Israel's sin had been brought to light and removed, at once God's message was one of glorious encouragement: "Do not be afraid or discouraged...for I have given you the king of Ai..."

Remove any hidden sin from your life, hidden from others, not from God. Take courage to rise higher than ever before, as you abandon yourself more completely to the Lord. Ask God to not only forgive, but to cleanse you, morally purify you, and set you a part for His will and His will only.

Ai was a small town, yet the same people who conquered the mighty Jericho were defeated by Ai. It was not the strength of the enemy (Ai), nor was it that God had failed them. The cause of their defeat was something else, and the Lord tells them what it was: "Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen the things that I commanded to be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them; they have also lied about it and hidden the things among their belongings. That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat..."

It was hidden sin that conquered them.

The lesson is simple, anything in your life that is contrary to the will of God, no matter how insignificant it might seem, or how deeply hidden, will cause you to fall before your enemies. Immorality, bitterness, selfishness, doubt, or whatever is paralyzing your spiritual life must be confessed and removed. You will be defeated, and dismayed until the wrong thing is dug up from its hiding place, brought to light, and laid before God. Is there something you are not consecrating or giving to God? Don't rob God by holding back what should be given to Him. Every day Pray David's prayer, Ps 139:23-24 NLT

Search me , O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

We must not just hear God's Word (through preaching, Bible study, etc.), the real test is to put it into practice, is it change your life?

There is no need for you to be defeated. The Lord is able to deliver us from the hand of our enemies that we may serve Him as it says in Luke 1:74-75 NLT: "We have been rescued from our enemies, so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness forever."

"Destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction." God calls us to be holy as He is holy.