

The Valley of Trouble (Achor)

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon delves into the story of Achan in the Valley of Achor from Joshua 7, highlighting the consequences of sin, the need for repentance, and the importance of dealing with sin in the church. It emphasizes the dangers of presumption, ad-libbing in ministry, and the significance of sanctification. The sermon concludes with a message of redemption, reminding listeners of God's forgiveness and restoration in the midst of trouble and discipline.

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Scripture: Joshua 7:1, Proverbs 28:13, Hebrews 12:15, 1 Corinthians 5:5, Isaiah 65:10, Hosea 2:15, Matthew 26:28, Psalm 51:10

Topics: "Consequences of Sin", "Redemption and Restoration"

Description

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Transcript

I want you to turn in your Bibles here to Joshua chapter 7. We've got the books of Moses and then Joshua chapter 7. And I want to go to our next message in this series on the valleys. We've been dealing with the valleys of the Bible and we've seen that each valley in the Bible is symbolic. It's got a message for us, the church, and we've seen how diverse.

We went to Psalm 23 and of course it's the valley of the shadow of death. And we see the comfort that was to be found there. Last Sunday, we looked at the valley of Baca or the valley of weeping and many commentators try to put the valley of Baca that I dealt with last week together with the valley that I'm about to deal with here, which is the valley of Acre.

And they try to say they're the same. They're not the same. And that's why I preached one last week and I'm preaching a different one.

They're nothing related. You're going to see they're two valleys filled with very different things. My message here, part eight, the valley of trouble or the valley of Acre.

Reading from Joshua chapter 7 verse 1. And the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing for Achan, the son of Garmi, the son of Sabbath, 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. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven on the east side of Bethel and speak unto them saying, go up and view the country.

And the men went up and viewed Ai and they returned to Joshua and said unto him, let not all the people go up, but let about two or 3000 men go up and smite Ai and make not all the people to labor thither for they are but few. So then went up thither of the people, about 3000 men, and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about 36 men for they chased them from before the gate, even unto Shebarim and smote them in the going down.

Wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord unto eventide. He and the elders of Israel then put dust upon their heads.

And Joshua said, alas, O Lord God, wherefore has thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies for the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it and shall environ us around and cut off our name from the earth. And what will thou do unto thy great name? What a prayer, what a prayer.

Now listen, the response to that prayer. And the Lord said unto Joshua, get thee up. Wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel has 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. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but they turned their backs before their enemies because they were accursed. Neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Up, 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, O Israel. Thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought according to your tribes and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh that according to the families thereof and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households and the households which the Lord shall take shall come by man. And it shall be he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord and because he has brought folly in Israel. And 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, everything and all that he had and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

You see it there, the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

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.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your words. We thank you how at times it encourages us and lifts us heavenward.

Lord God, there's times that instructs us and leads us forth. There's other times that convicts us and deals with us and brings us to a place of repentance. And brokenness and father only your Holy Spirit knows how to work in a meeting and a gathering and individualize.

I know there's someone here who will need encouraged. There's someone else who needs convicted and only your Holy Spirit can do that and apply the balm of Gilead to each soul that needs it. Only you can make the word of God a sword or a hammer.

Only you can make it a fire nor God are a sweet smell and fragrance and nor God we trust you in this day by day. We don't have the ability to do that but you're a sovereign God with perfect wisdom and we yield to you even in this gathering. Will you speak to us as we nor God take a moment in time nor God to stand at this valley of Achor, this valley of trouble and to consider what you would say to us in Jesus mighty name.

Amen. This valley of Achor that is mentioned here is mentioned five times in the Bible. Twice this valley is mentioned in Joshua chapter 7. Again it's mentioned a third time in Joshua chapter 15.

It's also mentioned once in Isaiah and once in the small book of Hosea. And so these five times talk about a specific valley. This valley has a message for us.

There's something unique about this valley that's not like last week or any of the previous weeks. This valley of Achor has a message that the others didn't have. Some of the valleys we've been in are very encouraging.

They're valleys of fruitfulness or of victory. There's even a valley of weeping like we dealt with last week. There are valleys that aren't easy to walk through.

But this valley is very different than any of the valleys we've dealt with so far. Radically different. And I've called this message the valley of trouble.

You see this valley in the five verses where it is mentioned initially it is a bad valley. This valley represents a place where sin gets dealt with, exposed, confronted. In fact it's more than that.

