

OVERCOMING DEFEAT – Joshua 8:1-29

Joshua 8:1-9 - The **first** step in overcoming defeat.

1) Do not be afraid or dismayed.

Afraid – yare (yaw-ray): fearful, dreadful, terrified.

Dismayed – hatat (khaw-thath): to be shattered, broken, demolished.

Faith is not the absence of fear but trusting God despite our fears.

(Lamentations 3:22-23) Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

2) Go up to Ai. (v.1b, 2) Ai represents the place or point in our lives of “defeat.”

Note: two things when confronting defeat.

(A) Surround yourself with support. (v.1)

(B) God's Promise. (v.1b)

(2 Corinthians 1:9-10) Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.

The promises of God are always greater than our “defeat!”

(Isaiah 65:8) Thus says the Lord: 'As the new wine is found in the cluster, And one says, 'Do not destroy it, For a blessing is in it,' So will I do for My servants' sake, That I may not destroy them all.

(Isaiah 61:3) “...beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

3) Follow the Lord's command (word).

What really matters is following the word of the Lord!

(v.7b, 8) “...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.”

Ambush set up between Ai and Bethel - Ai – ruin / Bethel – House of God.

Symbolic of the “choice we have in defeat.

(Proverbs 21:16) A man who wanders from the way of understanding Will rest in the assembly of the dead.

(Proverbs 18:10) The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

From defeat, follow the Lord’s commands, to safety!

In (v.14-17) the plan unfolds, and Ai takes the bait!

4) Sustaining Prayer. (v.18)

Exodus 17 – Moses’ raised hands.

Prayer is what sustains us in the battle, from “defeat!”

(1 Thessalonians 5:17) “...pray without ceasing...”

(v.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. “

(v.21-27) Ai falls.

The price of 400 years of “unrepentance” and “rebellion!”

Genesis 15:13-16 - (Genesis 15:16) “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

(v.28-29) 28 “So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. 29 And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua

commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that remains to this day.”

CONCLUSION: The Man in the Arena.

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”— Theodore Roosevelt

(Psalm 61:1-4) Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings.