

New Beginnings, Joshua, 2026 – #6– Joshua 6: Jericho!

We continue our journey of New Beginnings with Joshua and the Children of Israel as we travel to **another place just a short distance from Jericho, named Ai.**

Jericho was in their review:

- Walls fell.
- Victory was experienced.
- The presence and power of God was everywhere.
- The great day ended as most great stories with **A Happy Ever After** - Rescue and redemption of Rahab and her family!

It was a story for the ages!

Next is Ai. (Not *Artificial Intelligence*) - A small town that stood between them and their objective. Easy. Manageable. **This time, the story would be much different.**

Ai would be remembered, not as a place of victory and joy, but a place where they learned a tough lesson, a sad, sobering memorial of regret.

Curiously, this valley – the Valley of Achor – is referenced in *prophecy as a future place of hope*, a place where one day Israel would be restored...

Hosea 2:15 - ***And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth...***

So, while there is a past lesson of dark, difficult truth that is relevant still, there is also future hope.

Why would God preserve an event this dark in the midst of a story of New Beginnings?

Sometimes, what stops a new beginning and a journey of victory is not the enemy outside, but the deadly, sometimes hidden danger within.

Etch this truth on your heart:

Hidden sin blocks forward movement with God.

Let's see what happened, and listen as God does His special work in our lives today.

I. Directions.

- 6:18. “Don’t...
- **The instructions were Simple. Clear.**
- **God didn’t explain “why?”, just what.**
Though sometimes we might wonder “*why?*”, most of the time we don’t need to know and couldn’t understand anyway.
We just need to know, trust and obey Him.

II. The Disaster.

A. The initial failure in facing Ai:

1. We never find that they sought God at all. Joshua or the leaders.

2. There was a natural (but deadly) self-reliance and confidence.

“It’s just a little town.”

“We can handle it.”

“Don’t send everyone... Just send a few thousand soldiers and it will be an easy victory. “

*****When we become convinced that “we” can, and leave God out, sooner than later we will find “we can’t.” In every area:**

Our lives. Our pursuits. Our relationships.

Jesus warned - “Without me you can do nothing!” John 15:5

3. They executed their plan, did their best, and failed utterly.

Their best wasn’t good enough. It never is.

B. The humiliating defeat

- At least 36 men died.
- “the hearts of the people melted, and became as water”
- Disgrace, Pain and Panic!

C. Joshua's response

Things went horribly off script. Joshua was frustrated. His response:

He blamed God – “*God why did you let this happen?! YOU let us down!*”

He argued His case against God:

- “Now, your name is disgraced, because *You let this happen!*”
- “Our enemies are encouraged. They have seen a weakness (i.e. – *“You have really messed up now, God.”*”
- What do you expect *me to do now after this humiliation?*”

D. Jehovah's answer: 7:10-

I've heard enough.

Maybe instead of blaming Me, you might ask,

Lord, you've been good to us. You've always been faithful. What went wrong?

Stand up, hush up, and listen!

God revealed that the cause, the problem, was...

III. The Disobedience: The Problem was their sin!

- Vs. 11- Israel has sinned
- Vs. 12-13 – “The accursed thing”

A. General: God had very clearly revealed His will; They ignored it & sinned.

Remember:

- God loves us.
- The purpose of God expressed in the will of God is ALWAYS driven by His love and intended for our good.

B. Particular: A man named Achan, part of the family of Israel, ignored God's Word and secretly took a **Babylonian garment, silver and gold.**

No doubt, there were the whispers of the enemy:

“God is holding out on you. You can't trust Him. Look – see – this isn't gonna hurt anything. Go ahead...” **Sound familiar!**

Then there was probably the sinful soul's default self-justification -

- “*It's no big deal.*”

- “You need this. This will change your future. You deserve this.”
- “You can control it, hide it, get away with it!”

Whatever the prevailing lie, Achan chose, and sinned.

The Principle: *Because God loves us*, He warns us of sins and its consequences!!

God repeatedly tells us that sin is deadly – not because He wants to make our lives miserable, but because He *loves us*. Wants to protect us. Wants to bless us!

When we convince ourselves that we can ignore God’s Word and rebel against God’s will, and *do better as well as somehow avoid the consequences, the pain of Ai looms over our horizon.*

The Price:

- Achan confessed.
 - Achan and all of his family died.
- **Sin rarely affects just us... it almost always hurts others

The story is harsh like many in the Old Testament. Scary.

