

Sin in the Camp

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[0:01] Sin in the camp. In Joshua chapter 6 is where we're going to go. In Joshua chapter 6 is where we're going to go.

And they were also told to keep themselves from the accursed thing. So I'm going to pick it up from Joshua chapter 6 from verse 17.

And this was the instruction. And the city shall be accursed, even it and all that are therein to the Lord. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house.

Because she hid the messengers that we sent. Verse 18. And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing.

Lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing. And make the camp of Israel accursed and troubler. But all the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron are consecrated unto the Lord.

[1:51] They shall come into the treasuring of the Lord. So the instructions were clear. Here in Joshua chapter 6 verse 18. Keep yourselves from the accursed thing.

Don't have any part of that. God had been faithful. They'd seen victory after victory. And now under the leadership of Joshua, Israel is now headed out to conquer and take possession of the land of Canaan.

Jericho had fallen. Jericho had fallen. By God's intervention, they crossed over the Jordan River on dry ground. Everything was going smoothly. Yet now they became overconfident.

They grew careless. In chapter 7 tells of Israel's disastrous defeat. It was an unexpected defeat.

Humiliating. They were shocked and stunned. Why had God withdrawn his blessing?

What was the problem? Sin in the camp. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for this time again. Lord, still our hearts.

[2:52] Help us to learn your word and apply it to our lives. Help us, Lord, to put it into action for your praise. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sin in the camp. I believe this is one of the biggest problems. And still is in the world today. Sin in the camp. Sin in God's people.

Joshua chapter 7. We pick it up. The children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing. For Achan, the son of Calmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. Achan took of the accursed thing. We're going to hear about that and what it means for us today.

People of God, in the scriptures, we see how God's anger can be stern. And Achan means trouble or troublesome. Because of Achan's sin, not only did he suffer, but all of Israel along with him.

[3:59] Achan stole from God. There was sin in the camp. It was overlooked. We cannot afford to ignore sin. The word of God says, righteousness exalted the nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Proverbs 14, 34. Hidden sin has the power to destroy individuals, families, marriages, cities, entire nations. God takes sin seriously.

We read on, Joshua 7, verse 2. It says, Now, Ai was the next city ahead of them.

It looked like it was going to be a walkover after Jericho. It was like one of those country towns when you're out in the country and you drive through and you blink and you miss it.

That was kind of the picture of this city. It was not a big city. It was just a small city. Verse 3. So it wasn't a big city.

[5:25] The town was as small as its name. Ai. Ai, I suppose you say it. And notice it was just a few men. They said, just 2,000 or 3,000 will be able to sort this.

It's going to be a piece of cake. It was going to be easy, they thought. Now, notice they did not pray. They failed to seek God's direction. They did not pray for His strength.

They just said, yeah, let's go up. 2,000 or 3,000. This is going to be a walkover. But this little city of Ai was to bring them to their knees.

What happened? They were utterly defeated. Now, we could think of our own situations in the Christian life, where we face battles.

Yesterday's victory does not guarantee today's victory. We must keep close to God. Walk close to Him. We are in a spiritual warfare. And the devil wants to claim another scout.

[6:24] He loves to bring Christians down and take away our victory. Ai seems small. But because of Achan's disobedience, Israel actually found themselves fighting against God.

We'll pick it up again. Chapter 7, verse 4. It says, This is verse 5.

We're in Joshua chapter 7.

And hearing about the men of Ai of Achan. And what happened? There was a big shock here. The people of Israel, the children of Israel, were defeated at Ai.

What a contrast it was. They had such great victory at Jericho. And now they came to a place of great defeat. Friends, the Christian life can be like that. We can have great victories one moment, and then great defeats.

[7:42] The Christian life can be filled with such things as that. The Lord may have worked wonders in the past in our life, but sometimes spiritual neglect can bring ruin and loss.

And we can get too kind of self-confident. As the scripture says in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 12.

Wherefore let him that thinketh, he standeth, take heed, lest he fall.

We should never get to the place where we feel self-confident, without our need to trust in him. We need to rely on our Lord.

And so what happened here, the Israelites were paralyzed with fear, and their courage melted away. And as if losing wasn't bad enough, then it says Israel ran.