It is a valley of defeat, of almost nigh unto destruction because of sin. It is a valley that you go to when you're defeated. It is a valley when your sin catches up on you.

See you can't outrun your sin. No one can outrun sin. It has to be dealt with somewhere.

One of those places is this valley. Sin gets dealt with. The name of this valley, Achor, it means the valley of trouble.

The name Achor means trouble. But that isn't all we've got to say in this message this morning. God help us if that's all I had to say.

Do you realize this valley became a valley of redemption, forgiveness, recovery, and victory. And this little place, this valley of Achor is only about 10 miles from Jericho and it's outside a place called Ai. That's the correct pronunciation of it.

Not I, it's Ai. It's not very apt for our generation and the time that we're living in. We're living in an Ai generation.

I really mean that. We're living in an Ai generation. Let me tell you, we're living in a generation in the church where sin is undealt with.

They're trying to deal with Ai without dealing with sin. You can't do that. You can't be in an Ai age and not end up in this valley of trouble.

You cannot do that. You will not do that. And so this valley of Achor, the name Achor, it means to cause trouble, to disturb everything, cause affliction to everyone, or to stir up the waters that bothers everybody.

That's what it means. And so this valley, something happens there to cause trouble for everybody. You don't want to go to this valley.

This is not a good valley. Some of these valleys, like David, ran into the valley. Nobody runs into this valley.

You run there, running from the enemy. It is a place of defeat. It is where you turn tail and hightail it out of there.

But you end up in this valley. We read previous to this in Joshua chapter six. Do you know what happened just before this? They just won one of their greatest victories that we all remember.

They had just defeated Jericho, an impregnable city, a mighty city, a city built up to the sky. No one could defeat that, but Israel defeated it. And as they defeated Jericho, an impregnable city, it was by God's power, by God's might.

It wasn't by their might. Listen to what Joshua said from God to the people. What a warning.

Listen very carefully. Joshua chapter 6, 17. And the city, that is Jericho, shall be accursed.

And all that are there in it to the Lord, verse 18, and ye and all that keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing and make the camp of Israel a curse. You get in the message and trouble it. But all the silver and gold and the vessels of brass and iron are consecrated to the Lord.

They shall come into the treasury of the Lord. And so warning is given. They've just had the greatest victory, an enormous victory, a major intervention of God.

Astounding, astounding. And he gives one warning. Don't touch the gold.

Don't touch the silver. Don't touch anything. It belongs to God.

One warning. Let me preach my message here. I've got three points for you about the Valley of Achor.

Number one, and this is the title of my first point, a troubler in the Valley of Trouble. One individual man, a singular troubler. And where is he? He's in the Valley of Achor.

I should really deal with point two about them all, but I'm not going to do that. I want to go right to this. I want to deal with one man before I deal with all the people.

I want you to see this. I know if I was trying to have it nice and smooth, I'd preach point two first, but I don't want to. I want to go straight to this so that you understand what we're dealing with.

I want to deal with a troubler, a man who causes trouble for everybody. And his name is Achan, or Achan, and he's mentioned all through this chapter. Listen to what Achan means.

This is going to surprise you. The name Achan means to be a troubler, to be troublesome, one who causes trouble to others. One through his own sin causes trouble to come knocking on everyone else's door.

That's what his name means. And you know in the Bible, name denotes character. It's all through the Old Testament.

It's a teaching manual for us. It's not accidental. Do you know what his father's name means? If you look at his father's name, it means gardener.

Do you know what a gardener? He lives and abides and works in the things of nature, of beauty, and it smells beautiful. Achan doesn't smell beautiful, I want to tell you. Achan stinks to high heaven to God.

You know who Achan is? He is a troubler of Israel. And so that's why I call him a troubler in the valley of trouble. Here you have Achan, by name a troubler, by nature a troubler, by action a troubler, and yet he's in the people of God.

He's fighting God's enemies. He's a soldier in the house of God. He's counted amongst the tribes of Israel.

His genealogy or genealogy is correct. Absolutely correct. He can show you his birth certificate.

He can show you everything. But you know what? There's a problem with this man. He is a troubler.

You see, I want you to see in this message, personal sin is not just personal. If you think as an individual you can sin and you don't affect others, you're deceived here this morning. You say, well, I'm just sinning.

I'm not going to bother anyone. I'm not going to trouble anyone else. Can I tell you, your sin is not just personal.

