

The Impact of Sin

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[0 : 0 0] If you would, open up your Bibles again to Joshua chapter 7. There's one other announcement. It's in the bulletin, and this is the one that I meant to say earlier, but then it slipped my mind as I was trying to remember. Next Sunday, after our worship service ends, so before we go to Sunday school, we'll have a quick members meeting to vote on our deacon election. So we'll have deacon election. We have four men nominated. We have three deacon spots that we need to fill. So we have Jonathan Warhurst, Steve Mitchell, Charles Hill, and Marshall Miller, who are all nominated and are eligible for election, and they've all been deacons before, so you know them well. But that'll be after our worship service next Sunday and before Sunday school, okay?

All right, so we, again, are in Joshua chapter 7. We're talking about the impacts of sin and consequences and facing those things. We have the story here of Achan, a person that we don't know anything about prior to this, and we really only know of him because of this, because of his unfaithfulness. But something interesting about this passage is found in verse 1, and it's that the Israelites, however, were unfaithful regarding the things set apart for destruction. So the Israelites corporately were viewed as unfaithful because of the sin of one person, Achan. The whole nation was set apart for destruction by the Lord because of one individual who acted selfishly and in greed. So we have this story of Achan, who, again, prior to this, we don't know anything about him, but we can assume a couple of things. I mean, he had seen the Lord do some amazing things at this point, in recent memory, by the way. He saw the Lord part or stop the Jordan River so that the people of Israel could get into the land that God had promised them. I mean, even prior to that, he saw and fought, presumably, in battles that led to their conquest of the land right on the outside of the Jordan against Sion and Og. I mean, this man was even a part of the conquest of Jericho, presumably. I mean, you have to think, I mean, actually we know he was because he stole from there. He marched around the city, you know, for six days, and then on that seventh day, he marched around it seven times. He had participated in all of these different things and seen, he saw the walls fall, he participated, presumably, in the covenant act of circumcision with the rest of the men. I mean, he had taken care of so many different aspects of his faith. He was, presumably, up to this point, a fairly faithful Israelite. And then, when push came to shove, Achan was in the land of Jericho. He knew the Lord's command, and still, greed and selfishness won the day. The story of Achan is a warning for us. It's one that we should take note of because Achan was faithful for a really long time. But his act of unfaithfulness, his act of sin, ruined all of those years of military participation, all of the years of trusting and following where the Lord led Moses and Joshua. We can be faithful for a really, really long time. And then in a moment, through an act of sin, deliberate sin, defiance even, we can throw that faithfulness away. And in doing so, bring reproach on the name of Christ. And so, it says, the Israelites were unfaithful regarding the thing set apart for destruction. Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, took some of what was set apart, and the Lord's anger burned against the Israelites. So, we know, from the very beginning, who the culprit was. And I was reading the commentary, and it reminded me that when we get to the scene where Joshua is crying out to the Lord, Joshua does not have the narrative overview that we have. Joshua was confused, remember? But we know from the outset, we have the reader's perspective here, that Achan is the one who's committed this act, and that his act of sin impacted the entire nation. Verse 2 says, Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-Avon, east of Bethel, and told them, go up and scout the land. So, the men went up and scouted A-I. By the way, I think people sometimes say I, some people say A-I, I don't know. I say A-I, because I don't know how I'm supposed to pronounce that, and it's two letters. I mean, why not, you know?

It's like G-I-F. Raise your hand if you say GIF, with a hard G. Okay, raise your hand if you say JIF, like the peanut butter. Okay, Jiffy, you know what I mean. Yeah, there's a split there. I have a friend who spells that word out every time he wants to reference it. He says, did you get that G-I-F that I sent? So, I took that approach with A-I. Verse 3 says, after returning to Joshua, they reported to him, don't send all the people, but send about 2,000 or 3,000 men to attack A-I, since the people of A-I are so few, don't wear out all our people there. So, about 3,000 men went up there, but they fled from the men of A-I. The men of A-I struck down, about 36 of them, and chased them from outside the city gate to the quarry, striking them down on the descent. As a result, the people lost heart.

[5 : 50] The people were, this is a, they were completely, completely freaked out. They were so scared. They didn't know what was going to happen. If we could lose this battle, how much worse is it going to get when we go fight against real, you know, real standing militaries? How much worse is it going to get when we face a real challenge? They were completely freaked out. Their hearts melted. This is very similar, by the way, to the way that Rahab described the hearts of the people in Jericho in Joshua chapter 2. If you remember, the two spies are there in the land, and Rahab was talking to them, and she said, we've heard about what the Lord has done. We know the way that he parted the Red Sea.

We know the military conquest that he's given you, and we know also that this land is yours, because when we heard those things, she said, the people's hearts melted. Just like this. So, the same result of seeing military defeat and a curiosity and a fear about what is going to take place led to the people losing heart. But we're going to look at the sin of Achan, because he is a story about disobedience and greed. His sin is deeper than the surface. It was defiance. Achan defied against the direct command of the Lord. It wasn't just defiance. It was also covetousness. It was greed. It was selfishness.

Achan knew not only that he shouldn't take things from Jericho, but he knew also what would happen to the entire nation if he did, because this was not hidden from him. He defied the Lord's command, and he coveted the Lord's plunder. If you look back in Joshua chapter 6, the Lord made it very clear to the people about what they ought to do when they get into the land. He said, the land, the city, and everything in it are set apart to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone with her in the house will live, because she hid the messengers when they were sent. And so, the Lord made it really, really clear. He told Joshua. Joshua told the people. And then, after that seventh march around the city, Joshua, when he shouted, when he told the people to shout, he reminded them again, shout, the Lord has given you this victory, but don't take anything that you're not supposed to take.

Don't take anything that's not yours. These things in Jericho belonged to the Lord. There's a few reasons why. One of the reasons is because this is the first city that they took when they went into the land. And so, this land, this city of Jericho, acted as something of a first fruits offering to the Lord.

This is his possession, and he's giving it to his people. And so, there's something of a first fruits offering. But then, on the other hand here, we have to remember the battle of Jericho was the Lord's battle from start to finish. It wasn't Joshua's battle. We know the song. You know, Joshua fought the battle of Jericho. You know, we can sing it, but we won't. Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, but really, Joshua fought the battle as a proxy general. He fought the battle as much as, and so far as, the commander of the Lord's army told him what to do, and then gave victory. The commander of the Lord's army. God himself is the one who tore down the walls of Jericho. It was not Joshua. It wasn't the men of Israel. They walked around a city. And so, this victory was the Lord's, which means, you know the saying, right? To the victor goes the spoils, right? This is the Lord's victory, and it's his plunder. It's his to choose what to do with, and he rightly chose that this was supposed to be an offering to himself. And so, he said, don't take anything. Don't take anything. And he told him that if you do, verse 18 of chapter 6 says, but keep for yourself, keep yourselves from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you take any of these things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction and make trouble for it. Not only is there the command to avoid, there's also the explicitly stated punishment, the consequence of what happens if you do.

[10 : 18] You're set apart for destruction, and also everyone else is. So, don't take anything. Take this command seriously. Take the command of the Lord seriously. So, as they go through the city of Jericho, right? The walls fall down. The soldiers advance. Achan was faithful and obedient. As a

soldier, he went in and he fought. And while he was there, he saw some things, and greed took over. Greed took over. He coveted, what was the Lord's. It really was too, by the way. It was just sinful, selfish greed. I mean, think about this. Achan didn't take the gold and the silver and then run away from the camp. He didn't go AWOL and go out into Canaan and start purchasing things with his new money. Like, he didn't, you know, he didn't completely leave the camp. He took what wasn't his only to hide it, to bury it, to keep it for himself. It was just greed. Greed is a dangerous, dangerous thing. I mean, even in the moments where you see the Lord giving great victory, greed can come in and destroy the soul. And it's what happened here with Achan.

And he knew that what he had done was wrong. It wasn't only that he took what wasn't his. It wasn't only that he took it because he was greedy in the moment. He also was fully aware that he was sinning against the Lord. And how do we know that? Because he took what he stole and buried it. He hid it.

He wanted it to be hidden. And how often do we try to bury and hide our own sin? We want to make sure that no one knows the things that we've done.

All right? The ways we've acted improperly. The ways we've sinned against the Lord that if people knew, they'd have a different opinion of me. If people really knew what was in my heart, I don't know that I'd be welcome at that church. If people really... Guys, we're all sinful.

We all have evil, sinful thoughts and desires. And so we can't just live in this place of trying to bury and hide our sin. Because what happens is what we try to do, we try to convince others that we didn't do anything. Right? We try to like, on the surface, we live this church life where it's like, hey, how are you? Every Sunday morning, I go to church on Wednesdays. I'm doing really, really good. [12:52] And I want to make sure that when I'm at church, no one has any idea that I'm really struggling with X, Y, or Z temptation. Or I'm really struggling in some specific area of sin. We try to live this fake life. And God does not take kindly to hypocrisy. We can't try to bury our sin and convince others that it doesn't exist. Even if we do, and people don't know that we've committed some sin or some sins.