Verse 4 it says, we'll go back there, it says that they fled. They fled. They ran away. They turned tail, and they ran away. Something went desperately wrong with the people of God here.

[8:45] What did they not do? They did not pray. Friends, we must pray. Christian soldiers, we must pray. We also notice, they didn't take the Ark of the Covenant into the battle.

The Ark symbolized the presence and power of God. They just went into the battle in their own strength, and they failed. We can do that, can't we, as Christians?

We can try to do things in our own effort and strength, well-meaning, but not resting in his power, not trusting in him. We try to live the Christian life to fight the flesh and the devil in our own power, and we fail, time after time.

What a shame. Friends, brother, dear brother, dear Christian sister, we need not come to that place of defeat. When you fail up, your life, your sin doesn't just impact your own life, but those all around you as well.

When Achan disobeyed God, 36 lives were lost in this battle. Sin weakens you.

[9:55] It takes the heart out of you, the power to defeat the enemy. We must keep short accounts with God. What happened next? We take it up from verse 6. And Joshua rent his clothes, he tore his clothes in this show of despair, of grief, of contrition.

He tore his clothes, it says, and he fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide. He and the elders of Israel, and they put dust upon their heads.

So they came in repenting. Joshua's response was to immediately seek after God, and he waited upon God. He should have done that before the battle. Of course, we see that in hindsight.

Verse 7, And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us?

Would to God we have been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan. Joshua's prayer was a bit of a lament, as if he was blaming God here. Verse 8, O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?

[11:06] For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

So here was Joshua, a great defeat, and he prays. He prayed too late, really. But at least he did seek after God. He humbled himself, and he prayed.

Brother, sister, we're entering into battles. We're entering into spiritual warfare. Every day. Every day, there's more of that to face.

Do we stop to pray? Do we stop to pray? When we face battles in our lives, friends, we're all in a battle. We're all suffering the scars of battle.

We all have these things that we've got to fight and get through. We face attacks. When we tend to, Christian, take time to pray. Take time to pray. Don't neglect to pray.

[12:05] Verse 10, And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up. Wherefore lies thou thus upon thy face? The Lord says here, Get up. There's sin in the camp. As we read verse 11, there's sin, he says.

There's a bad apple and you need to deal with it now. Friends, sin blocks our prayers. When Joshua was on his face in prayer, God told him, What are you doing?

Praying. Get up. There's sin in the camp. Deal with the sin. Then you can come and talk to me. The Bible teaches that sin can hinder our prayer lives.

It says, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Psalm 66, verse 18. To regard means to cherish. It's like caressing your favorite pet.

I know we've got a bit of a stray cat and Julie's a coxer enough to stroke the pet now. But some people like that with their sin.

[13:01] They caress it like their favorite pet. They cherish it. They regard it in their heart. And they wonder why God can't hear them.

Friends, we need to deal with the sin.

If your prayer life is to be effective, do not hold on to your sin. Keep clear of sin. God will help you to get victory. Next we see, The Lord lets Joshua know why they've lost the battle.

Verse 11. Joshua 7. Verse 11. Israel had sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant, which I commanded them. For they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

So this was a secret sin. One of their number had taken this item, these items, these accursed things. And, Francis, the same is a picture for us of that which we might cherish, that the Lord says, Do not harbor that.

Do not cherish that. You cannot hide from God. God knows about our sin. And God hates our sin. He hates my sin. Notice it says, Israel had sinned.

[14:14] Israel had sinned. Notice that. Verse 12. It says, Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turn their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed. Neither will I be with you anymore, except you destroy the accursed from among you.

There's only one of their number, but God counted it as Israel has sinned. Notice there, verse 11. Israel hath sinned. Friends, sin will hinder your spiritual life.

Sin will hinder God's working in you. Sin will block God's blessings, your victory, your joy. It will rob you of God's blessing, God's presence. We must deal with sin.

Seek the Lord to deal with sin, to deal with the accursed thing, to destroy the accursed thing. The Lord says further, verse 13, Oh, sanctify the people, and say, sanctify yourselves against tomorrow. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee. Oh, Israel, thou canst not stand before thine enemies, and so you take away the accursed thing from among you.

[15:22] So here were the people, they were in to think, something was wrong, something was going wrong. The Lord says, sanctify yourselves. He says, get right, get out of the flesh. He says, get back in the spirit.