It's going to affect someone else. You cannot be a troubler without troubling others. You can't be an Achan.

You know, it says over in 1 Chronicles 2 and 7, it's going through all the genealogies of the tribes, mentioning everyone. Most of them, it just mentions their name, but it doesn't with this man. It says, and the sons of Carme, it's going through all of the tribes.

Achan, they call him there. Then it has to put a description in and say, oh yes, you know the one, the troubler of Israel. You know, like it says, Judas, the betrayer.

Remember the Bible, the gospel, it can't even mention Judas without saying, yes, you know the one, the one who betrayed Jesus. You know who he is. So it says here about Achan, the troubler of Israel who transgressed in the thing that is accursed.

That's the one. Do you realize this man brings everything to stand still. Israel's defeated.

We're going to come to that shortly. An entire nation of 600,000 soldiers who have just defeated Jericho marching around it are now defeated by a handful of soldiers. How could that happen? How did this happen? One man, one man, and he's a troubler of Israel.

He's caused trouble to come to everyone. This is so serious that we need to understand what actually has happened here. We have a troubler in the valley of trouble.

And so the valley of Achor is actually a valley where God's people come to because of one person. Don't tell me sin doesn't matter. Listen to me very carefully.

We live in an AI generation in the church that says, sin isn't that big a deal. Oh yeah, God's dealt with that. It's not a big issue.

We're all under grace. We're all sinners. It doesn't matter.

Hey, we're all the same. So we don't deal with it. That's not what this says.

It's not what the Bible says. I want to tell you, this entire chapter shows an entire people of God, the entire nation, the entire body of believers coming to stand still because of one man's secret sin. It's not even public.

But I tell you what the results of it are, the consequences of it are, the fruit of it is, that's how Joshua knew what in all the world's going on. Why are we defeated by the enemy? Can you please tell me in this hour, why is the church of our day defeated by the enemy? Why have they removed themselves from the streets? Why is there no power? Why is it seems like the world is evangelizing the church instead of the opposite way around? Why are they coming and getting your teenagers? Do you think that's normal? It's not normal. It's not okay.

There's something actually wrong. There's a reason. And when you end up in defeat outside of A, AI is nothing.

AI is nothing. Just quote me on that one. AI is a little insignificant place.

It is nothing. Joshua, he can't understand this. How can this happen to us, an entire nation? We cannot be defeated.

Yes, you are. And he goes and seeks God. And God says, I'll show you who's the cause of it.

See, God knows everything. Listen, when Achan is caught and taken, he didn't admit, he didn't own up. He didn't say it's my sin.

He has to be hunted down. He has to be found. He has to be dealt with.

He's not forthcoming. Listen to what it says in Joshua 7, 21. This is his confession.

And you're going to see what caused this. When I saw, that's where it began. What happened with Achan that brought all this about? It began with them seeing.

You don't think your eyes are dangerous? Achan's sin, where he's brought to this valley of trouble, began with seeing. I just saw. You look too long.

That's what you did. Do you remember Genesis 3, 6 with Eve? You remember she saw. I could take you all through the Bible on seeing.

Listen to what it says in Genesis 3 and 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise. Do you see where it began with Eve? Before she reached out and took, before she thought, before she lusted, before she desired. Hey ladies, it's not just the men that look and lust.

And it's not always for sexual gratification. It could be for many things. With Eve, it was the fruit of the tree that was denied her.

That one thing that was denied her. I want that thing. You know what? I see this all through the church.

Things forbidden, things taught on. And yet we say, I want that. We begin to look.

I like that. You need to be very careful. You don't know where that's going to lead you step by step.

And so you see here, it began with looking. Achan was a man who saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonian garment. It was a Babylonian garment in Canaan.

Amidst the desolation of Jericho, he saw this beautiful garment from Babylon. You know, Babylonian religions, very dangerous. You know what I believe it symbolizes? Ecumenism.

Sure, we're all one. Oh, you priests can pray to Mary and we pray to Jesus, but we're all one. And we all join together.

We all speak in tongues. You're looking at a Babylonian garment. And I could preach an entire sermon on that Babylonian garment.

See, as soon as you get an Achan looking at that, you're on dangerous ground. You think that couldn't affect all the people of God? One man looking at a garment. Remember Hezekiah, the greatest king of Israel, a revivalist.