And we try to convince ourselves that we haven't done anything wrong. And we have this really neat thing that we can do as people, which is we can just convince ourselves to stop thinking about it, stop thinking about it, stop thinking about it, until that guilt is gone. And then it's like, oh, I don't feel guilty anymore, so it's over with. I'm good. I'm not thinking about that sin. It's buried. It's over. It's hidden. There's no hiding our sin from God. Achan tried to hide his sin. Achan tried to hide his shame, and he couldn't. The Lord knew exactly where it was hidden. The Lord was not shocked. He wasn't surprised. Should I remind you of the story of David, the king of Israel? He had all of those moments of great victory. He was finally the king in Israel after Saul's death, and after a couple of revolts ended, and now he's the king in Israel. And when his men are off at war, he stayed home, and he sinned in the same way that Achan did. Very similar, by the way. He looked and saw something that wasn't his. In David's case, it was Bathsheba. He coveted what wasn't his instead of looking away.

And then he tried to cover up his sin. He tried to bury it. Achan buried his under his tent. David buried his by sending the husband of that woman to the front lines to die. He murdered Uriah the Hittite because he wanted to cover up his sin, and no one in the kingdom of Israel knew. He was clean. He was free. Home free. Now I'm consoling the wife of this dead soldier. I'll marry her, and she'll become my bride. It'll be great for her. It looks like really noble on the outside, right? But the Lord was not surprised. God sent Nathan, the prophet, to David to talk with him. Tell him this story, if you remember, about a lamb, and how somebody who had a lot more than someone else took that lamb, and David was enraged whenever he heard this. 2 Samuel 12, 7 through 9 says, Nathan replied to David, you are the man.

This is what the Lord, God of Israel, says. I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from Saul. I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your arms. And I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more. Why then have you despised the Lord's command by doing what I consider evil? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with a sword, and you took his wife as your own. You murdered him with the Ammonites' sword. Something about the Old Testament prophets, they didn't mince words, did they? I mean, Nathan told David exactly what David knew to be true, and exactly what David had tried to hide from anyone ever finding out. But God knew all. God knew all.

Looking back at the sin of Achan here, it had consequences. The same way that David's sin had real consequences. The loss of his son. There was no lack, there was no peace in his bloodline after this.

[16:22] He dealt with revolts from his own son until the day that he died. There was real consequences for the sin that these people committed. Achan set apart himself, and he set apart the people for destruction.

It's an amazing thing. The sin, it seems small. It seems minor. He just took a little bit of money. He just took a robe that looked really pretty. Like, it seems like small, but here's the thing. When we think like that, when we think like, why is it such a big deal? Like, why is God so mad? I think we fail to recognize the holiness of God and how seriously he takes sin. God takes sin very seriously. He takes defiance to his commands very seriously. And there are consequences when we sin. And so, as we're looking on here, we're going to talk about the consequences of Achan's sin. There was at least three consequences here. One is the defeat at Ai. Another was confusion for Joshua and the leaders. And then finally, Achan's own judgment. And so, as Achan sinned, and he set apart the people for destruction, I want you to think about this. It's like, it's not that big of a deal. It's just some money. It was just a robe.

His actions led to the death of 36 people. His sin led to the death of 36 people. It says, they went up to Ai, just 3,000 of them, and they turned and ran. And the men of Ai chased them down and killed about 36 of them. Now, why did they send such few numbers? Well, Ai was a small place. There weren't many people there. And the people were really confident in the Lord. They had just seen God do amazing things. They didn't need all of the soldiers. They didn't need everyone. They just need a small, you know, little group to go in there and take care of this little city. We're feeling good. We know the Lord's given us victory. And Joshua, at this point, was right along with them. Because he had seen God give them victory after victory. He knew, right, in his mind, we're good to go. Let's go take on this city with a small number of people. But here's the thing. Joshua wasn't aware of, and the people, the soldiers, the spies, especially, who went and told Joshua, we only need a small group of people, they were not aware of the fact that Achan had sinned. They weren't aware of his greed. They weren't aware of his selfishness. They weren't aware that he was unfaithful, and it set apart the entire people for destruction. So when those 3,000 men went to Ai, they were chased, and they fled.