He says, take away the accursed thing. Ask yourself, what is the accursed thing? What could it be? What is, what is my accursed thing? What is it that's, that's, that's impacting my spiritual life?

What is your accursed thing? Could it be an unforgiving spirit? Could it be your tongue? Could it be lust? That area that you've not surrendered?

A secret sin. Friends, it's not secret from God. It's not secret from him. You cannot fool God. Achan thought he could hide his sin, but we know it was exposed.

And it's the same with all of us, isn't it? When we stand before our maker, we're exposed. Verse 14, it says, in the morning, therefore, you shall be brought according to your tribes, and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come, according to the families thereof, and the families which the Lord shall take shall come by households, and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man.

[16:43] Verse 15, it says, and it shall be that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath brought folly in Israel.

So here Joshua calls the people to account, he calls the people to attesting, to discern where the accursed thing is in the camp.

And the clear message here, for us people here today, is that God hates sin. He hates sin. And sin will cost you. Sin will cost you. It will cost you dearly. And sin will bring trouble.

It must not be allowed in the camp of any child of God, or the children of God. Once sin is dealt with, victory and lasting, and the lasting victory is assured.

It says sin is folly. Notice it says that this is folly. It's something that's foolishness. Friends, sin is foolishness. It's the most foolish thing to be a captive of sin.

[17:55] Now when we go witnessing, sometimes we knock on doors, and we get these intellectuals, that are so prideful of their empty heads. And it's folly.

It's folly. It's foolishness. They might have numerous letters after their name. And they might be whatever, doctorates or whatever they might have.

Highfalutin people. But they are fools if they say there is no God. That's what God tells them they are. And he's the one who knows who is a fool and who is not.

And friends, sin is a foolishness. Sin is folly. And God will punish our sin. So we ought to think very seriously on these matters. Verse 16. So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and he brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.

And he brought the family of Judah, and he took the family of the Zahites, and he brought the family of the Zahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. So he was kind of narrowing it down to tribe, to household, to family.

[19:00] And then it goes, verse 18, and he brought his household man by man, and Achan, the son of Calmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerach, of the tribe of Judah was taken. So one by one they came.

Tribe by household, by family, man by man, they faced up to Joshua. And next Joshua comes to Achan. And Achan owns up, he confessed his sin.

But he did this only when he was caught red-handed. God has to expose sin. We see there was sin in the church, in 1 Corinthians 5. Paul called out a man, for the sin of taking his father's wife.

What a vile sin. Some sins are more evident, and some less so. But be sure your sin will find you out. And it found out Achan, friends.

Verse 19, it says, And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, I give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me how, tell me now what thou hast done.

[20:06] Hide it not from me. Verse 20, And Achan answered Joshua and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.

So Achan, you know, the treasures, the wealth of Jericho, that he sort of submitted to God, he took some of it for himself.

And he thought that he could get away with his sin. Now he was caught out. And Achan confessed to his sin, I have sinned. He thought he could get away with it.

And many people think of that, don't they? They think they can get away with their sin. Be sure your sin will find you out. The word says that. The wealth of Jericho was hidden in his tent, but the wrath of God was hanging over his tent.

He thought that he could hide it under his furniture, under his furnishings. He thought he could lie, he thought he could cover it up, he thought he could pretend that it wasn't there, that it wasn't bad.

[21:12] But when we try to cover up our sin, it just makes it worse, doesn't it? When we hold on to our sin, when we refuse to give it up, when we refuse to let the Holy Spirit come and cleanse us, we sink deeper and deeper into the sin, and it holds us captive.

And we walk further and further from God. And it makes it worse and worse. Hidden sin, it's like hidden termites in your house. You know, I've experienced that.

It's suddenly shocking when you see what the termites do. Shocking. They had a whole wall of a house eaten away with termites.

It looked fine. It looked perfect. Until I started to scratch away at the mud and pull away at the wall coverings and then could see what destruction was being created behind the surface.

And friends, sin is like that. You might try to hide it, but when it's exposed, we see the ugliness of it. Confess your sin. Don't wait until you're caught.

[22:30] Sin is deceptive. Of course, I'm not saying go into some cloister and confess to some man clothed in black, but confess your sin to the only one who can take it and deal with it.

