

Jos211 – Seriously Dealing With Sin – Joshua 7:1-26

Pastor Dave Shepardson Calvary Chapel Nuevo / [www.wordbymail.com](http://www.wordbymail.com)

Open your Bibles. Turn them to Joshua Chapter 7. We are doing the entire chapter, twenty-six verses. Title of the message, “Seriously Dealing With Sin.”

In Genesis God made a one sided covenant with Israel through Abraham that Israel would always be God’s chosen people and that he would always be with them. However – in order for Israel to walk in (live in) the blessings and promises of the covenant – Israel *had a role*. And it is exactly the same for each of us today.

Our salvation is a free gift from God, a one-sided action of God (in Christ) paying for our sin and giving us (in exchange) his own righteousness – *positionally*. You are saved from a one side action from God. He did that. Your part was to be dead in your sin. His part was to come and breathe life into you and for you to simply receive that gift. And that is done. And so Jesus Christ and his sacrifice has taken upon himself – your sin and paid the full penalty and in exchange given you his righteousness, *positionally*.

However, practically (meaning in practice) in order for us to walk in (or live in) the blessings and promises that come with our salvation we *absolutely have a role*. You have a role in whether or not you are walking in the blessings and the promises of the covenant of your salvation.

When we put our full faith in Jesus Christ for salvation we enter into a two way relationship. Walking *with God in* that two way relationship is what enables us to experience the blessings and the promises that come from God.

And it is us rebelling against God (as we choose sin over the Lord) in that relationship that destroys the blessing and promises that come *from God, through* our salvation. And so, the covenant is real, positionally, but whether or not you are walking in the blessings and the promises of it, depends on whether or not you are walking in the blessings and the promises of it, or whether you are rebelling against God and choosing sin – and thereby suffering the correct and right consequences for that sin.

That is what we clearly (and graphically) see in Joshua Chapter 7.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, we need to see this in your Living Word. Your Living Word needs to be what it is to us personally. It is living and it is powerful and it is sharper than a two-edged sword and we give you the right, right now, to pierce us as necessary. To allow your Word to be discerner of the thoughts and intentions of our heart. Lord, we willingly lay ourselves open to you and pray that you would speak to us in your Word and*

*by your Spirit, and that you would do a great work in our lives, even at this moment. For your glory and in your name, Jesus. Amen.*

In our ‘me-centered’ church culture we tend to focus too much on what God is supposed to do for us and we tend to focus too little on what is required from us to enable God to do what he desires to do for us. Joshua Chapter 7 is about what is required *from us* for God to do what he desires to do *for us*.

So far in Joshua things have been all good with God both spiritually and physically. The people have been *walking* with God and they have been *obeying* him. Every verse of every chapter so far has been a spiritual and physical success, from the greatest promises of the first chapter through the crossing of the Jordan River, to the supernatural victory of Jericho.

Israel (under Joshua’s leadership) has been riding the spiritual wave of victory and the last verse of Chapter 6 (from last message) sums it all up.

**Joshua 6:27 (NLT)**

***27 So the Lord was with Joshua (and the people), and his (and their) reputation spread throughout the land.***

And then like a bird flying without a care straight into a plate glass window, we read the first word of the first verse of Joshua 7.

***BUT...***

**Joshua 7:1(A) (NLT)**

***1 But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the Lord . . .***

Six incredible chapters of victory and then the block wall of Chapter 7 verse 1. ***1 But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the Lord . . .***

In Chapter 7 the dust is still settling from the walls of Jericho being knocked down by the Lord. And so, still speaking about the Jericho battle, in the second half of verse 1 we see the WHO and the WHAT of the block wall that the Israelites are about to hit.

**Joshua 7:1(B) (NLT)**

***1 . . . A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated things, so the Lord was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, a descendant of Zimri son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah.***

This sin (this violation) has to do with the *“things set apart for the Lord.”* In verse 2 they are called *“the dedicated things.”* These are both good translations of the same word.

Last message in Chapter 6, we read the detailed instructions for God’s victory at Jericho.

In Joshua 6:18-19 we read,

**Joshua 6:18–19 (NLT)**

***18 “Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction (that’s the same word), or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel.***

***19 Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the Lord and must be brought***

This was not always going to be the case. In future battles the Israelites would be allowed to keep the spoils of the war (a portion going to the Lord). But Jericho was the first battle and the first victory and God was setting a precedent that all the spoils of victory belong to the Lord and as he gives them *to us* – they come *from him*.

But more importantly for our study today we have to see that *we have a role* (a part) in whether we *walk in the victory* of the Lord – *or not*.

And then secondly we need to see today that our individual rebellion and sin can have a direct impact on the Body of Christ that God has made us a part of. We’ll see both these points develop clearly as we continue.