And then this is the response of Joshua. And I want to pause for a second, because the first time I read through this, I was thinking, okay, Joshua sounds a lot like those people in the wilderness. Like, wow, wow, God, we should have gone back to Egypt. But I was studying a little bit and praying through this, and I really think that this is not complaining about God. Joshua's in this state of shock, and he's crying out to God and asking him, what happened? What happened? You've given us victory.

What happened? This is what it says, then Joshua tore his clothes and fell face down to the Lord before the ark of the Lord until evening, as did the elders of Israel. They all put dust on their heads. [19:33] Oh, Lord God, Joshua said, why did you ever bring these people across the Jordan to hand us over to the Amorites for our destruction? Remember, Joshua didn't know about Achan's sin. If only we'd been content to remain on the other side of the Jordan. This is despair. What can I say, Lord, now that Israel has turned its back and run from its enemies? When the Canaanites and all who live in the land hear about this, they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. Then what will you do about your great name? Joshua sought the Lord, and at first it seems like he's blaming the Lord for this failure, but I don't think that's what he's doing at all. But how often do we take that approach, where we face consequences for our own actions, and then we shift the blame and say that God is unfair to us, God is harsh to us, God, whatever, we blame God for the consequences that we face for our own actions. That's not what Joshua did, but I mean, how often do we do that? I know, I mean, I've been guilty of it before. It's like, it doesn't feel fair. It doesn't feel right, but God is the one who is just and perfect and right all the time. The difference between what we do and what Joshua does is that we blame God for the consequence. Joshua wasn't blaming God. He was despaired. He was concerned, not just for himself and for the people, but he was concerned for what the defeat of the people of Israel would mean for the name of the Lord. So he cried out in fear and waited for the

Lord's answer, and this is what the Lord says. The Lord then said to Joshua, stand up. Why have you fallen face down? Israel has sinned. They have violated my covenant that I appointed for them.

They have taken some of what was set apart. They have stolen, deceived, and put those things with their own belongings. This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They will turn their backs and run from their enemies because they have been set apart for destruction. I will no longer be with you unless you remove from what, remove from among you what is set apart. That's powerful. I will no longer be with you. Verse 13, go and consecrate the people.

Tell them to consecrate themselves for tomorrow. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. There are things that are set apart among you, Israel. You will not be able to stand against your enemies until you remove what is set apart. And so God not only consoled Joshua by telling him, get up and quit blaming me. It's not my fault. This is the people of Israel who have lived in unfaithfulness. I set a covenant before them. They agreed to it. And then this covenant that I set was broken. Achan, as a representative of Israel, as a member of the nation of Israel, Achan cast everyone else into the same judgment that he was going to face.

And here's the thing, this process that God has before them, it's intense. Have everybody go through person by person, you know, clan by clan, person by person, until I identify who the person is. And Achan is told to confess. So finally, after everybody went through and he has Achan here, there's this call to confession and repentance. So there's a couple things I want you to think about here, too, with this call to confession. One, the nature of confession. And two, the danger of private sin. So verse 19, Joshua said to Achan, my son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and make a confession to him. It really, in the Hebrew, it says, give glory to the God of Israel, and praise his name. I urge you, tell me what you have done. Don't hide anything from me.

[23 : 15] There's a principle here that we have to think about. And one, or what it is, is when we confess our sin to God, God is honored through that. God is honored when we confess sin. Hiding sin is unfaithfulness.

Hiding sin is disingenuous. Hiding sin is lying. When we have committed a sin against a holy God, we have to turn to him with repentance in our hearts and confess that we've sinned against him. He knows.

He knows we've sinned. Well, if he knows, why do I have to confess? Because this is a holy act where we are submitting to the Lord himself and saying, God, I have broken your law. It's a heartbreaking thing to do to confess sin, but it is far better for us. It's far better for our health. It's far better for the people that we encounter. It's far better for ministry and service in the church, the life of the church, if we don't live with hidden sin in our hearts. I mean, think about this. Joshua and the people of Israel felt the consequences of Achan's sin. Do you think for one second that the church won't feel the consequences of the sin of one member? I absolutely think that we could. And so we have a responsibility as Christ followers to humble ourselves before the Lord and confess our sin to him regularly for the sake of the unity of the church. We don't want to face the consequences corporately.

We need to stand before the Lord and confess. But Achan, whenever he was told to confess, he's giving glory to God by doing it. And he did. He admitted what he did, what he had done, right? Like, I mean, at that point, he realized the gig is up. You know, God knows. Now Joshua knows. It's me. I did it. What am I going to do here? I don't really know. Okay, so he told the truth. He told the truth.