Confess your sin to him who is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Don't wait until you're caught.

Sin is deceptive, isn't it? It was deceptive. Achan thought he could get away with it. Reality is I can deceive you. I can deceive you. I can even deceive myself.

Isn't that true? The Bible talks about people that they're so self-deceived that they're even deceiving themselves. But the Bible says I cannot. Deceive God. Sin is deceptive, isn't it?

It'll fool us. And we must deal with it in our lives every day. We're sowing. Will we sow to the flesh or sow to the spirit? Galatians 6, 7, and 8 it says Be not deceived.

[23:35] God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

But he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. There'll be harvest from what we sow. Sometimes it's sowed.

It takes time but it comes out, doesn't it? Like my veggie patch at home. Ultimately something springs out of the ground. As well as the weeds, there's some actual vegetables.

But it depends what we sow, doesn't it? And the Bible says we can sow to our flesh and there'll be corruption. Or we can sow to the spirit, there'll be life everlasting. Friends, sow wisely, sow wisely. Achan could have repented but he chose to cover his sin and his confession came too late. There was confession there but not repentance. Friends, we're all accountable to God.

[24:35] Here's what Achan said, verse 21, he says, when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of 50 shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them and behold, I hid in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it.

The Lord had given clear command to Achan. Everything was to be destroyed and these items, their silver and gold was to be devoted to the Lord, to put in his treasury in the tabernacle.

God had given clear instructions that Achan disobeyed God's command. Do we obey the word of God? Friends, this is what matters what is right and wrong, only this.

You know, Julie and I were just watching a video earlier in the week and the gender dysphoria, this confusion that says there's more than male and female, it's just the total confusion that's out there in this world.

Friends, this says what's right and wrong. It says God created man and woman. God created a male and a female. There's no third, fourth, fifth, other genders. This is the truth of the word, of the creator of life, the one who sustains us.

[25:53] His truth is absolute, it's unquestioning. The word of God, do we obey it? Achan chose to disobey God's command. God has given us clear instructions, warnings.

He beckons us, he exhorts us, he encourages us in love. It's important that we obey the word of God and he demands the obedience, not partial obedience. Obedience means obedience, complete obedience in this world of compromise.

We must understand God refuses to negotiate with us. Thou shalt, thou shalt not. What did Achan do?

He says, I saw, I coveted, I took, I hid. There was a process there, notice that? I saw, I coveted, I took, I hid.

It's a process, you see that as kind of the process of temptation as well. How do we deal with it? Don't be enticed by it. As we see in the book of James, it tells of this kind of, these sages, every man is tempted and he's drawn away of his own lust.

[27:06] He sees it, he wants it, he's enticed, it says, then when lust hath conceived, and bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Friends, we must get serious about the truth of the word of God, about the call of a creator to come to him.

Temptation entices, and if we fall for it, we'll see that sin brings forth death. Achan took some of this luge from the ruins of Jericho, he took some gold and silver, a valuable garment, he hid them in some hole that he dug in the ground in the middle of his tent.

It says that first he saw sin is defective, sin begins with a look. Notice the progression of Achan's sin, he saw, he coveted, he wanted it, and he took it, and then he hid what he had taken.

It's the same thing happened in the garden, isn't it? In the garden of Eden, with Eve, she saw, she coveted, she took. Also with David, with Bathsheba, he saw, he coveted, he took.

How can we overcome temptation? We're all flesh. Friends, it happens so often. I see it.

[28:28] I've seen it. We all can get caught up in things that are wrong. As a pastor, I see it all the time. The train wrecks, believers, Australians, sin, does them great damage.

Friends, we reap what we sow, it. First, we become aware of the possibility, then we feel the desire, then we find ourselves doing the wrong thing. Sin.

Listen, be mindful of sin. There was three men who applied for a driving job, and it called for driving a truck over a mountain with some winding roads.

And the first guy said, I'm such a good driver, I can come within one foot of the edge without losing control. The second guy said, oh yeah, well I can come within six inches of the edge and not lose control.

And the man that does the hiring, he looked at the third man and asked him how good a driver he was. He said, well I'm a good enough driver to know not to drive close to the edge at all.

[29:37] I stay as far away from the edge as possible, as far away from the danger as possible. He got the job. It's the same with Christians. I think they can just push the boundaries, just push the envelope, just toy with their sin.

