

THE REMEDY FOR SIN AND DEFEAT: CONFRONTATION WITH THE LORD

JOSHUA 07:06–26

Introduction

All kinds of human emotions are felt by people who experienced failure. There are the emotions of discouragement and depression, of being distressed and downhearted, of feeling down and being treated like an outcasts, of being sad and crestfallen, of being disheartened and demoralized.

Sadly, these emotions become serious problems for some people. For example, people by the millions wrestle with the problem of depression and discouragement, living defeated, unsuccessful lives. For many people, life is like a roller coaster with peaks and valleys, being up one day and down the next. Life becomes like a wave of the sea rolling in out, swaying to and fro. Sometimes there is progress, but there is also regression. Gains are sometimes made, but losses are also suffered. From time to time there is victory, but there is far too often defeat. There are occasional conquests triumphs, but there is more often the experience of being overthrown, a sense of being routed and trounced by the events and experiences of life.

But listen: there is a glorious message of hope, the message of Holy Scripture. The Word of God declares that all these emotions that discourage and defeat us can be conquered. We can live a victorious life, a life that conquers and triumphs over all enemies that seek to defeat us as we walk throughout life.

Remember that Joshua and the army of Israel had just experienced the glorious conquest of the fortress at Jericho. Joy and rejoicing were flooding their hearts, for they had witnessed the power of God acting in their behalf. They had seen the walls of Jericho crumbling under the miraculous power of God. The future looked bright, for it seemed as though God would be with them as they marched forth to conquer the promised land. But then it happened: when the army launched an attack against the second city of the enemy, the soldiers were routed and soundly beaten. Defeat was now staring the Israelite army in the face. And through this experience, a strong warning is issued to succeeding generations: sin will always lead to defeat in spiritual warfare. This is the subject of this important passage of Scripture: *The Failed Assault at Ai (Achan's Sin): Spiritual Defeat Because of Sin*, Joshua 7:1-26.

- I. The cause of the failed assault: sin (v. 1).
 - II. The consequences of sin upon God's people (vv. 2-5).
 - III. The remedy for sin and defeat: a confrontation with the LORD (vv. 6-26).
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***Joshua 07:06–26 The Remedy for Sin and Defeat:
A Confrontation with the Lord***

The remedy for sin and defeat is a confrontation with the LORD. AS soon as the retreating, defeated soldiers returned to camp, Joshua took immediate action. He did exactly what he needed to do: he confronted the LORD seeking the reasons for the defeat. Four remedies to sin and defeat are gleaned from what happened:

1. The first remedy for sin and defeat is intercession (vv. 6-9). Joshua was stunned, bewildered, confused, shaken, utterly dumbfounded over the shocking defeat of the soldiers he had sent out against the enemy. He and the leaders immediately went to the Tabernacle and sought the LORD in prayer. Note that they fell face down before the Ark of the LORD and remained there until evening. Joshua acknowledged his utter dependence upon God, addressing God as *Sovereign LORD* (Adonay, Yahweh). Joshua was perplexed, dumbfounded. He asked God, “Why?”

=> Was Israel now to be destroyed by the Amorites?

=> Should they have stayed in East Jordan? Some commentators interpret Joshua’s words here as saying that he actually wished he had kept Israel on the east side of the Jordan River. However, this is most unlikely, for Joshua had held the hope of the promised land throughout his life. He was simply seeking the face of the LORD for the answer for the defeat. He was asking God if he had misread the will of God, if he had perhaps moved the people across the Jordan too soon.

=> What could Joshua now say to the people? Was he to continue as leader?

Note that Joshua’s major concern was the honour of God’s name (v. 9). He feared that the enemy would soon wipe out Israel and ridicule God’s name. They would call the LORD weak, powerless, unable to save and deliver His people and to fulfil His promises to them. God’s great name and His reputation were at stake. Therefore, above all else, Joshua begged God to protect His own name, to protect the strong witness of the LORD before the peoples of the earth.

Thought 1. Intercession is the answer to sin and defeat. When we sin and suffer defeat, we must seek the LORD in prayer. If we seek the LORD in prayer, He will hear us and meet our needs.

Mat 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

John. 15:7 “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”

James 5:13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.