[25 : 08] But that confession is not true repentance. He did confess. He told the truth. But that confession was not an example of true repentance. True repentance involves confessing sin, even when it has potential costs, personal costs, personal costs, and severe consequences. And true repentance occurs when the Holy Spirit of God convicts our soul over our sin, and we are called to confess and to repent. That's true repentance. Achan was brought forward by God, and he told the truth, which is a lot better, by the way.

There's a New Testament story. I don't have time to get into it. But in Acts chapter 5, there's these two people, Ananias and Sapphira. You know who they are? Yeah, very, very interesting people. They sold this piece of land, and then they said they gave all of the proceeds, all of the money from that sale of the land to the church, but they had lied. They were trying to make themselves sound really good for the church, like, we gave all of our money, but they kept some for themselves. And so then Peter has them come stand before them, one at a time, Ananias first, and he's, hey, did you, did you give everything from the sale of that land? By the way, they didn't have to. They just decided to lie and tell everyone that they did. Ananias said, yeah, we gave everything, and he fell dead. That's a New Testament story of someone facing the judgment for sin immediately. And then

his wife came through, by the way, Sapphira, and Peter asked the same question. What happened? Did you give everything?

And she said, yeah, we gave everything. Peter says, look at the feet of the people who dragged out your husband. They're going to drag you out too. And then she died. It was very severe. They tried to lie to God. They lied. They tried to lie to the Holy Spirit. We cannot trick God. We can't fool God. Achan tried to fool God. He tried to hide his sin. But the grace and mercy of God is available for those who genuinely repent. And there is a danger of private sin. We try to convince ourselves, and we lie to ourselves, and tell ourselves that the sin is gone. It's over with. No one knows about it. It's hidden.

It's private. It's only my problem, and I've dealt with it. It's fine. Mark 4, 22, Jesus says, there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be brought to light. 1 Timothy 5, 24 says, some people's sins are obvious, preceding them to judgment, but the sins of others surface later. Listen, none of the hidden sins that we commit are going to remain hidden at all.

[27 : 38] There's a danger in private sin, and it's believing, believing that somehow we fooled God. He is not fooled. Private sin is only private in appearance. God is not tricked. But there's an urgency here, too, in the plea from Joshua to glorify the Lord by making confession of sin. God would have been more glorified in this scene if Achan had not stolen at all, if he had been obedient. Further, God would have been more glorified if Achan, of his own volition, being convicted of his sin, had gone and fallen on his face before the ark of the Lord and said, Lord God, I confess, I sinned. I was greedy in the moment.

But he knew what would happen to him if he did that, and so he chose not to. But we have to confess our sin to the Lord. And here's the thing, we need to be willing and able and open to confess our sin to one another as well. Whether it's to your spouse or a trusted friend, accountability partner, whoever it may be, a deacon, a pastor, a Sunday school teacher, whoever it is, we have to have a relationship where we can confess our sin to another person and be received with grace and mercy and kindness. And also, we received with wisdom, where someone tells you how you need to, how you need to, you know, go from here, right? I mean, there's times where, where sin creeps into people's lives that if it comes to light, man, it's going to ruin a family. If it comes to light, it's going to, I'm going to lose my job. If it, if it comes to light, it's going to really have bad financial impacts on me. Whatever it may be, we have a responsibility to live in purity and in holiness as to the Lord and confess our sins. And that means that we have to have the integrity to confess our sins, even when it's not easy, even when it's risky. But ignoring sin, pretending like it didn't happen, it's not going to make it disappear. It's not going to atone for your sin. The only way that your sin is paid for is if you confess your sin to the Lord Jesus Christ and cry out to him for forgiveness. He's the only one who's able to, to forgive. He's the only one to, to make us whole, to, to fix the broken relationship that we've severed with God through our sin. So if you have not given your life to Christ and confessed your sin to him and trusted his grace and mercy, then today should be the day that you do. Because if you think the punishment for Achan was severe, and it was, I mean, it was severe. Like, he, he was stoned to death. Like, we don't do that in the church anymore. Don't worry. Okay? If you're new here, you're not going to get stoned to death. I promise. But it was a severe punishment. It was a severe punishment. And if that makes us uncomfortable, which it can, makes us a little bit uncomfortable. I don't know. That feels, that feels a little bit, like a little bit much.

That was probably too strict, you know? Too much punishment. Again, we're underestimating how seriously God takes sin. There's a reason. I read in a commentary this week, there's a reason that Jesus said in Matthew that if your right eye causes you to sin, you should gouge it out. If your right hand causes you to sin, you should cut it off. It's better to live without a part of your body than to be, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And Jesus took sin really, really seriously.