And it's a trap. We need to do the same thing spiritually. To think about our lives, people we mix with, the places we go, the things we do, what we watch, what we read, what we receive, don't go to places where you're tempted.

Get away from such places where you're tempted. Whatever the cost, don't drive close to the edge, stay as far away from the edge as possible. That's good advice. The word says how we can overcome temptation.

We can know victory in our lives. It says God is faithful. He's not set in temptation such as common to man, but he's got his faithful.

He will not suffer you to be tempted above that you're able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. So how do we deal with temptation?

[30:57] Don't toy with it. Don't get as close to the edge as you can. Get as wide as you can from the edge. Be determined to fight it, to be self-controlled, to be content, to yield yourself to the Holy Spirit.

He's called the Holy Spirit, to be disciplined, to guard your heart with all diligence, to confess your sin and forsake it. Don't give Satan a chance. Do not give him a foothold.

Dear saint, seek to please God as your primary motive. And learn this scripture. It's a short one. Neither give place to the devil. Don't give place to the devil. In other words, don't give the devil a foothold. Don't give him an inch. He'll take a mile.

Don't give place to the devil. If something is a temptation for you, think clear of it. Put some boundaries around yourself to honour your Lord that you love and who wants the best for you.

[32:04] Whatever it is that is drawing you into that spiral, that darkness, don't give an inch. Don't give place to the devil.

Determine not to. God helping you. We're all accountable. When Achan stuffed that Babylonish garment in his tunic and he filled his pockets with 200 pieces of silver, when he grabbed that wedge of gold, he knew what he was doing.

He knew what he was doing. He was breaking the clear command of God. How did he justify it? How did he rationalize it?

You might think if you're in Achan's shoes, he might have tried to argue the point, make all kinds of excuses for what he was doing. That's what people tend to do, isn't it?

Oh, it's just a lapse. It's just a mistake. It's just an affair. It's just a little sin.

[33:07] Friends, we can make all kinds of excuses, but it doesn't make it right. Back to our text, verse 21, it says, When I saw among the floors a goodly Babylonist garment, and 200 secles of silver, and a wedge of gold of 50 secles weight, and I coveted them.

I wanted them, and I took them, and behold, they're ahead in the earth, in the midst of my tent, and the silver on it. It was beautiful. This Babylonist garment, look at that.

How could you resist this? This Babylonist garment, this was a long robe worn by the dignitaries. Oh, this would just make you look just so fine and dandy. You know, the Babylonist garment, how could you resist that?

When I saw these items there in the ruins of Jericho, this goodly Babylonist garment, this was the top of the fashion of the day. There was 200 shekels of silver.

Wow, I could do some of that. And the wedge of gold, you saw the beauty of these things. They were fine things. They were things to be desired. He probably ran his hands over that garment, this nice soft material.

[34:14] This would have been very expensive, very valuable, very tempting, and he would sift his fingers through those silver shackles. Oh, they just hear the jingle jangle of all that lovely silver.

And he probably stared in disbelief at that great chunk of gold. Wow, it's really heavy. This must be really valuable. He saw these things, but he failed to see the consequences of taking them.

It says he saw them, and he took them. Somehow that Babylonish garment, it never made it to the burn pile. That's where it should have gone. The silver shekels, the gold webs should have been made to the treasury of the Lord, as God had commanded, but they ended up buried in the dirt under Achan's tent.

He kept an accursed thing, and he stole from the Lord. What happened? Thirty-six men died, and Israel as a nation was shamed before its enemies, and Achan's sin was found out.

Achan's sin stopped the blessing of God for the nation. What a shame and reproach. Sin has a destructive domino effect, doesn't it?

[35:27] The effect of the whole nation. It brought shame and reproach, and it's the same in our time, in our nation. God help us, Australia.

We see the professing Christians and churches that bring great shame, and the world looks at that and says that's Christianity, and we see some sad things.

And look, churches like ours are not immune from anything. To displease God is a drastic, dreadful thing.

Sin has massive consequences. You see verse 22, so Joshua sent messengers and they ran onto the tent, and behold, it was hidden in the tent. They found it, the accursed thing.

They found the silver under the tent. Verse 23, and they took them out of the midst of the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the children of Israel, and they laid them out before the Lord.

