

Wednesday Devotional (6/10/20)

Joshua's prayer in Defeat – Josh 7:3:13

Background: Israel's journey into Canaan continues with a battle against Ai. Riding the victory of Jericho, Joshua prepares for battle, but not in the right way. There are two problems in this narrative: the sin of the people, and the pride of Joshua. Joshua will come to see that leading sinful people comes at a cost. This portion of the narrative also reveals Joshua's reliance on himself. Unlike the previous victory at Jericho, this military strategy is devised solely on the basis of perceived strength of the enemy, not on the strength of and dependence on Yahweh.

If the Israelites assumed that their comparative size and ability were what would bring victory, they were swiftly reminded that it is the presence of the LORD that makes them strong. The death of 36 soldiers and an embarrassing defeat led Joshua to pray. The LORD revealed that they had sinned by taking “devoted things,” from Jericho.

Lessons to Learn:

- This sin of Achan was not simply an issue of theft. No, this was the sin of unfaithfulness. Wickedness and righteousness are matters of the heart, and God is fully invested in His children's hearts. God desires us to be faithful to Him, rather than possessions or professional successes, both of which were temptations for Joshua and Achan.
- The Lord said that Israel had sinned, yet it was one man who took the sacred things to himself. Our actions affect people in ways we may never know. We live in an individualistic age, but the truth of community solidarity is reinforced for every believer in the body of Christ: **(1Cort 12:26)**
- Failure must bring us to prayer. (It was by prayer that Joshua learned of Israel's disobedience and it was by prayer that he knew what to do next.)

Questions to ponder:

- Read the prayer Joshua prayed after experiencing the loss at Ai (7:7–9).
- What do you notice about the prayer? How is it like/unlike yours?
- In what ways does the Holy Spirit make you aware of areas in your life that need course correcting?

