



Jericho: Disaster or Kingdom Destiny?

Date: Sunday 10th **Speaker:** Rachel Binder (City Centre AM & PM), Kat Densham (South Site)

Key Verses: Joshua 7:1 – 8:2

Talk Summary:

In the story of Joshua 7-8, unbeknownst to the rest of the nation, a man named Achan has taken some of the spoil of Jericho against God's express direction and hidden it in his tent. Though Israel won the battle against "undefeatable" Jericho through God's miraculous intervention, they flee before the small army of Ai and 36 of them die in the battle. Joshua, distressed, cries out to God, who reveals that there is sin in the camp and gives instructions of how to identify and punish the guilty one. Once this is done, God's anger is turned away from Israel and He gives specific instructions for attacking Ai again. This time Ai is soundly defeated before Israel, who are allowed to keep the plunder for themselves.

In the context of God's big story, Joshua 7-8 illustrates that sin produces destruction, but God provides justice and life. God hates sin because 1) it is against His nature and 2) because it destroys people, whom He loves. Sin and its consequences were never what God intended for His Creation; therefore, God is at war with sin wherever it is found.

Although sin produces destruction, we often don't act like that is the case. There are two myths we commonly believe about our sin. Myth #1 is that "it's no big deal." We can excuse "little sins" without realizing that they still hold us back from the freedom God has for us, and can lead us into deeper problems (see James 1:14-15). Myth #2 is that my sin is "my business," that it doesn't affect others. Achan's story illustrates that this is clearly not the case. We can all think of people and relationships that have been negatively impacted or even broken through sin of various forms. Even if we think that others aren't affected, God sees and knows every hidden thing and longs for us to bring it into the light and cooperate with Him for freedom and wholeness.

In Joshua 7, Achan and his family were punished for his sin, turning away God's anger. But in the context of God's bigger story, God provides justice and new life for all who turn to Jesus. Through the cross, Jesus shows us that whatever penalty God's justice requires for our sin, God was willing to take on Himself so that we could have life free from the power of sin. God invites us to confess to Him what He already knows, receive His forgiveness, and cooperate with the Holy Spirit for the transformation He longs to bring.

Being honest with another trusted person in our lives can also be a key “next step” into freedom from sin that we feel trapped in.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

Here are some questions for your group to consider after reading Joshua 7:1-8:2.

- What words, phrases or incidents in the text reveal God's attitude toward sin? What is your reaction to that?
- Why do you think Achan acted in the way that he did? (Incidentally, the amount of gold and silver he stole would be roughly equivalent to a lifetime's wages.) Can you relate to anything he may have felt or believed?
- Do you find yourself identifying with any either of the “myths” about our sin that were discussed on Sunday? If yes, in what way?
- If you were Joshua, what do you think the events in Joshua 7 and 8 would have been like? How would sin in the camp have affected you? Are there any leadership lessons you can glean from how God and Joshua related in this story?
- The wrath of God against sin is an uncomfortable thing for many of us. What is your honest reaction to that idea? If you or someone you love were a victim of serious crime, do you think you would feel differently about God's justice?
- The wrath of God against sin is present throughout the Bible, both Old and New Testament. In the New Testament, the focus is on how Jesus took our sin on himself; through the cross, Jesus turned away God's wrath and gave us His righteousness. Here are just a few of the many New Testament verses you may want to look at as you consider this aspect of God's character and our response.
 - Romans 1:18
 - Romans 5:6-9
 - Romans 6:19-23
 - Romans 8:1-4
 - 2 Cor 5:21
 - Ephesians 5:1-10
- What response do you find yourself having to these verses above?
- Consider breaking into smaller groups or pairs (men and women separated) to share what areas of sin God has been convicting you of in your own life. Pray for one another and check in with each other during the week if applicable.

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?