**Joshua 7:2 (NLT)**

***2 Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the town of Ai, east of Bethel, near Beth-aven.***

(As I said) the dust is still setting at Jericho and Joshua’s ready for God to bring him another victory. Joshua does not go back to Gilgal (his spiritual home base) and it does not seem that he even stops to pray. Joshua is just confidently ready for the next battle. Maybe too confidently ready.

And so, seemingly without stopping to listen to the Lord, Joshua sends the spies right out to the next town to conquer and when they return, they’re even more over-confident than Joshua was.

**Joshua 7:3 (NLT)**

***3 When they returned, they told Joshua, “There’s no need for all of us to go up there;***

*it won't take more than two or three thousand men to attack Ai. Since there are so few of them, don't make all our people struggle to go up there."*

Piece o' cake. No problem. We can beat these next guys with both hands tied behind our back... So apparently without God's involvement at all, Joshua sends a small, over-confident force to Ai, to meet the next enemy.

And right here is where the "but" from verse 1 starts to show up.

**Joshua 7:4-5 (NLT)**

*4 So (only) approximately 3,000 warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated. The men of Ai 5 chased the Israelites from the town gate as far as the quarries, and they killed about thirty-six who were retreating down the slope. The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.*

That's the sound of that happy bird flying straight into a plate glass window! On the heels of such a miraculous victory at Jericho and with all the promises of God still with them, Israel is soundly defeated!!!

The men of this nowhere little town chase the Israelite warriors away like scared dogs and they kill thirty-six Israelite men. (You'll see at the end of the text today that these thirty-six men of the "Body of Israel" died because of one man's sin.)

And then what happens? (End of verse 5.) *The Israelites* (all of them) *were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away*.

When the first spies (who were sent to Jericho) reached Rahab the Prostitute she told the Israelites that their enemy's hearts had melted in fear at the miraculous power of God displayed through them. But now, it is the Israelites whose hearts are melting and who are paralyzed with fear.

And then something happens that I think is the strangest part of the entire story. Watch Joshua's response – but look closely at what he is implying. Because if you look closely you'll see Joshua actually trying to *blame God* for this defeat.

**Joshua 7:6-9 (NLT)**

*6 Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the Ark of the Lord until evening. 7 Then Joshua cried out, "Oh, 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!" (Almost the exact words the Israelites used to complain against God in the wilderness.)*

**8 Lord, what can I say now that Israel has fled from its enemies?** (Now that you've let us down.)

**9 For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?"** (Yeah God, what will happen then?)

Listen, please, leaders are frail men and women – sinners just like you – and here Joshua is proving that he is *just like each of us*. When sin in our life brings its *own consequences* and then the first thing we do is blame God, or at “least imply it” as Joshua is doing here.

And I don't think God appreciates it at all based on how God responds.

### **Joshua 7:10–11 (NLT)**

**10 But the Lord said to Joshua, “Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? (I think God's trying to say “quit your whining, & quit blaming me)**

**11 Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings.**

So first God sets Joshua straight. ***Get up – why are you praying like this is MY FAULT***

And it's not the praying part that's the problem with Joshua. It is that Joshua hadn't even bothered to *ask God why* this has happened. He hasn't even considered that it might be *his own fault* or the fault of the People of Israel. He just goes direct to blaming God, *just like we do*.

And so God sets him straight and then tells him in verse 11, ***Israel has sinned and broken my covenant!***

*(Notice that “willful sin” is breaking the covenant you have with God.)*

And then look how God views what has happened.

Again, verse 11. ***They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me.***

When we keep back something that has been dedicated to God, God considers it *stealing*.

God says the same thing in **Malachi 3:8 (ESV)** talking about Israel refusing to bring what belongs to God into the temple. God says – ***You are robbing me.***

Someone in the Israelite camp had stolen what God commanded to be set apart for him.

And then the end of verse 11 says, *they have not only stolen [these things] but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings.*

And then we see the consequences.

**Joshua 7:12 (NLT)**

*12 That is why (because of this sin) the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat. For now Israel itself has been set apart for destruction. I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction. (Same word as “set apart for the Lord”)*

This is a verse of radical consequences and radical repentance and it’s usually right about here that people start saying, “*That’s why I like the New Testament – I just stick with the New Testament because I don’t like all that “judgment” stuff.*”

God doesn’t like all that “judgment” stuff either. But God is first – perfectly holy – and then – within his holiness, God is love.

And if you never understand God’s judgment upon sin you’ll never understand God’s love in the sacrifice of Jesus.

And here God is saying because of this sin of stealing from God, Israel has now become “*set apart for destruction*” just like their enemies.

And then God says (second half of verse 12)

I will NOT be **with** you

I will NOT bring you **victory**

Until **you repent** – *by destroying the things among you that were set apart for destruction* (to the Lord).

Can I just stop right here and ask you... as I go through this text, is the Living Word of God making application of these truths in your own life?

Okay, so now God is going to tell Joshua the process for repentance in order to get Israel back on track.