Deut 4:29 But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all our heart and with all our soul.

Isa 55:6 *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.*

Jer 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

Hos 10:12 *Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unploughed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.*

2. The second remedy for sin and defeat is that of hearing the Word of God (vv. 10-15). By seeking the LORD until evening, Joshua proved his sincerity and earnestness, that he was totally dependent upon God to conquer the enemies of the promised land. Thus the LORD confronted Joshua and met his every need.
 - a. The LORD encouraged Joshua by telling him to stand up, questioning why he was lying down on his face (v. 10). The confrontation was straightforward and direct: it was now time to act, to arise and begin to handle the situation.
 - b. God then launched a charge against Israel, a charge of sin (v. 11). Throughout this charge, note the corporate, community responsibility and guilt. Note how God builds up charge after charge against the people. They had committed sin after sin: God's covenant had been violated by the people. They had stolen some of the things given to the Tabernacle, things that had been set apart, devoted to God. Moreover, the people had lied about the theft by secretly hiding it among their own belongings.
 - c. God then explained the defeat of Israel by the enemy: they were defeated because the sin had doomed them to destruction, had alienated them from God (v. 12). And note the warning of God: He would not be with them anymore until they destroyed the things among them that had been set apart, devoted for destruction.
 - d. God then commanded Joshua to go and tell the people to sanctify or purify themselves (vv. 13-15). Three actions had to be taken for sanctification or purification:
 - => The people were to seek out the sin and sinner and remove the accursed thing from their presence (v. 13).
 - => The people were to present themselves before the LORD in the morning: tribe by tribe, clan by clan, family by family, man by man (v. 14). As the people appeared before the LORD, He would identify the guilty person.
 - => The people were to execute the guilty person and destroy all his possessions (v. 15).

Thought 1. One remedy for sin and defeat is that of hearing the Word of God. When we sin, we must listen to the Word of God and do exactly what He says. It is the Word of God that tells us how to deal with sin and defeat, that tells us...

- how to approach God
- how to receive the mercy of God
- how to receive forgiveness of sins
- how to repent and be restored to God

- how to dedicate and recommit our lives to God
- how to renew our covenant with God

We must hear the Word of God and do exactly what God tells us. Obeying God, heeding His Word is the remedy for sin and defeat.

John 15:3 *“You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”*

John 17:17 *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*

Rom 15:4 *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

Eph 5:26 *To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.*

Eph 6:16-17 *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Psa 19:8 *The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.*

Psa 119:9 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.*

Psa 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

Psa 119:130 *The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*

Prov 6:23 *For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life.*

Jer 23:29 *“Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces”?*

3. The third remedy for sin and defeat is that of uncovering and identifying the sin (vv. 16-23). As this point is studied, note how the sinner remained silent throughout the entire investigation. He was unwilling to confess his sin unless it was discovered.
 - a. Joshua began the investigative process early in the morning (vv. 16-18). The clans of Judah were investigated first, the clan of Zerahite and the family of Zemri were singled out. Then the guilty man was singled out. The scene of soldier after soldier walking by Joshua and the leaders of the nation must have been a dramatic picture. Finally when Achan's turn came to appear before the court officials, God indicated that he was the guilty offender. Note the spirit of Joshua as he examined the defendant.

- b. Joshua urged Achan to confess the truth before God, that he no longer try to hide the terrible sin (v. 19). The sin had been committed against God; therefore, confession needed to be made to God. Achan needed to give glory to the LORD and humble himself before the LORD, for he had refused to step forth prior to being discovered. Throughout the entire investigation, Achan had attempted to hide his sin. It was against God and against God alone that the sin had been committed. The sin had been a violation of God's covenant; therefore the only conceivable way for the sin to be forgiven was for confession to be made to God.
- c. Achan confessed his sin. However, keep in mind that the confession had been forced upon him. He had refused to step forth prior to the discovery of his sin (vv. 20-21). Note that Achan took the very steps that lead to death and destruction:
 - => He "saw" the plunder: a beautiful Babylonian robe, two hundred pieces of silver, and a bar of gold weighing one pound.
 - => He "coveted" them. => He then "took" them. => He "hid" them.Simply stated, Achan "saw...coveted...took...and...hid" the items in the ground inside his tent. These were the very steps that caused Eve to fall into sin and later David when He committed adultery with Bathsheba (Gen 3:6; 2 Sam 11:1-27).
- d. Joshua sent messengers to gather the evidence from Achan's tent (vv. 22-23). They quickly found the evidence and returned, spreading it out before the court.