We often struggle trying to balance the love and mercy of God with the righteousness and wrath of God. There is a lot we may not understand, **but**, there are a few things we are to learn and know:

- Sin is costly. Deadly.
- God told them – “*You can’t go on to victory with hidden sin.*”
- **Truth: We cannot walk in God’s power while hiding what He has already told us to remove.**

Why this story of a people and place long ago? Because...

Sometimes, what stops a new beginning and a journey of victory is not the enemy outside, but the deadly, sometimes hidden danger within.

IV. Discernment.

So - What must we address before we can move on to the life of blessing and victory God intends?

Worse: What, if left hidden in the tent of our hearts,

- Will steal our joy, kill our dreams, and destroy our hopes of God’s promises?
- Will hurt us, those we love – and break the heart of our God?

A. Reality of Our Sinfulness

1. *Is there really such a thing as sin? Yes.*

2. *Do we all sin? Rebel? Yes!*

Paul: Romans

3 - *"There is no that doeth good, no not one... All have sinned..."*

John – 1 John 1

8. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

B. The Remedy For Sin.

In our text - Someone had to pay the price and suffer the penalty. Before they could go on, they had to deal with their sin. It was terrible.

What they never could have imagined, we celebrate.

This horror of Ai pales in comparison to the real story it shadows:

Jesus took our sin, became our sin, and suffered all of the wrath and condemnation for that sin on the cross!

All we have to do is trust Him, receive Him as our Savior, and He will instantly do for us what we could never do for ourselves!

Jesus is the only remedy for our sin!

C. God's Response To Our Sin.

• *Does God kick us out of His family? No. never.*

• *Does God just ignore it because He loves us?*

Absolutely not, it is exactly the opposite!

Because God loves us, wants His best for us, and knows what sin will do to us, He always deals with our sin.

1. When we sin, we suffer the inherent consequences of sin itself.

God doesn't remove those; he warns us to fear them!

2. When we as His children sin, God always addresses our sin.

• He convicts us of sin

• He calls us from sin

• He sometimes chastens us. Heb. 12 says He scourges those He loves.

Many ways - Many degrees / Sometimes instant - Sometimes delayed.

D. The Road Back - What do we do now? *When we sin*, and God brings us to the awareness of our sin, how do we respond?

1. Confession: "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us of all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

- Confess. Agree with God. Acknowledge it.
- **What sins have we tucked away and somehow convinced ourselves that they don't matter, that God will ignore them and bless anyway?** **Is perhaps God's Spirit shining His light on**
 - Private bitterness.
 - Secret greed.
 - Hidden lust.
 - Small dishonesty.
 - An addiction.
 - Unforgiveness.
 - Spiritual laziness.
- The very first thing the Prodigal did when he went back home to His Father- **"Father, I have sinned..."** Luke 15:21

When is the last time God broke your heart with conviction, and you cried out in confession to Him?

2. Repentance.

God's Last Word to the churches – to us – Revelation – seven times He tells them – "repent!"

Rev 3:19 - *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

More than regret or feeling bad about something, we are to turn from disobedience and obey; from our way to His; from sin to our Savior!

Jesus in grace told a broken woman, **"Go, and sin no more."**

If God's Spirit leads us to genuinely repent, our lives will reflect it!

3. Restoration of the fellowship of our relationship.

1 John 1 - Walk with Him in full fellowship, in light!

Luke 15 – When the prodigal returned home, a loving father was waiting, restored him – Rejoiced!

4. Do Right. Do as He leads:

- Apologies
- Restitution
- Extend grace as we have received grace from Him!
- Sometimes – **Public confession!**

As I was finalizing the notes for this morning, I mused –

What do you want to see as you look at the congregation as a result of the truth of Ai? My answer –

“I want us to know we have been with Him today. That we have been quiet and listened. That we have followed where He has led.”

David in Psalm 139

23. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

I pray that across the congregation, evidence of our time with Him will be seen in

- Shining faces.
- Soft tears.
- Quiet kneeling.
- Maybe decisive moves
- Perhaps a few who don't make eye contact because something holy is happening inside.

How? Before God leads us forward, He directs us inward.

Salvation.

Children of God: *Perhaps the Spirit of God has pointed to something in our tent!*

- Confession.
- Repentance.
- Restoration.
- Right actions.