



Victorious Christian Living “The Consequences of Sin And the Power of Repentance” Joshua 7:1-26

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The basic premise of the video series, **“Behold Your God: Rethinking God Biblically,”** is that the American church has lowered the concept of God’s holiness.

- Critics point to a rise in “worldliness” in the church, where there is very little difference between the lifestyles of believers and unbelievers, other than church attendance.
- Christian Apologist Tim Keller says today’s “consumerist” approach to worship is more concerned about attracting people to an event than about the assembling of believers to worship God.
- A low view of God will result in a high view of self and a low view of our sin. But a high view of God will result in a low view of self and a high view of our sin. As A.W. Tozer said, ***“When a person respects the supremacy of God’s pure holiness, he begins to respect the seriousness of his sins, because they separate him from God.”***
- When we realize that the greatest problem we have today is to find some way to make ourselves acceptable unto a holy God, those temporal problems that seemed so enormous become so tiny. No matter what they are, temporal

problems last for a season, but our problem with sin could last for eternity.

This God we serve and worship is not only holy; **He is “Holy, Holy, Holy!”** He is eternal, He is pure, He is sovereign overall, in all and through all. He is powerful, all-knowing, ever-present at all times, and in every place. He is just, merciful, true, and loving. This God in whom we believe is incomprehensible, yet He loved us so much that He took the initiative to redeem us from our sins.

- We are sinners by nature and by choice, and to sin means to “miss the mark,” to “fall short of God’s glory.”
- When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, He cast them from His presence because they fell short of His glory.
- As descendants of Adam and Eve, every human being inherited that sin nature, and we prove that each time we sin, whether by commission or omission.
- And every sin, regardless of how insignificant we think it is, is against a Holy God, worthy of our death, and our eternal separation from His presence.
- However, when we confess our sins, and repent of them, God accepts the death of His Son as the wages we deserved for our sins. This is what it means to be saved from the penalty of our sin through our faith alone and in Christ alone.

America is reaping the bitter harvest of pulpits that refuse to preach the truth and refuse to call people to repentance.

- When people no longer see their personal need for forgiveness, they see no need for Christ, which leads to a low view of God, a high view of self, and a low view of their sins, compared to the more heinous sins of the wicked.
- Our only hope is for the Church to return to its mission as the Pillar and Ground of Truth, and for pastors to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God, calling sinners to see their sins, and reminding them of the wages of sin.
- If we are to see a genuine revival among God’s people, it will not come through some clever marketing scheme or cultural relevance seminar, it will come when God’s people are not ashamed to fall on their face before God, and cry out unto God for His forgiveness.
- Then, they must do whatever is necessary to fully repent of those sins, including restoration and reconciliation with those affected by those sins, for anything less than that is not genuine repentance, and that’s why sin is no big deal to us today.

Up to this point in our study of the Book of Joshua, we have seen one victory after the other, out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, through the wilderness, across the Jordan, and a resounding victory over Jericho.

- However, due to one man’s sin, the children of Israel are in retreat, having been defeated at Ai, and Joshua is on his face before God, filled with dismay that, not only had the Israelites been defeated, but the glorious name of the Lord had been discredited.

The parallel to the life of the Christian is clear. Salvation is the gift of God’s grace to those who will receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. However, sanctification requires a higher level of daily disciplines.

- After being delivered from that ***“sin that so easily besets us,”*** we may think that we can just claim victory over any obstacle that would hinder our spiritual growth.
- However, the child of God that has fully surrendered their life unto the Lordship of Christ has just opened themselves up to a different level of temptation and sin, for while Satan was not threatened by their superficial faith, which

permitted the sins of personal pleasure, he was certainly not pleased when they said their life's desire was to glorify God and to praise Him forever.

The three reasons why the Israelites were defeated at Ai.

1. An Air of Self-Confidence – In verse 3 the spies told Joshua: “*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.*”

- Ai was a smaller city than Jericho, and since the fall of Jericho was so easy, the Israelites thought Ai would be even easier.
- Obviously, that view was based upon the belief that the Israelites had captured Jericho, when all they did was to walk around it and shout!
- God was the Victor over Jericho, and it was pure assumption for the spies to expect God to empower them to defeat Ai as He had Jericho.
- Just as the Israelites were overly self-confident because of their victory at Jericho, Christians can become overly self-confident when they are victorious over those sins that so easily beset us, and think the rest of their journey will get easier, but it won't.

2. A Neglect of Prayer – Vs. 2 – “*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.”*

- Before the battle of Jericho, Joshua spent much time in prayer and the Lord met him there and gave him the battle strategy.
- Before Ai, Joshua did not take the time to pray; he just began making plans to capture the next city in Canaan.
- In verses 6-9, Joshua rent his clothes and fell on his face before the Ark of the Covenant. But in his frustration, he began to question God as to why He would allow them to be defeated at Ai.
- In verse 10, God rebuked Joshua: “***Get up! Why are you laying down on your face when there is work to be done?***” To plead with God after being defeated was utterly useless!
- Had Joshua had his time in prayer before he sent the men to Ai, God could have revealed to him that there was sin in the camp, and not only was he heading for defeat, but disaster.
- One of the greatest temptations of living the Victorious Christian Life is to think we can arrive at such a high point in our daily walk with the Lord that we don't have to do those basic fundamental disciplines. But as Robert Murray McChesney said: “**What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.**”

3. The Sin of Disobedience – In verse 11, God told Joshua: “*Israel has sinned, and they have transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.*”

- One man had stolen some property which belonged to God, but the verdict from heaven was not that Achan had

sinned, but Israel had sinned; One man had failed God, but many soldiers had died, and the whole army was defeated.

- The timeless truth or the practical principle is that **when one Christian sins, the whole Church is affected: not only that local fellowship of believers, but the whole Body of Christ.**
- Joshua called the people to prepare for a tribe-by-tribe, family-by-family, tent-by-tent, man-by-man inspection, with the intent of finding the man who took those things that belonged to the Lord.
- Verses 20-21 – ***“I have indeed sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I’ve done. When I saw the spoils of a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”***
- Verses 25-26 – ***“And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.” So, all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So, the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore, the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.***