**Joshua 7:13 (NLT)**

*13 “**Get up!** (A reiteration for Joshua) **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 from among you.***

And here is how it is going to work.

**Joshua 7:14–15 (NLT)**

*14 “In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes, and the Lord will point out (most likely by ‘lots’) the tribe to which the guilty man belongs. That tribe must come forward with its clans, and the Lord will point out the guilty clan. That clan will then come forward, and the Lord will point out the guilty family. Finally, each member of the guilty family must come forward one by one. (Serious Suspense)*

*15 The one who has stolen what was set apart for destruction will himself be burned with fire, along with everything he has, for he has broken the covenant of the Lord and has done a horrible thing in Israel.”*

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Burned with fire? *Just* for stealing something that belongs to the Lord? Yeah! *Just* for stealing something that belongs to the Lord.

And so Joshua obeys the Lord. And watch for the building intensity as step-by-step one person’s sin is found out.

**Joshua 7:16–18 (NLT)**

*16 Early the next morning Joshua brought the tribes of Israel before the Lord, and the tribe of Judah was singled out.*

*17 Then the clans of Judah came forward, and the clan of Zerah was singled out. Then the families of Zerah came forward, and the family of Zimri was singled out.*

*18 Every member of Zimri’s family was brought forward person by person, and Achan was singled out.*

Numbers 32:33 says . . . *you may be sure that your sin will find you out.*

But that wasn’t written to unbelievers. It was written to believers and Achans’s sin had found him out.

But please listen very carefully. Do you see how this one man’s sin has brought defeat on the entire People of Israel? And do you know we together as one are called the Body of Christ – many times in the New Testament. And have you ever seen the sin of one person (or small group) in a church bring defeat upon the entire church? (I have.) That is exactly what is happening here.

And so we are going to end with a very long read without much (if any) comment as we go through it.

The stage has been set. The truth has been told. This is the end of the story, but not the end of the lesson.

**Joshua 7:19–26 (NLT)**

*19 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.”*

*20 Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel.*

*21 Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest.”*

*22 So Joshua sent some men to make a search. They ran to the tent and found the stolen goods hidden there, just as Achan had said, with the silver buried beneath the rest.*

*23 They took the things from the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites. Then they laid them on the ground in the presence of the Lord.*

*24 Then Joshua and all the Israelites took Achan, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, daughters, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, tent, and everything he had, and they brought them to the valley of Achor.*

*25 Then Joshua said to Achan, “Why have you brought trouble on us? The Lord will now bring trouble on you.” And all the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and burned their bodies.*

*26 They piled a great heap of stones over Achan, which remains to this day. That is why the place has been called the Valley of Trouble ever since. So the Lord was no longer angry.*

Under intense interrogation – Achan confesses – but he never *repents* and he never throws himself on the *mercy* of the Lord.

Can I ask what have we stolen from God that belongs to him? Or, what sin are we hiding hoping it won’t be “found out?” Please hear me when I say repentance and the mercy of God is our only hope.

Achan’s judgment occurred in the “Valley of Trouble.” But God made a promise to his people in Hosea 2:15 where God says *I will transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope.*

God’s gateway of hope comes only one way – through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 2:24 (NLT)**

*24 [Jesus] personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.*

By freely receiving his payment for our sin, our “Valley of Trouble” is turned into the “Gateway of Hope.”



Yes, God's judgment upon sin is real. And yes, one person's sin can bring defeat into the entire Body of Christ. But God has given us a "Gateway of Hope," a way of salvation.

**Ephesians 2:4-6 (NLT)**

***4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much,  
5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)  
6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.***

... **because we are united with Christ Jesus**

Not because we are good or can ever "become good." But only because we are united with Jesus Christ.

If our text today has pointed out to you that you, yourself, are a sinner, please hear me when I say your only hope is by being united with Jesus Christ through your faith in him.

God calls us to repent of our sin (turn from it) and to be united to Jesus Christ by placing our full faith in him and then by continually turning from sin and continually turning to God.

You may need to do that for the first time today.

You may need to do that again, today.

Either way, I pray you would do it.

Let's pray. *Lord, individually we are each great sinners. Lord, if were only that we've stolen from you and hidden things from you, then we would only be like Achan, but Lord we are worse. All of our sin, the full weight of it, all of the times we've rebelled against your law, we've turned from you, that we've rejected your way for our own, Lord, it's a heavy burden.*

And so right now, I would just ask you, roll that burden over to Christ and say, *"I deserve judgment, but I receive your salvation, Jesus. I receive your offer of salvation. Of full payment for my sin. I turn from my sin and right now I commit to destroy that thing that needs to be destroyed in my life. And I turn to you, Jesus. I turn from the world and I turn towards the kingdom's cause. And today, Lord, today, forgive me. Wash me clean. Redeem me Lord. Buy me back from the master called 'sin.' Restore my life and place my feet on the Rock. Save me Lord. In your own name, amen.*