[36:28] So Achan's accursed things were uncovered, and it was exposed. friends, today, sin will take you farther than you want to go, it will keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you far more than you want to pay.

Sin has dire consequences. Verse 24, Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

So it says they took Achan and all of those trappings and his family, his possessions, and he took them to a place called Achor.

The word Achor means trouble. Achor was in trouble, in Trouble Valley. Friends, that's where sin will take you. He'll take you to Trouble Valley. As Achor was led away to the valley of Achor, he began to realize the cost of his sin.

His sons and his daughters must have known what he'd done. Beside him, they were led to their deaths. Can you imagine the pain that Achor must have felt, knowing that he had led his own sons and daughters astray?

[37:44] Sin will do you damage. Sin will damage you. your testimony. Sin will damage your effectiveness for the Lord. It will damage your name. It will damage your family. As he was brought into Trouble Valley, Achor would have understood the consequences of what he had done.

But now it was too late. If you're going to sin and not repent, you need to know you're headed for trouble. You need to see sin as God sees sin.

Sin must be dealt with. Sin is never worth it. Achor paid the price. That Babylonian government wasn't worth it. The silver, the gold wedge, it wasn't worth it.

Achor paid the price. Friends, sin is a terrible, destructive power. I've seen the damaging effects of sin. People I love and care about. And even in this, our own church.

I've seen, you know, over 20 odd years now, I've seen people appointed to positions of responsibility. There's one man who was in jail, not from crimes he committed here, but he was not fit to serve.

[38:47] His sin was hidden and he brought great shame and hurt to lies. He was a man that was in a responsible position in this church. I don't know if he's still in jail today, but he had a long jail time.

It wasn't a crime he committed in the church, but it was a hidden sin and it was exposed. Another man was trusted with church finances and he suddenly shot through.

It turned out that he was wanted by his previous employer for suspected theft. It's possible that he abused his position and his access to church finances while he was with us.

Another Aiken. Another man who was in a key ministry role working alongside me, got off into error and he would not leave off what he was teaching.

We had to address that as a church and he remained defiant still. He was another Aiken. Another man in a trusted role committed a serious sin with a woman associated with his church and I had to take action against him to confront him about the sin.

[39:52] I know of people who are in trusted positions who've fallen into sin. They're spiritually nowhere now. They're nowhere. They've lost everything and all it took was one indiscretion.

Sin does great damage. Friends, I'm speaking from experience and I don't mean to labor these things but there are many tragic examples and I'm sure others might know of such things.

Situations where we're just to look. It's just, oh, I want that. A taking of that. Heartbreaking examples. Sin is so destructive.

I've seen it all. And so if I rebuke you, it's because I love you. You see these things, not to mention the backbites, the murmurers, the ones who sow discord, the ones who try and draw disciples away after themselves into false doctrine, the ones who will not take counsel.

It's sin and it does great damage. People of God, sin does great damage. I've seen homes damaged, marriages broken. It's sin. It's a shame and it brings individuals great damage and it does great damage to the testimony of the church.

[41:01] This is what happened with Achan. It wasn't just Achan, it was his family. There was a ripple effect. There's a domino effect because it affects the whole group. My heart goes down.

I notice people affected, but many were all affected by the effect of sin. And I've seen sad situations in my own family. Situations I'd like to see them restored in faith.

But they're not where I believe God wants them to be. And my heart goes out. Friends, there's many Achan's out there. And in ministry we can see the worst side of people.

Sometimes it breaks my heart. Brent's reproach on the church of God. Achan's sin brought shame. Achan's sin brought great reproach. And it resulted in the death of 36 men.

It brought judgment from God. Sin is destructive. I'm warning you because I love you. How we ought to aspire rather to integrity.

[42:04] Friends, we read on verse 25, Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones and burnt them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

Verse 26, And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called the Valley of Achor unto this day.

You know, I suppose as time went by they were seeing that monument, that graphic site of that memorial of Achan.

And they knew what it meant. It was compromise. It was sin. In the Valley of Trouble. And in the decades to come, the children will have asked their parents, Why?

Why is this Valley called Trouble? And their parents would answer it. Because of sin. And that appointed to that great heap of stones that marked the resting place of Achan.