God took sin really, really seriously. And if you think that Achan's punishment is too severe, if you have not believed in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, then the punishment that Achan faced is going to look like peanuts. Eternal separation from God is far worse. But this is a picture of what happens when we don't believe and don't confess our sin before the Lord. As we close here, I want you to remember three things. Well, number one, persevere in faithfulness. Achan did all the right things, right? Like, let's move this to modern context. Achan showed up to church all the time.

[31 : 43] Achan was in the choir. Achan, you know, he was here at the Easter thing, and Achan helped set up tables and chairs. Achan cleaned dishes. He did all the right things. But if his heart

was not for the Lord, then when that moment of temptation was before him, he was going to fold. And he did. You can do all the right things. You can look really, really good. You can look like a faithful believer. But if Jesus Christ has not entered your heart and transformed your life, then there is no hope beyond this life.

So persevere in faithfulness. And number two, confess sin. We have to practice confessing sin. I think too often, confessing sin gets overlooked in the church. We can't let sin just, we can't pretend like sin doesn't exist. We can't pretend like sin isn't happening. We can't pretend like we're not struggling in different areas of our life. We have to practice true confession. And then third, as we practice that true confession, trust the grace of God. And here's the thing. As the church, yeah, we're called to hold people accountable. We're called to make sure that people know the right ways to live and all those things. Absolutely. That's why we teach God's Word, 100%. But we're also called to reflect the grace and mercy of God. And if someone confesses sin to us, and then we take that and betray their trust by going and telling other people about the things that they've done, or if we betray their trust by casting them off as some people far worse than we are, I mean, how disingenuous is that? That doesn't reflect the grace and mercy of God at all. And so if someone trusts us enough to confess their sin, then we need to trust them enough to pray with them. Pray for them. Lead them to praying and asking

God for forgiveness and mercy. And trust that God is gracious and kind. And we're going to close today a little bit different. We're about to have the Lord's Supper. We're going to have a closing song.

But the way that we're going to close, I'm going to do something different that I have not done here yet. I've actually never done it anywhere. But this, the idea of confessing sin is just, it's burdening my heart today. And so I mentioned the story of David earlier and how Nathan, the prophet, came to him and told him how what he had done was evil in the Lord's sight and called it to light.

I want us to listen together to David's repentance. Because unlike Achan, who mentioned what he had done, David, when he was confronted with his sin, turned to the Lord for mercy. So Psalm 51 records David's words after his sin with Bathsheba. And I'm going to ask, as we move into this time, we're actually going to have communion today as well. We're going to share communion. And there's a lot to say about taking communion the right way, sharing the Lord's Supper the right way. And one of the things that we have to do as we take the Lord's Supper is we have to come with repentant hearts, clean hands and pure hearts before the Lord. Because God does not want us to take this in any disingenuous way whatsoever. So here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to ask you to close your eyes.

[35 : 07] Nobody's going to hit you, okay? Close your eyes. And I want you to listen as I read Psalm 51. And then we'll sing a song. And you can sit in your seat.

And if you need to pray and confess sin, then do that. If you want to stand, you can stand and sing. If you want to sit and sing, you can do that. If you want to come up to these steps and use them as an altar, you can kneel here and confess your sin. Whatever God leads you to do in this time, do it obediently.

Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love, according to your abundant compassion. Blot out my rebellion. Completely wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. For I'm conscious of my rebellion and my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. So you are right when you pass sentence. You are blameless when you judge.

Indeed, I was guilty when I was born. I was sinful when my mother conceived me. Surely, you desire integrity in the inner self and you teach me wisdom deep within. Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Turn your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt. God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore the joy of your salvation to me and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit. Then I will teach the rebellious your ways and sinners will return to you. Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God, God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not want a sacrifice or I would give it. You are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God. In your good pleasure, cause Zion to prosper, build the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in righteous sacrifices,

whole burnt offerings. Then bulls will be offered on your altar. Oh God, thank you for who you are. Thank you for this example of the serious nature of sin.

God, I pray that you would forgive our sin. God, where I have sinned in my life, I confess to you that I, that I haven't trusted you the way that I should. God, that I haven't been obedient to your word in the ways that I should. God, I am a sinful man and I need your mercy and grace every day.

[38 : 18] God, we love you and trust, like David, that you will renew the spirit of those who have lived in sin and now turn to you for your grace and mercy.

In Jesus' name, amen.