Remember what he done in his latter days? He went and brought these visitors from Babylon into his palace and showed them all his treasures. Remember God sent a prophet to him and said, what did you show them? Oh, all my treasures. Hey, it's okay.

They're friends from Babylon. We're all in unity together. They're really impressed with me.

God says, because of this, you're going to lose everything. And your children will go into captivity. You think sin isn't dangerous.

You think compromise isn't dangerous. He'll bring you to a valley, a certain kind of valley. And it says, and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of 50 shekels of weight.

And notice this next word. Then I coveted them. Do you see where Achan's sin is? He coveted.

He saw the gold. He saw the silver. Then he began to covet.

The word covet means to be eager to gain what belongs to others. Do you ever look with covetousness? I wish I had that. I wish I could have that.

I long for that. Be very careful. Achan, actually, this is his personal confession.

He says, I was covetous. So you knew your sin. You weren't ignorant of your sin.

All along, you're just fitting in with everyone else. You're not confessing your sin, not dealing with your sin, but you knew your sin. You were denying your sin.

You're ignoring your sin. You're pretending it wasn't real, but you knew your sin. And his sin was that of covetousness.

Remember over in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, when Paul is dealing with the church in the New Testament, and he begins to talk about certain Christians in the church called brothers who you shouldn't sit and keep company with or have a meal with. This is foreign to most churches. This is utterly foreign what I'm saying to most churches.

1 Corinthians chapter 5 and 11, but now I have written unto you not to keep company. It means fellowship, intimacy. If any man that is called a brother, notice this, be a fornicator.

Do you know any Christians committing fornication, sleeping with their girlfriends? He also says covetous. After fornication, covetous is the next one. Do you know you're not to keep company with a Christian who's covetous, who desires and burns and longs? And it's obvious they're actually doing this.

Anyone can sin. We're not sinlessly perfect. I'm not sinlessly perfect, but we're talking about someone who is unrepentant, doesn't deal with their sin, doesn't care about their sin, justifies their sin.

And this person, covetous, you know what that word in 1 Corinthians 5 means? It means holding or desiring more, eager to gain, a desire to have the major portion or what somebody else possesses. And so Paul is saying in the church, someone called a brother, called a Christian who's covetous, you're not even to have company with them. You're not even to have fellowship with them.

You're not even to eat with them. Church, is there any wonder the church is defeated at a core whenever we tolerate covetousness in the church this day and say, it's no big issue. I love my brother.

I care about my brother. We are all under grace. It doesn't matter if you're a fornicator or a covetous person or an idolater.

What's an idolater? Someone who uses statues in worship. You can't use statues in worship and be in fellowship with the real church. You cannot do that.

A railer, what's a railer? Pouring out false accusations against a genuine brother. You're not to keep company. Fellowship, you can't sit down and have a meal.

A drunkard. Oh, I love Jesus, but I get drunk. Titsy.

Or an extortioner with such, listen to what Paul says, not even to eat. Not my words, not my exposition of the text. It's what the text says.

And so this fellowship and company means don't mix together with, don't associate with them, don't dwell in unity with them. How many of we heard in this city, they have dramatic experiences with Christ. They come out of the world and then suddenly they go, they want their sin.

They want to live their old rebellious life. They make decisions like aching. I want covetousness.

I want the garment. I want the gold. I want the silver, or I want the girl.

And you know, suddenly what happens to them? They suddenly take up this teaching called once saved, always saved. They all do it. I don't know where they get it from.

They must get it on YouTube. And they go and get it. And I believe in security in Christ.

You need security in Christ. I'm not undermining that. I am secure.

I'm a very secure person in Christ. But when someone says I'm safe, I can drink, I can take drugs, I can sleep around, but I'm safe. We believe in once saved, always saved.

You're on your way to hell. You're in a dangerous place. You're going to the Valley of Acre.

That's where you're going. You're a danger. You cannot fellowship with us in this church and be like that and think like that.

You cannot do that. Because we care for you too much. You remember over in Acts chapter 5 in the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira come into the house of God independently.

Peter says, did you sell the land for so much? Yes, sure did. And we're giving it all to the church. You know what? While at church, you don't, whatever you do with your land and your money, that's up to you.

That's between you and God. But when you publicly make it known, I'm giving, I'm selling my field, I'm giving to the church. No, you better do what you say.

They lied. Oh, God doesn't mind about land. It's a small issue if I lie.

