



MONDAY 28 MAY 2018

SERIES: Joshua – Promise & Courage

Read: Joshua 7:1 & Romans 5

Plug In...

We stop on this verse to notice how God works. This story tells of 'one' person's sin, Achan's, but attributes it to *all* Israel – "But, the Israelites were unfaithful...the LORD's anger burned against *Israel*". [Read the entire chapter to hear the story.]

The story shows God's steep punishment for Achan's sin; many individual Israelites were killed in their next battle (v.5). When Achan is discovered (vv.16-19) his entire household are stoned.

Chew It Over...

This seems completely unfair. How can others pay for the guilt of an individual? We more readily understand how the *effects* of an individual's action can flow down to others. Analogies like a parent trafficking drugs and going to jail has sharp consequences for their family. We grasp something of 'one' representing the 'many' when we think of a Member of Parliament for our electorate – what they vote on is considered our vote, our voice. Or, our footy team kicks a goal, the whole team gets the points, not just the full-forward. In fact, we who weren't on the field, watch the TV shouting, "We won, we won!". But it has to be said, we in Australia live by the notion, "Whoever does the crime, they do the time".

Passages like Joshua 7 show God doesn't only see people as individuals, but views people as groups, or households, or nations. God made a covenant with Israel so, when an Israelite breaks the covenant, all Israel is in jeopardy. Other examples: some priests trying to usurp God's appointment in Moses, [Numbers 16:25-27](#); Jeroboam's sin means all Israel will go into exile, [1 Kings 14:7-16](#); even some of Jesus' parables carry the same dynamic, Matthew [18:21-35](#)). Eastern cultures are not as confronted with these

stories as we are as their identity is grounded more in the family, or household, or nation. Australians, the West, we love our families, but we define our sole identity by a big capital "I".

Yes, there are questions remaining. Yes, it may not all sit comfortably. However, our aghast at '*How can an individual pay for the guilty of another?*' changes somewhat when we think this is how God worked with Jesus: the *one* for the *many*. God deals with groups, families, humanity through a head; a representative. Without it, what is true for Jesus would not be true for us. Read [Romans 5:12-21](#).

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God for giving everything that Christ won to you. Thank Jesus for plundering you from Satan's household and placing you under His Divine headship, counting you as His family. Use these Scriptures to form a response as you pray today: [Mark 3:23-27](#); [John 1:12](#); [Ephesians 2:19](#).



TUESDAY 29 MAY 2018

SERIES: Joshua – Promise & Courage

Read: Joshua 7:1-15

Plug In...

Joshua is confused and desperate, his words bare that out. Maybe Joshua can't believe what he just saw, the Israelites have lost courage – again! They've turned on their tail. He knows that places them under God's judgement and begins sharing his grief with God and appealing for God to uphold His own name.

God sees all. God tells Joshua, yes Israel have sinned, but the sin is not this wobbling at the knees, but something prior. Someone has broken the covenant making all Israel liable.

Chew It Over...

As readers, we were told up front about Achan's sin. So, we know that God knows. There is going to be a slow reveal of the culprit and it will be painstaking and agonising to watch Achan hold out thinking he might still escape.

We need to stop pretending. How foolish it is to pretend that the Sovereign LORD, Lord of Heaven and Earth – our maker – does not see EVERYTHING. Yet, we pretend. We hide.

Prayer Suggestion

Take [Psalm 139](#) and spend time asking the Lord to run a searchlight over your heart. List some things out. Ask Jesus to expose motives. Trust that He knows you thoroughly. Know you can do this, be vulnerable, for He has thoroughly forgiven you.



WEDNESDAY 30 MAY 2018

SERIES: Joshua – Promise & Courage

Read: Joshua 7:16-21 & Romans 14:11-12

Plug In...

This scene goes in slow motion. Every group comes forward. The LORD shaves the group down narrower and narrower. Each round is an opportunity for Achan to take responsibility and own up. It is excruciating to watch him continue to hide.

Then, God identifies the person. In one last call for Achan to set his heart right, Joshua says, “Give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honour him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me” (v.19).

Chew It Over...

Joshua’s words can be translated as “give glory to the LORD” or “praise the LORD”. We learn it is an act of praise and worship to confess. How is it that confession gives glory to God? Think: what does the action of confession and to whom you confess, say?

Prayer Suggestion

In order to pray, reflect how Achan shows us God knows everything; there will be a day where we will have to give an account of everything we’ve done ([Romans 14:11-12](#)). Make confession part of your regularly praising of God.

[[Psalm 86](#) is a good example of confessing our nature, our heart struggles, our evil world circumstances that also praises God for His glory, His redemption, His forgiveness.]



THURSDAY 31 MAY 2018

SERIES: Joshua – Promise & Courage

Read: Joshua 7:21 & Colossians 3:5-6

Plug In...

The confession of Achan is recorded very concretely. He saw something beautiful. He wanted what sparkled. He wanted the power gold and silver would give him. Achan says, he took them because behind the attraction was that he coveted them.

Chew It Over...

The Bible often shows that coveting seems to undergird all behavioural sin. So, the taking with the hands, the speaking with the lips, the walking into the wrong places, the desiring with the eyes all trace back to coveting.

