



Just Brave Enough

Joshua 7-8

Courage Comes from Believing in God, Not Yourself

Read: Joshua 7:1-6

Q: What did Achan do that caused the Lord's anger to burn against Israel?

Q: Do you think God still works this way in our lives today? Why or why not?

Q: Have you ever had an experience where it seemed like God was working against you?

Q: Refer back to Joshua 6:18-19 to discover what is meant by "devoted things."

Q: What might be considered a "devoted thing" in your life?

An NIV text note explains that "devoted" things or people were to be given over to the Lord, either by putting valuables in the Lord's treasury or by totally destroying them. Prisoners taken captive in wars were usually devoted to destruction. Achan sinned because he stole what had been devoted to the Lord when Israel conquered Jericho. This one man's sin brought guilt and punishment on the entire nation of Israel. It's interesting to note that King Saul sinned in a similar way when he did not obey God in totally destroying the Amalekites, as God commanded in 1 Samuel 15:18-23.

Q: Have you ever had a situation in your life where you assumed God would respond the same way He did in the past, and He didn't?

Q: Is disobedience always the reason God doesn't respond the way we anticipated? Why else might things not work out as we assumed they would?

Q: How did Joshua and the elders repent? What might this look like in our own lives?

Read: Joshua 7:7-9

Q: What was Joshua's concern when he pled with God in prayer?

Q: Does God always display His power by granting us success? Have you had a time in your life where failure was actually part of God's plan?

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There were numerous times when Moses also pleaded with God about what neighboring people would think about His power. In Numbers 14:13-16, Moses cried out to the Lord to display His strength in order to protect His reputation. He was afraid that nations who had heard of God's fame would say that the Lord was not able to bring His people into the land of promise. Moses also pleaded with God in Deuteronomy 9:25-29 not to destroy faithless Israel because of surrounding nations who would say God was powerless to help. These leaders were genuinely concerned about God's honor among the heathen nations.

Read: Joshua 7:10-18

Q: How does God answer Joshua? What was the first thing the people were commanded to do?

Q: What is God's response toward disobedience and sin? What is the sentence for those found guilty?

Q: Is the sentence the same for us today?

Read: Joshua 7:19-26

Q: To what act does Achan confess? What was his real sin?

Q: What did Achan's sin show about where he put his trust? How does "common sense" (i.e. why would we throw away all these valuable things?) sometimes get in the way of our own obedience?

Q: Have you ever had an experience where you tried to make God's plan happen your way rather than trust in His way? How did that turn out?

It is interesting to note that in 1 Chronicles 2:7, the names, Achan and Achor, are interchangeable. Both names mean trouble, which reflects the trouble Achan brought on Israel by not destroying the devoted things. Achan placed himself under the doom of destruction and involved his entire household in his punishment.

Read: Joshua 8:1-9

Q: How does the Lord encourage Joshua now that Israel has been purged from sin?

Q: What happens to our courage when we know our hearts are right before the Lord? How have you experienced this in your own life?

Q: Where does our righteousness come from?

Read: Joshua 8:10-19

Q: What did the men of Israel do when they saw what Joshua was holding?

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Q: How has God's presence made you brave? Is bravery the absence of all fear? Give an example from your own life.

It's interesting to look back at Exodus 17:8-13 where Moses held up the staff of God to win the war. When the Amalekites attacked Israel, Moses told Joshua that he would stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in his hands during battle. As long as Moses held up his hands with the staff, the Israelites gained the victory. When he lowered his hands, the Amalekites took over. Aaron and Hur had accompanied Moses up the hill, so they held up his hands to keep them steady until sunset. This was how Joshua was able to overcome the Amalekite army with the sword. Holding up the hands has long been a symbol of appeal to God for help and enablement. And we see this once again when Joshua fights against the city of Ai.

Read: Joshua 8:24-35

Q: What about the Biblical account increases your courage?

Q: What makes you the most uncomfortable? What do you find yourself wrestling with?

Q: Do we see any foreshadowing of the Gospel through Old Testament stories like these?