Really? You think so? You think it doesn't damage your own soul, your own spiritual well-being, or cause trouble for others in this valley? You see, you know, Ananias and Sapphira died for lying to the Holy Ghost. It wasn't man. They weren't dealing with men.

You know, I've noticed over the years how people think they're dealing with Keith Malcolmson. I go, man, don't they realize? There's nothing to do with me. I know what I am.

That's why I tremble every time I get into this pulpit. I know who I am. I know what I am.

But I know I'm dealing with God. You need to know you're dealing with God. We're not playing church here.

This is real. If we don't get this right, we've got a short time. We're only here for a short time.

Then we're gone into the presence of God. This has got to be right. We need the Lord here.

Notice what else it says in verse 11 about him. God said about him that he stole. He had stolen.

Who had he stolen from? Jericho, the Ammonites, the pagans, the enemies of God. Did Achan steal from them? No, from God. Do you know all of the gold and silver was now God's.

Remember what Joshua said in chapter six. See all of this that we won in the victory from the enemy. It belongs to God.

You think you come into the church and this is what I got out of salvation. It's mine to do with whatever. See some of you, if God hadn't worked in your life, you'd be on a dung heap.

You wouldn't even have anything sitting here. But now you think everything you got because you have the same mind. You think of church.

You think you've got power and choices over that. You need to be careful you're not stealing. Achan was not only a covetous man, he was actually a thief from God.

He stole gold and silver from God. Not only that, it says in verse 11, he dissembled, which means to tell a lie. He was a liar.

Now we know he didn't tell lies. He lived a lie. You know why? He's walking amongst God's people.

Amen. Revival. Praise God.

Look at the miracles. Look at the walls of Jericho. Now I'm kidding.

Did you see those walls fall? Do you see how great our God is? Do it again, God. Do it and I. Send us another revival. You're a thief.

While you're praying that, preaching that, saying that, you're actually a thief in your heart. You're stealing from God. You've got all this gold and silver that you've stolen and yet you're going, praise God.

I'm part of a move of God. I'm part of a revival. Didn't Ananas and Sapphira say that? Acts chapter 5. They're part of a revival.

Do you know what? I'm selling my field and giving the money towards revival. The first revival. The Pentecostal revival.

This is the Jerusalem church. I'm a part of this. Hey, praise God, Peter.

Keep preaching. You thief. You liar to the Holy Ghost.

You see, this is who Achan is. Do you know what he was doing? He was gathering gold instead of fighting enemies. You don't think there's a motive in that heart? What about the enemies? What about the devil? What about souls? It says in verse 15, he hath wrought folly in Israel, which is wickedness.

You know, there's a lot in the church. Hey, he only took a garment, only took a bit of gold. Hey, it was lying there anyway.

You're making too much of sin. No, this is God's view of it. It's wickedness.

There's a lot of things we have normalized in the church. We have lost the reality of the seriousness of sin in this hour. We don't realize how serious sin is.

That's why we don't care about the cross or the blood in the same way, because we've lost that. See, God gave them the victory of Jericho, but there is a man who uses spiritual victory for his own physical gain. Look at this man.

He is directly and willfully disobedient against God. He hides his sin. He covers his sin.

He doesn't confess it. It says in Proverbs 28 and 13, he that confesses his sin, sorry, he that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy. This man, Achan, is in trouble.

He's a troubler. You see, when you do this, you deliberately sin against God's word, and then you just live as a Christian. You knowingly, I'm not talking about failure and sinning.

Listen to me very carefully. All have sinned. There's not one of you, I am sure, would dare to say that you have misplaced your foot this week.

I'm not talking about that. That isn't who Achan is. Achan is a deliberate, willful rebel in the house of God.

He doesn't want to leave his sin. He loves his sin. He covers his sin.

He's not repentant. He's not fighting against sin. He's not wrestling over sin.

He's not confessing his sin. So don't think everyone's an Achan. They're not.

Achan is someone who boldly and brashly lives in the house of God and says, I will not depart from my sin. I am not going to confess it. Remember what it says in Hebrews 12, 15, looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.

Oh, someone in the grace of God can't fail. Can't they? What's Galatians all about? The churches of Galatia fall from grace. I didn't say lose their salvation.

Didn't mention that. I said fall from a position of grace. It says you need to take diligence lest you fail of the grace of God.