Thought 1. Sin cannot be hid, not from God. We may be able to deceive people, commit sin under the cover of darkness, and keep it secret. But not before God. God sees every sinful act, even every single thought that crosses our minds. No sin can be hid from God. When we commit sin, the only remedy is to identify the sin and open it up to God. Confession needs to be made to God while there is still time, so that we can be forgiven our sins.

If we wish forgiveness, we must uncover and unveil our sins before the face of God. Only as we expose and confess our sin will God forgive us.

Luke 12:2 *"There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known."*

1 Cor 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

Eph 5:12 *For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.*

James 1:13-15 *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

Num 32:23 *Be sure that your sin will find you out.*

Job 10:14 *If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished.*

Psa 19:12 *Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.*

Prov 28:13 *Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

Eccl 12:14 *For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.*

Jer 2:22 *Although you wash yourself with soda and use an abundance of soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me,” declares the Sovereign LORD.*

Jer 16:17 *My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes.*

Ezek 8:12 *He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They say, ‘The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land.’”*

Ezek 11:5 *Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me, and he told me to say: “This is what the LORD says: That is what you are saying, you leaders in Israel, but I know what is going through your mind.”*

Hosea 7:2 *But they do not realize that I remember all their evil deeds. Their sins engulf them; they are always before me.*

Amos 5:12 *For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts.*

4. The fourth remedy for sin and defeat is that of routing out and judging the sin and sinner (vv. 24-26). What now happened was dramatic, a drama that stands as a great warning to Israel and to all succeeding generations of people.
 - a. The judgment had already been pronounced: the accursed thing was to be destroyed (vv. 24-25; see v. 12). In this case, the accursed thing was Achan himself. It had been his sin that had caused the judgment of God to fall upon the Israelites, a sin that had cost the lives of thirty-six soldiers. Just imagine how the family members of these thirty-six soldiers had felt during the investigative process. Standing there, the family members were bound to be wondering about the death of their loved ones. In some cases the soldiers had been husbands and fathers, and in all cases they had been sons. Hearts were broken and grief-stricken, and tears had flowed from the broken, grieving hearts of the families. A tragic, terrible evil had resulted from the sin of the soldier who had stolen items that had been set apart, devoted to God and His service.

The justice and judgment of God had to be executed. Achan and his entire family and all their possessions were taken out of the camp (v. 24). They were then executed (v.

25). Why were the family members executed along with Achan? Because they were accomplices in the crime: they knew about the stolen goods that were hidden in the tent. They were just as guilty as Achan in bringing the judgment of God upon the nation. Note that everything was burned. This was a symbol of purifying, cleansing the evil of the sin from among God's people.

- b. The result was dramatic: the LORD's anger was turned away from His people. The relationship between God and His dear people was restored (v. 26).
- c. The valley was renamed Achor which means "trouble." Thereafter, the valley was to stand as a warning against sin and its consequences.

Thought 1. Sin must be routed out, gotten rid of, removed, forsaken, turned away from. Only as we rout out sin and forsake it will God forgive us. To have our relationship with God restored, to have access into God's presence, to have our sins forgiven and cleansed, to be accepted by God, to renew our covenant and promises with God, to rededicate and recommit our lives to God — sin has to be routed out of our lives. For a relationship to exist between God and us, sin has to be removed, taken away from us. God is holy, and He cannot dwell in the midst of sin. Therefore, sin has to be removed from us in order for God to dwell with us. Favour with God, access into God's presence, comes by routing out the sin from our lives.

Eph 4:22 *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.*

1 Th 5:22 *Avoid every kind of evil.*

1 Pet 2:11 *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.*

Heb 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

Job 11:14 *If you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent,*

Ps.34:14 *Turn from evil and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

Isa 55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*

Psa 97:10 *Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.*

Prov 4:27 *Do not turn to the right or to the left; keep your foot from evil. ■*