




## Joshua - Strong and Courageous "Hidden In Plain Sight"

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home GROUPS

### Message-Based Outline and Questions For Personal Study and Home Group Discussions

 **MESSAGE:** Review the sermon and explore the message by using these questions.

 **OPEN IT:** Use the following questions and points to begin your study:

Do you remember the first time you got in trouble with your parents? For lying? For stealing?  
How did your parents handle it? How did you feel?

 **EXPLORE IT:** Now dig deeper into God's Word:

What was Achan's major sin? How did Achan's sin affect others?  
How was his family drawn into the sin?

 **APPLY IT:** Use these questions to apply the message to your life:

At the end of your life, you will stand before God and give an account of your life. What sin do you need to uncover?  
How do you need to call upon God for help?  
Is there reconciliation that you need to pursue?

 **PRAYER:** Pray throughout the week, remembering the needs of others in your Home Group:

Thank God for freedom that comes from confessing sin.  
Thank God for His lesson of Achan, who needed to reveal his sin, but who suffered because he didn't.  
Pray that you would lay your heart bare before God. Pray that God would convict you where needed.  
Pray for refuge in God as you confess to Him. Pray that our church will become God's battleground for righteousness.

**BIG IDEA:** Our sin hurts most when it is hidden.

#### Scripture: Joshua 7

<sup>1</sup> But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, 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 army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there." <sup>4</sup> So about three thousand 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 in fear and became like water.

<sup>6</sup> Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell face down 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, "Alas, 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> Pardon your servant, 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: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.

<sup>14</sup> "In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the Lord chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the Lord chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the Lord chooses shall come forward man by man. <sup>15</sup> Whoever 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 an outrageous thing in Israel!"

<sup>16</sup> Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen. <sup>17</sup> The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen. <sup>18</sup> Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen.

<sup>19</sup> Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and honor him. 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 bar 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 bar, 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." (Joshua 7, NIV)

### **Our Ongoing Struggle With Sin**

- You will have a continual battle with sin.
  - Sin is doing anything you know is wrong. Sin is doing anything that violates God's will.
  - Sin is not doing something you know is right that you should do.
- It is more difficult to deal with hidden sin.

### **Israel had a setback in its journey**

- God won the battle at Jericho for them.
  - God orchestrated the events.
  - Jericho's walls were destroyed, giving the victory to Israel.
- But one man - Achan - disobeyed God.
  - He took plunder in Jericho, then tried to hide his sin.
- Joshua sent spies into Ai, preparing for the next battle.
  - Ai, with a population of about 12,000, probably had about 2,000-3,000 soldiers.
  - Israel sent 3,000 of its soldiers to the battle.
- Israel lost the battle, with 36 men being killed.

### **1. Our sin impacts others whether we realize it or not.**

- While only 36 men died in battle, this was a stunning defeat for Israel.
- Their defeat meant that God was not on their side.
- The defeat was Achan's fault. Others around Achan felt the result of his sin and yet didn't know it had happened.
- One sin leads to another - your own sin and someone else's sin. Sin can start a chain reaction of more sins.
- We like to cover up our sins. In your sin you can cause others to stumble. (Matthew 18:6)
- Each person will be held individually accountable for his own sins, but one who causes others to stumble will be judged more harshly.
- Joshua bowed before God and asked for the cleansing of Israel.

### **2. God hates when we sin.**

- One man's sin (Achan) affected the whole nation. Sin is serious; God hates it.
- We are all prone to wander, to sin, and we try to cover it up.
- Repeated sin comes more easily; our hearts become hardened.
- Our sin impacts our relationship with God; we become separated from God.
- Jesus came to restore that broken relationship.
- If you are comfortable with your sin, you have a real problem with God.
- Joshua confronted Achan; Achan's sin was revealed.
- Achan confessed, but it wasn't heartfelt nor voluntary.

### **3. Sin holds its power in darkness.**

- Hidden sin has more power than it did originally; the hiding magnifies the effect of the sin.
- Achan was not forgiven because he did not confess willingly. He could have confessed earlier, but didn't.
- Sin kept its power over Achan because it was hidden.
- "True confession goes beyond the admission of what one has done; it includes the recognition of guilt and remorse." (Donald Madvig)
- We cannot free ourselves of sin.
- Achan and his entire family were stoned to death. The family must of known about the sin and hid it, also.

### **4. Dealing with sin hurts, but leads to health.**

- Achan's family participated in the sin. His sin should have been brought to light.
- Sin erodes your integrity. There is freedom in doing what is right.
- The more we dig a hole trying to hide sin, the deeper we go, and the harder it is to escape.
- We must let our flesh die to sin daily.

**BIG IDEA: Our sin hurts most when it is hidden.**