Unless a root of bitterness, a root of bitterness, that's something deep down in your heart, a bitterness. You know what bitterness is. Springing up, listen to this carefully, trouble you and thereby defile many.

You need to be very careful of your heart. That a root of bitterness doesn't spring up because you know what? You always know someone better. They defile many.

Bitterness never stays in one heart. It defiles others. It affects others around you.

Guaranteed. Someone's always going to listen to you and they will become bitter. It spreads.

That's why sin is so dangerous. What does God say? Take Achan out to the valley of Achor. Take this troubler out to the valley of Achor.

Stone him to death. Stone his wife to death. His children to death.

His tent. He said even take his tent there. Destroy everything.

Annihilate it. Are you horrified at sin? Are you shocked at sin? Can I tell you what Achan represents? The old nature and all of us have it. Do you know what the old nature is? You don't educate the old nature.

The old Adam nature, the flesh. You don't perfume it. You don't rehabilitate it.

You know what you do? You crucify Achan. You don't want to play around with Achan. Achan is your worst enemy.

He really is. There is actually no hope for an Achan at this point. He has gone so far.

So rebellious against the things of God. Achan, your flesh is like my flesh, I want to tell you. Your flesh and my flesh are very the same.

You know what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5? If a man is living in willful sin and will not repent, you can go to him. You never do this publicly just overnight. There's a lot happens behind the scenes.

You're trying to help someone. You're trying to deal with their sin. You're begging them.

You're saying turn from your sin. If they don't, no, no, no, you don't understand. I'm a Christian.

I love Jesus. I'm going to heaven. You can't when you're getting drunk.

You can't when you're sleeping around. You can't when you're covetous or bitter. I'm not going to forgive them.

Doesn't it bother you what Jesus said? You don't forgive them, I won't forgive you. Doesn't that bother you? Doesn't that make you tremble? I'll never forgive them. I was in a church in Wales some years ago.

This older man, red cheeked, sitting behind me. And I'd just preached on revival, went and sat down. And he turned around, shook my hand, smiled.

He says, my son, I hadn't asked him. I didn't know anything about him. I'm a stranger.

Take my hand. He says, my son hurt me and I will never forgive him. And he says, I'm filled with the Holy Spirit.

I speak in tongues. I operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and you and no one else can tell me I'm in danger. That scares me for myself.

Nevermind him. You see, it says in 1 Corinthians 5 concerning these that won't turn from their sin. Verse 2, to be taken away from among you.

If they don't want to change, I would have any sinner walk in here. Let the homosexual come in. Let the transgressor come in.

I wouldn't start telling them, change your clothes. You can't sit in here. I'd be looking to see his heart changed because I love him.

I care about him. He's a broken vessel that needs Christ. But someone who's claiming to be a Christian born again, filled with the spirit and yet loving their sin, that's different.

You can't tolerate that. And so verse 2, let him be taken away from among you. Verse 13, put him away.

Verse 5, deliver him unto Satan. Verse 7, let him be purged out. Surely we're lovely Christians.

We're not going to use those terms. I'm talking about a basic real church. See later on in Joshua, read once again of the valley of Achor in Joshua 15, 7. And it's part of the inheritance of the people.

You know what? Achan dies. That will never be his inheritance. There's some we're going to watch die in the valley of Achor.

They are utter rebels. They're troublemakers to everyone here. We beg them.

We love them. We care about them. We warn them.

But they don't want that. They go, no, no, you don't understand. I've watched YouTube.

I've watched preacher false prophet. I know more than you. Fine.

Fine. But you know what? You'll never get the inheritance of Israel. Number two, God's people in the valley of trouble.

God's people in the valley. Let me take the picture back a bit, just to show you. Israel had been in the wilderness for 40 years.

In chapter 5, two chapters before this, before Jericho, Israel comes into the land. They're about to face Jericho, an impregnable city. You know where God takes them? The hill of four skins.

You know why? They've never circumcised in the nation since Egypt. 40 years no one's been circumcised in Israel, walking in the wilderness. All that generation has died.

Now a young generation has arisen. None of them are circumcised. But before you get into the land, you've got to be circumcised.

So the entire nation, all the males, all the men are circumcised to show they have the covenant of God. Then they keep the Passover on the 14th day. And just as they're passing out of the wilderness into the land of promise, the manna stops falling because now they're going to get it in the land.

