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Joshua 7:1-6
Message Title: Live and Learn

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about learning? Do you like to learn so you can know or grow? Sometimes we like to know things so we can be right, other times we like to grow so we can be closer to Christ? What do you think about that idea?
 2. In regards to God's people, if God doesn't change, why is sometimes God against them and other times God is for them?
 3. How would you have felt if you were an Israelite who was defeated in battle and lost a loved one?
 4. What is the best antidote for being fearful we are not enough?
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Teaching Notes

How many of you like to learn? Is to know or to grow?

If you remember from a few weeks ago...

Joshua and the nation of Israel are coming off a great victory.

They marched around the walls daily for a week...

...They blew their trumpets and...

...They shouted and the walls came down!

They defeated Jericho without a battering ram or a siege.

Rahab and her family were saved...

...and everything else was devoted to the Lord or destruction.

...Or so we thought.

But the next chapter starts with a But.

Sadly, today, we will find their second battle was their first defeat.

There is a lot of truth to the saying...

...”you learn more from your failures than you successes”.

Over the next couple weeks we will try to learn from their defeat.

Because it is also true that one of the best ways...

...to avoid mistakes is to learn from someone else's.

Title: Live and Learn...Big Idea:

We all sin, but a sin isn't the end if we can learn from it.

7:1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel. They had a great victory...but they committed a great trespass.

Achan had taken of the accursed things.

Everything was either destroyed or devoted to the Lord.

But notice it is Israel that God says committed a trespass.

1. Our sin impacts our community.

The sin of one was also the sin of a family and a nation.

The writer purposely names the lineage of Achan.

There is a responsibility we all have as part of God's community. Every person is attached to another person.

"A trespass":it is a purposeful step over the line.

A trespass is a rebellion to God's authority and...

...a condemnation of His knowledge and goodness.

Judas purposely betrayed the Lord for 30 pieces of silver.

Adam rebelled against God's direction because...

the fruit looked good and seemed to make one like God.

Saul decided to keep the best for himself and say it was for the Lord when God said it was all to be destroyed.

David who knew Bathsheba was another man's wife and slept with her anyway.

These are all trespasses and rebellion to the authority of God and an affront to His glory and goodness.

...And each of these resulted in separation and death.

2. Sin brings separation and death.

Next notice...It says the Lord is angry with them.

so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.

The word **anger** is actually "af" face, nostril, or nose.

It is often kindled or hot.

God's face was angry hot against Israel.

>Isn't God for them? How is He against them?...Yes, it's both.

God is for them: He chose them, guides & provides for them

...but when they turn away from God and go their own way...

...God is against them because...

...God is against sin.

3. Sin is missing the mark of God's good life.

Sin and especially trespasses bring separation and death.

Because God is for goodness and life...

...God is against sin and death.

So if someone is bringing sin and death into the community...

...God is against them, He hates them.

But, God also loves them...He is not malicious.

He judges as a good judge for the good of the community.

He cuts out cancer like a good doctor for the healing of the body.

He focuses on the habits that harm like a good counselor for the health of the home.

God deals with sin in the community to keep the community safe

Because God is ultimate life and goodness

He doesn't want people to live in rebellion to Him.

God may use painful consequences to keep us from deadly consequences.

We can learn this the easy way or the hard way.

And here...at Ai...they are going to learn this the hard way.

2-3 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few."

Do you see a problem with "Now Joshua sent..."?

Who is missing? God.

There was no prayer

No waiting on the Lord

No seeking His will.

No standing on holy ground.

Maybe if Joshua would have stood on holy ground first...

he would have avoided having his face in shameful ground later.

4-5 So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

Wow. That was quick!

They go up the hill to fight and come running back in defeat.

...And they have become like their pagan enemies...

...hearts melting in fear.

But...Didn't God say, No one would stand before them!?!

...How could they be defeated?!?

The promise that "no one would stand against them" was predicated on their standing with the Lord.

God does not stand with us, we stand with God.

When the Commander of the Lord's Armies first answered Joshua's question...are you for us or our enemies...He said, No.

When He told Joshua to take off his sandals, it was because Joshua stood on the holy ground of God's presence.

When we choose to stand where God is not present...

...and we take our own stand...

...the ground we stand on is not holy...

...and we miss out on the power of His presence.

4. Sin keeps us from the blessing of God's presence.

In His presence is fullness of joy,

there is truth for living

There is hope for the future.

There is wisdom and direction, and grace and blessing.

In hubris/pride, they thought they could do it without God.

Logically maybe they are thinking...

...this is a small town...we got this one ourself.

We may think we should ask for help only when we NEED it.

...But the life of faith is NEVER meant to do it ourselves.

We always need God.

We are walking by faith...we can't see the way!

We always need His direction and help.

Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing."

Our victories don't come from God, just because they are hard...
...victories come from the Lord because they are His.

Proverbs 21:31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.

And...the Lord's victories bring the Lord glory.

But when people get the glory or think they should...
...everything gets screwed up.

People begin to look to people instead of the Lord.

Then, they make idols of other people and put them on pedestals
...and they forget they are just people like they are.

They don't see real humans that make mistakes...

...they see fake little gods to worship and follow.

Anyone on a pedestal falls...Everyone has feet of clay
...And when they fall, those who have been trusting them fall.

Do you remember what was said re: Joshua at the end of ch 6?

His fame spread- fame is a dangerous place for anyone.

If our fame spreads to our heads, we are set up for a fall.

Proverbs 11:2 **When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.**

16:18 **Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.**

And just as with Israel...usually after a fall comes fear...

You realize you don't belong here.

You can't cut it. You don't know what to do next.

When most people feel like this, they deny it or run from it.

It is not true...we didn't lose, the ref was against us!

Or they quit or walk away.

The way to deal with these feelings isn't to deny or run in fear...

...it is to run to the Father and then walk by faith.

The antidote for fear is not pride it is humility.

5. Faith and humility keep us from sin and fear.

Let's go a little deeper...as we close.

Why does pride cause us to deny or run or quit or avoid?

Our pride can't process the truth of our failure.
Our pride can't handle the reality of our inability.
Our pride can't deal with the limitations of our humanity.

But part of living is making mistakes and learning from them.

The bible tells us that we all sin.
We all fall short of the glory of God.

When I trust God, I walk in humanity and humility.

Like Israel...in pride and self confidence we can run ahead...
...but then we fall flat on our face and lose big...

What happens next is key and varies...

Some deny it altogether or blame someone else.
Others run or quit because they realize their inability.
Still others don't deny, they confess.
They don't run away, they run to.

Pride keeps us from coming to God in faith, and fear creeps

But then we try to keep fear out with more pride.

But we become more and more of a fake and less and less of who we really are.

The real way to get rid of the fear we are not enough.

Is to admit that we aren't...but He is!

The real way to get rid of the fear that we can't...

Is to confess that we can't...but He can.

Pride and self confidence is not the antidote for sin or fear...
...it is the cause.

We know what the problem was...we saw it in verse 1.

They don't need to be afraid...

...they just need to get back to the Lord.

Defeat breaks us.

If we yield to the breaking we are healed.
If we resist the breaking we will be broken.

And to his credit, what does Joshua do?

6 **Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.**