The Ten Commandments list begins with “Have no other gods before Me” and ends with “Do not covet” ([Deuteronomy 5:1-21](#)). Coveting seems to be the deep heart motivation that lies behind breaking all of the commandments, even the first one. Coveting to be God.

[Colossians 3:5-6](#) – Paul explains that all coveting is idolatry (NIV says, ‘greed’, most versions render ‘covetousness’). So serious is this deep motivation that Paul says Christians need to actively put it to death – *mortify*.

Are we willing to find out what our motivations are? It means asking questions with God’s help. It means being concrete like Achan: What’s catching, transfixing our gaze? What is alluring? Notice these things. And ask yourself: What is going on for me with that attraction? It is not that they are beautiful or worth something that makes them wrong ([1 Timothy 4:4](#)). We won’t notice unless we plan to notice these things. Spend time now.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask Jesus to equip you with the Spirit to rigorously put to death the covetousness that lies within. Ask the Lord to make you creative in finding time and places to do this often.



FRIDAY 1 JUNE 2018

SERIES: Joshua – Promise & Courage

Read: Joshua 8:1-29

Plug In...

After the sin of Achan has been dealt with, the covenant relationship is back as it should be. God says again go with strength and courage. We see the attack on Ai is successful. This time the Israelites are permitted to take spoils from the city.

Chew It Over...

God is not stingy. All those beautiful things Achan wanted were going to be given from the Lord. Yet, he grabbed early because he didn't trust. We also see that the sinful mistakes of Israel God is able to incorporate into His entire plan to fulfil what He has promised.

Imagine some of the things that must have gone through Achan's mind: "The Jericho campaign went well, but I'm not sure this can be sustained. I better grab what I can now." Or: "Surely God is not being too literal, after all God what does God need with a beautiful cloak?" It is not hard to come up with plausible justifications that might have gone on in Achan's mind. They start to sound familiar.

We too can succumb to Achan's mindset because we have not seen everything God has promised us in Jesus in its fullness. Reflect on parts of Scripture where God knows we will be tempted to lose courage and strength.

[Romans 8:28-32](#) – God doesn't miss a beat. The end result, all things are Christ's, so all things will be yours.

[Matthew 6:25-35](#) – God knows exactly what you need to stay committed to the Kingdom, He'll give it to you ([Matthew 6:9-11](#)), and you will one day have all the blessings of the Kingdom.

[Hebrews 13:5](#) – God has dealt with the only thing that could ever separate Him from you, our sin.

Prayer Suggestion

If you feel weak, tell God. If you sense belief is hard and hope is waning, ask Jesus to give you what is needed to persevere. If circumstances have become so dark that you can't see a way out, ask for Jesus to hold you and lift you. These are all requests God will absolutely honour ([Hebrews 13:5](#); *cf.* [Joshua 1:1-9](#)).



The Lakes

WEEKEND 2-3 JUNE 2018

SERIES: Joshua – Promise & Courage

Read: Joshua 8:30-35

Plug In...

Jericho was a success – almost, had not Achan kept goods for himself. Now that Achan's sin has been dealt with, the conquest of Jericho and Ai form a completion of entry into the Promised Land.

Joshua organises for the people to stand and listen to the Words of God recorded by Moses. The blessings and the curses. The people must, must, must remember the covenant, remember the Word of God.

Chew It Over...

Already through Joshua we've seen the need to constantly self-examine (e.g. [Joshua 1:7-8](#)), set up reminders about God so that you'll almost trip over them ([Joshua 4:4-7](#)), create constant conversations and rituals so that others will know the Lord ([Joshua 4:20-24](#); cf. [5:2-12](#)) – even to confess in the wake of sin to give glory to God ([Joshua 7:19](#)).

The New Testament tells Christians to likewise have reminders (i.e. Lord's Supper), rituals (i.e. baptism), to be involved in things that will inscribe the things Jesus has done for us and the wonder of and glory of God upon our hearts. Otherwise we will forget. Given the insidious nature of covetousness, we've been urged through the Achan story in Joshua and by Paul to *put it to death* (more than once, [Colossians 3:5-8](#); [Romans 8:12-13](#)). Sin is so dangerous that we must not kid ourselves.

John Owen urged people to regularly practice the *mortification of sin* (killing off sin in our lives). He once wrote, "A man may easier see without eyes, speak without a tongue, than truly mortify one sin without the Spirit". So the will to mortify, the doing

of it, is all the work of the Spirit. Nevertheless, we're involved. Paul talks of 'putting off' sin and then working at 'putting on' attitudes, dispositions, virtues of Christ.

You could start by reading [Colossians 3:1-17](#) and for each of the things that belong to the earthly nature ask: *How do these things specifically manifest, or turn up in areas of my life?* For each of the virtues of the Lord to clothe yourself, take realms of your life and ask: *What words, actions, attitudes would come into being if I embrace this? How do I inscribe this onto my heart with the help of the Spirit?*

Prayer Suggestion

We need the super-beyond-human power of God's Spirit to realise any of this. And it is poured out to us because of Jesus, so ask.