[43:03] Friends, sin does damage. Does great damage. Damage in the church. We read of Ananias and Sapphira. Another example. There's many things we could cite. Of great loss and great shame and damaged testimonies.

Of the Achans in our midst. Question is, are we like Achan? What is hiding under your tent? What are you hiding? What are you trusting in? When Achan saw the road, the silver, the gold, he didn't look left and right and thought no one's looking behind and above and around.

No one's watching. But he forgot. God was watching. God saw. The Bible says there's nothing hidden that won't be revealed. Some sin is not revealed in this life, but it will be revealed.

How will we deal with sin? Friends, we're told to get rid of the accursed thing. Whatever it is in your life, that's something God prompts you to deal with it.

Deal with it now. Deal with it now. While you can. Don't put yourself into a position of temptation. Friends, the Bible talks about slippery places.

[44:14] Psalm 73, verse 18. And Dion Moody says, if you don't want to slip down, don't go in slippery places. Don't go in slippery places, please.

You know, I've got a bit of a slope at the back of my place, and if it's been raining, and I don't have the four-wheel drive, I'll be going backwards. It doesn't matter what gear I've got it in.

There's slippery places, people. And that happens spiritually, doesn't it? Slippery places, spiritually. Don't put yourself there. Don't go there. Don't fool yourself. Don't think you can keep traction when it's a slippery place.

Don't even go there to the slippery place. Read the Scriptures tell us that sin was the source of all trouble. When God's people stepped outside of His will, they suffered consequences.

There's a terrible consequence, a terrible cost, a disobedience. I urge you, people of God, I urge myself to keep close accounts with God.

[45:19] As with Adam and Eve, sin took them from the presence of God. What a great loss. They had everything. Everything. Literally. And then they lost the presence of God, people of God.

What matters most is the presence of God. That was the worst of it all. Genesis 3, 24, sin will take you away from the presence of God.

That's a dire, dire result. Isn't it? The sin of disobedience, it cost the children of Israel 40 years of wandering. Joshua 5, 6, says that they walked 40 years in the wilderness.

They obeyed not the voice of the Lord. Friends, sin is our greatest enemy. And it brings great shame. As we said, righteousness exalts a nation. Sin is a reproach to any people.

Sin is folly. It's a foolishness. The world might say, this is trendy, this is cool, this is hit, this is, yeah, let's get with it. But the Bible says sin is folly.

[46:29] It's a reproach. Achan, what Achan did was folly. It was foolish. What a fool, what a fool that he was. Achan thought he could get away.

He could gain from his sin, that he could get away with it. The Bible says be sure your sin will find you out. Achan was tripped up by the flesh. It looked good.

He wanted it. He grasped it. He got it. He covered it. Coveted it. He wanted it. You may be able to hide your sins from the police. You may be able to hide your sins from some folks.

You may be able to hide your sins from people you love. But you cannot hide your sins from God. because of his sin Achan lost his reputation, his family, his life.

There's powerful learnings from the life of Achan. We can't see the pile of stones there as it were in the valley of Achor today but we can know, yes, we can think of the trouble that Achan got himself into and it was all because of sin.

[47:34] It was a bondage. He would have been looking over his shoulders in fear. I hope no one finds what I've taken, what I've done, my disobedience.

Some people think no one will know about their gossip, their spiritual neglect. I hope nobody finds out what I've been doing.

But God knows. And the Bible talks about leaven in the lump of sin in the camp. Friends, it's not just you that's affected. Your sins affect other people.

And sin will always hurt others. You may think sin will only affect your life but it affects others. It's like a pebble in a pool. Ripples come and spread all around.

And sin will affect your family, your church, the Christian community, the name of Christ. You know, the media just loves it, don't they? Another Christian falls.

[48:33] And it's front page, isn't it? Fathers, when you don't bring your family to church, it affects your children. Thirty-six men died.

Achan thought he was being smart, but he was a fool. It was a reproach for the nation. His sin will find you out. All sin will be uncovered by God.

So what is the answer? It says, he that covereth his sins shall not prosper. Achan can try to cover his sins, but he so confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Friends, the urgent message is to talk to God, to talk to the Lord, to get it right with him. Get real with God. Get rid of sin.

