TALKING POINTS

Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Quarter 4, Lesson 6
"The Enemy Within"

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MEMORY VERSE: "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 17:10, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson draws practical insights from the tragic record of Achan's sin.

1. We are one in Christ (Sun, Thu)

- All Israel was implicated in and impacted by Achan's sin (Josh. 7:1, 11, 12; also Qtly, Sun, par 4).
    - Like ancient Israel, when we commit to Christ we become part of His body, the church, with all its privileges and responsibilities (Acts 2:41, 44-47; 1 Cor. 12:20, 26).

> Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation… The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent professors of Christ. These are the ones that keep back the blessing of the God of Israel and bring weakness upon His people. PP 497

- God intends our faithfulness to be a representation of His glory.
    - One of, if not the, major concern of Joshua after Israel's defeat at Ai was God's good name (Josh. 7:8, 9).
        - "Though [God] wanted the pagan nations around them to see what great things [He] would do for His people who obeyed Him, they could also, as Rahab did, learn about Israel's God by the power of His people's conquests." Qtly, Thu, par 5

2. God executes justice fairly (Mon, Tue, Wed)

- The process by which Achan's sin was identified and punished reveals God's mercy and justice.
    - As he had done with Korah and his coconspirators, God gave Achan and his family time to confess and repent (Josh. 7:13-15; compare with Num. 16:23-33; 26:11).
    - Though corporately united in Christ, we are still personally responsible for our own guilt (see Qtly, Mon, par 2).
    - Finally, Joshua's demeanor toward Achan reflects God's heart toward sinners (Josh. 7:19; Qtly, Mon, par 4).

- Despite God's best efforts, Achan's admission of guilt was a forced confession and not true repentance.
    - "His defiant attitude qualified him to be regarded as a high-handed offender, for whom there was no atonement according to the law of Moses (compare with Num. 15:27–31)." Qtly, Tue, par 2
        - There is a striking contrast between Rahab's faith and Achan's sin. "Rahab saved herself and her family, and they became respected citizens in Israel; Achan doomed himself and his family to death and became an example of ignominy." Qtly, Tue, par 4
- Finally, with the camp purged of Achan's guilt, Joshua obeyed God's directive and led Israel to victory in Ai (Josh. 8).

3. Today is the day of salvation (Fri)

- The Bible repeatedly implores us to act on conviction without delay (Ps. 95:6-8; 2 Cor. 6:1, 2).
    - Achan's delay, like that of Felix (Acts 24:25), was spiritually suicidal.

> A ray of light from heaven had been permitted to shine upon Felix… That was his heaven-sent opportunity to see and to forsake his sins. But he said to the messenger of God, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." He had slighted his last offer of mercy. Never was he to receive another call from God. AA 427

> Achan acknowledged his guilt, but when it was too late for the confession to benefit himself. PP 497 (Qtly, Fri, par 2)

CONCLUSION

> [Achan] had seen the armies of Israel return from Ai defeated and disheartened; yet he did not come forward and confess his sin… [H]e uttered no confession, until the finger of God was placed upon him. Then, when his sin could no longer be concealed, he admitted the truth. How often are similar confessions made. There is a vast difference between admitting facts after they have been proved and confessing sins known only to ourselves and to God. Achan would not have confessed had he not hoped by so doing to avert the consequences of his crime. But his confession only served to show that his punishment was just. There was no genuine repentance for sin, no contrition, no change of purpose, no abhorrence of evil. PP 497, 498 (Qtly, Fri, par 2)