

Joshua 8:1-20
Success In Second Chances
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Discussion Questions:

1. How do you normally feel after a failure or mistake?
 2. What were some of the most important changes Israel made? Can those changes relate to our lives?
 3. What impact do you think Joshua had when he stayed with the people? In what way is Jesus like that too?
 4. Why do most people use the same tactics after failures?
 5. What have you learned about God this week? What can you do differently now?
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We have learned some great lessons with Ai and Achan.

The cost and consequences of sin,
The judgment of God
And Confessing in a way that glorifies God,

We all make mistakes, but, we don't always learn from them.

...Sin is inevitable, but growth is a choice.

...And part of what helps us grow is making better choices.

Joshua went back to the Lord and God revealed the problem...

...There was sin in the camp.

They dealt with the issue, the sin was found and judged...

What comes after sin or failure? Hopefully, a second chance.

Title: Success in Second Chances

Big Idea: Success in Second Chances takes new choices.

They go right back where they were before... Ai.

If this is the way you have to go, get back to where you were.

When you get lost...

When you make a mistake in an equation...

When you lose your wallet or ur phone...

...You go back where you were before you got lost.

8:1 Now the Lord said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.

Even after their failure, God's words are the same as before.

He doesn't further humiliate them or rub it in.

There is no long lecture about their failure and sin.

They are not cancelled or given a second class assignment.

They have confessed, their failure is dealt with, let's try again.

How do u feel after failure? Embarrassed? Discouraged? Afraid?

...So, what God says is so good, it is key...

"Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, I have given it to you."

Going into a second chance...the first choice is faith not fear.

1. Have faith not fear after failure.

It is normal to be afraid after failures.

What if I fail again? What if I don't belong?

What if everyone thinks I am a fake? I let people down again?

You must decide **when** you fail you will get back up...

...you will listen to the Lord, deal w/it, learn from it, and keep goin.

God didn't fail, His promises still apply, there is work to do.

It would be a further failure to allow fear to stop their progress.

...Don't let fear double failure...

...Don't fear trying again, fear the Lord instead.

Next God says, this time, take all the people of war with you.

The first choice was renewed faith and their second is to...

2. Take no half measures.

Don't underestimate the enemy or ...

...make compromises that will weaken you.

...Don't flirt with the devil or make half hearted efforts.

When you are in a spiritual battle...

...fight to win, fight with all you have, fight like you mean it.

If He is the Lord, and you want victory...

...do whatever you must...

...to fulfill whatever God says must be done.

The question becomes how badly do you want victory?

...Or how badly do you not want to lose?

There is a great book called Atomic Habits by James Clear.

Make good habits easier and bad habits harder.

If you don't want to eat so much **sugar**, don't buy it.

If you don't want to waste time on **social media**, delete the app.

If you don't want to spend so much time **watching TV**, unplug it.

Take no half measures.

2 And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it.”

God promises victory, just like Jericho- But not like Jericho.

There is no seven days of marching.

There is no Ark of the Covenant before them.

There is no blowing of trumpets.

3. Fresh starts often require fresh tactics.

There will be victory, but it will be accomplished differently.

God knows the problem, so God knows the way....

...this isn't a giant walled city.

This is why we follow the Lord not a religious system.

We listen to the Holy Spirit not a memorized process.

We can easily get caught up in..

...religious ways, historical ways, comfortable ways...

...but what we really need is to follow His ways.

God hardly ever healed two people the same way.

- One leper He touched.
- Other lepers were healed as they went to the priest.
- Another leper washed in the Jordan River.

Don't get so caught up in the **how**, you forget the **what and why**.

The what is conquering the land.

The why is the judgment of Canaan and possessing the Land.

Other things are negotiable...

Methods change over time, but mission stays all the time.

Also...

At Jericho , the spoil was the Lord's, but now it is for the people.

Just because God said no once, doesn't mean it is no forever

We wait by faith, then we enjoy by faith.

Waiting shows God's rightful place, and it develops our character.

I am not a slave to my emotions, feelings, or desires.

Delayed gratification is a top indicator for future success.

There was a blessing coming.

There was plunder to be taken.

There was a reward on its way.

But I also do not demonize what He says no to.

waiting to engage in sex in marriage, doesn't mean sex is bad.
waiting to date the right person, doesn't mean dating is bad
waiting to seek the Lord with ur money, doesn't make money bad
waiting to know His direction b4 moving. Doesnt make movin bad
Once you have waited for Him, enjoy what He has given.

God's pleasures and blessings have a time and a purpose.

...If Achan had waited for Ai, what could have been different?

3 So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night. **4** And he commanded them, saying: "Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready.

5 Then I and all the people who *are* with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them. **6** For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, '*They are* fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. **7** Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand. **8** And it will be, when you have taken the city, *that* you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the Lord you shall do. See, I have commanded you."

They are using their past failure for a future trap.

...You think we failed before and we will fail again?

The pride of Ai will be their downfall.

...Pride is always a weakness...

...it leaves us open to ambush.

Pride says "I did it before, I can do it again"...just like Sampson.

Joshua also tells them not to go far away and to be ready.

4. Keep close, be ready, and stay humble.

We are all in a spiritual battle...

Don't wander, keep close, stay on mission.

Be ready for whatever and whenever.

There is an enemy and a battle...

...don't fall asleep on the battlefield.

And...though God is with us, we are not invincible,,,

...Stay humble...we are dependent on Him.

9 Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people.

You think these people were not nervous? A little afraid? PTSD?

They had just been beaten badly by this little town.

But Joshua stayed among the people.

5. Stay among God's people.

Whether you are a leader or not...stay among the people.

Don't get isolated or separated.

Staying together is encouraging and empowering.

For leaders, we lead people, we need to be present w/people.

We don't just lead with ideas or words or direction.

We can all think of great ideas...

...but people need to know us and trust us to follow us.

The shepherd smells like the sheep.

The teacher knows his students.

The parent understands their kids.

The business owner connects with his team and/or his clients.

10 Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai.

Skipping...

Joshua sets the ambush and the king sees it.

14 Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw *it*, that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city.

Joshua rose up early when he heard from the Lord.

But the king of Ai rushes off in pride and self confidence.

6. Rise up early, but don't hurry.

The Lord was never in a hurry...there was no rushing...

...and yet He always fulfilled the Father's will.

Skipping down...

Joshua acted like they were beaten again and all Ai rushed out.

18 Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that *is* in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that *was* in his hand

toward the city. **19** So *those in* ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. **20** And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.

By faith and in obedience, Joshua stretches out his spear...
...and the victory is theirs...now the enemy is lost.

7. Stretch out your hand.

God has given each of us different gifts and tools.

Use your strengths, Use your gifts,
Use your time, talent and treasure.

...Use whatever you have in your hand.

...But don't just use it, stretch it out.

Joshua carried a spear.

Moses carried a staff...and he held it out so people could see it

The man with the withered hand...stretched it out to he Lord.

The boy had 5 loaves and 2 fish...he gave it away to the disciples

The widow had some flour...she gave it to Elijah first.

When you get a second chance... stretch it out.

Give people something to see and follow.

What can you stretch out?

How can people see what God is doing in your life?

How can people follow you to a victory?

How can you lead in a way that inspires and causes action?

Everyone loves a good comeback story.

So the next time you fail make some new choices...

... that will bring success if you get a second chance.