God knows what you're doing. You can't hide it from him. It might be covered up in the ground, in the hole, in the tent, but God sees it.

[49:32] He knows it, what it is. God knows that everything that Achan did, every move he made, every word, God knows all about it. And friends, we're not saying make a public confession amongst the church here today, but what matters is confess it to God.

Confess to him. It says he that confesses and forsakes his sin, shall have mercy. There is one you can go to today. He's the lover of your soul.

He's the friend of sinners. His door is always open. You don't have to wait for a reservation to meet him. You can come to him right now and it says that his throne of mercy is available for you.

And you can let him, trust him to set you free. victory. You can know victory. And of course, the ultimate is salvation.

It's to know this Saviour looks upon you with mercy and he extends it to you that will trust him. And even if you're a disobedient Christian, he has tenderness.

[50:47] He doesn't want you to stay in that state. he wants you to get things right. After Achan was dealt with, God's people attacked Ai a second time. Totally different results.

It says that chapter 8 verse 1 of Joshua, The Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed. Take all the people of war with thee and arise, go up to Ai, see I have given it into thy hand, the king of Ai and his people and his city and his land.

The time came when they went forward with the assurance that God would help. There was no compromise now. And ironically, this time, God allowed the Israelites to take some of the spoils of Ai to keep it for themselves.

So if Achan had only been patient, he would have received some of the spoils of Ai as a gift from the Lord. He could have had the silver and gold.

Who knows what? He could have had some of the spoils of war of the city of Ai. He could have kept it for himself because God would have given it to him.

[51:53] If only, if only, he had not harbored that secret, unconfessed sin. If only he had trusted God's word and done God's will.

Friends, the Bible says don't let sin reign in the immortal body to obey it in that evil desires, the lust. It says, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I urge you tonight to go to the Lord now. And, make today a time of your personal dealing with this tonight. If God's put something on your heart to you, to be faithful to him, to get things right, to sort things out.

If there's things that you need to sort and sort them, make things right with those you've wronged.

Recompare those you've taken from. Don't damage your testimony, your ministry.

God can turn things around for you. If you've been in that place of disobedience, if you've fouled up, if you've damaged your testimony, it's not the end.

[53:08] It can be a beginning for you. It can be a new beginning. Amen? And you can live close to the Lord. You can keep short accounts with God. Don't neglect to pray. We're going into battle. There's a hostile world out all around us.

We are pilgrims in this foreign land. Friends, don't neglect to pray. Don't neglect His presence. Seek to live a surrendered life.

God will help you to get victory moment by moment, day by day. And it's not impossible for you to have that moment by moment victory. And when you stumble, there's one you can come to, and you must come to Him.

I urge you to come to Him. He will forgive you and begin that cleansing process. And friends, if I seem harsh with you at times, it's because I love you. I love you enough to tell you the truth.

Sometimes I'd rather pat you on the back and say she'll be right. But no, I must be honest before God to tell you the truth. Otherwise, I'm failing my God in not telling you the truth.

[54:16] And it's sometimes hard. I wonder if Achan, if only Achan had confessed his sin rather than hide it, God would have given him forgiveness.

The flesh will get in the way of God's will for you. Don't allow that. Offer Him your heart. As the psalmist scribes, search me, O God.

Know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. I want you to get victory in your life. I want you to be on the victory side. I want you to be with Joshua, not with Achan.

And friends, the Bible says, search me, O God. Know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Let that be your prayer today.

I urge you tonight, trust Christ for your saving. Trust Christ as your saviour, as your one and only saviour. You can't get to heaven without Christ as your saviour.

[55:18] You must trust him. You must believe on him. And believe him. Don't stay in the valley of Achor, in the trouble valley.

Don't hang around Achan. talk to your God. Talk to him. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you.

Your word tells us this telling example of Achan. Lord, I know for myself, I'm just as failing and faulty as any man. And Lord, Achan is a graphic picture of what we must not do.

Help us, Lord, not to be like Achan. Lord, to rather confess and forsake our sin, to yield and trust in you, our saviour, our master. Lord, to keep short accounts with you.

Pray for each Christian here tonight. They'll have victory. Victory, day by day, moment by moment, over whatever it is they're battling. That you'll give them the victory. You'll help them to see that which they must refuse.

[56:22] Lord, help us to know that victory, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Christy.