All of that's gone, that old life. You're over Jordan, the place of death, of crucifixion. Do you see the preparation for Jericho? Do you see how careful they were? Death to self.

I need to deny the flesh. I need to take up my cross. Why do you think Jericho was such a victory? This is how they approached Jericho.

They came the way of the cross, the way of obedience, the way of holiness. And this is how they'd come. And we knew that once they were there, God speaks to them in chapter six.

He says, I have given you the land. I've given you the city of Jericho. I have given it to you that you should inherit it.

So they walk around at seven days, six days in silence. On the seventh day, they blow the ram's horns. They shout and all the walls fall.

And that's when he gives the warning. Listen to me very carefully in this point too. And there's something that's bothered me all my life.

And I've only got the answer the past two days. This is what amazed me about the Bible is I can sit for decades. That's why I don't say everything I think.

Do not say all that you think. You can have thoughts. There's nothing wrong with that.

Just sit on some of your thoughts. Don't share them with anyone. I've had a thought all through the years reading this story.

Lord, you stop an entire army, 600,000 men because of one Achan. You stop the entire nation of Israel and bring them to this valley of defeat because of one man. And I've never said this publicly my entire life, but I talked to the Lord.

I went, Lord, we don't stand a chance. Have you ever thought it? What church stands a chance if one Achan can stop everyone? If God will allow everyone to stop because of one Achan? That's what I thought over the years. I know all of you are too spiritual and wise to think that.

But I thought that. I went, Lord, this causes me a big problem until the past two days. Now I see.

This is why you're slow to speak, quick to listen. Do you know what dawned on me for the very first time in my life? And call me slow. Okay.

You are a lot faster than me. Maybe I'm just slow. Suddenly I see this in the midst of praying, looking at this, thinking of this.

Suddenly I say, do you know what? It wasn't only because of one man. Something has happened with the nation. Remember how they prepared for Jericho and it was the greatest victory.

Do you know Israel moves from Jericho to Ai 10 miles with a different attitude and walk? The entire 600,000 soldiers. It's not just Achan here, the entire people. Let me prove it to you.

I'm going to show it to you right now. In chapter seven, we know that Joshua sent spies to search out the land. And it says in verse two, and Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Avon.

That means the house of vanity. On the east side of Bethel, that means the house of God. So they're coming to investigate Ai.

We just defeated Jericho. Everybody's hearing about Jericho. The entire nation is shaken.

Now we're going to go and defeat little Ai. And we need to pass by the house of the Lord and the house of vanity. The house of the Lord always represents God's house.

The house of vanity is a whole mirage of the church where you're living vanity. You're living in a dream world. What's it going to be? God's house or the house of vanity.

And you're going to make your decision here in this valley. So what's the strategy? How are they going to go up at this time? Or what is God's plan? Do you know what they say? These spies, they come back and they say, do you know what Joshua? There's only very few. In fact, you know what Ai means? It means a heap of rubble.

That's what Ai is. It's nothing. And you know what Joshua? We've looked and there's only a handful of them.

Don't bother even send them any. Maybe send 2000 or 3000. You've got an army of 600,000.

What does Joshua do? He sends 3000 soldiers against Ai. Do you see something that's happened here? The thinking. They were depending on God for Jericho.

There's no prayer, no sacrifice, no carefulness. They're just going, we got Jericho. Now we're going to get Ai.

Jericho was impressive. Ai is nothing. There's only a few there.

I mean, who couldn't defeat Ai? So just go up. They are but few. So they sent 3000 men.

Do you know what they thought about Ai? It's small, insignificant, irrelevant. It's nothing. So they become presumptuous, self-confident.

Do you know what scares me in ministry? Ad-libbing. Oh, I know how to do it. I can ad-lib preach.

I can ad-lib. By the way, guys, I don't need notes. Do you know what notes do? I keep you here three hours.

Notes aren't to give me something to say. It's to condense me down. Hope you realize that.

Just in case you try to steal them, you better be in for a long set. Do you know ad-libbing? I get worried. I can do this.

I don't need to prepare the guitar. I don't need to be preparing my heart last night. Who can't play a guitar? Who can't preach? Who can't do the Lord's table? Ad-libbing creates an attitude of heart.

Oh, I know when you go into situations you don't have time to prepare. The Lord is there. The Holy Spirit is there to help you.

But when you have days on end and you go, I'm sure the Lord will take care of it. You have confidence in yourself. That's not confidence in God.

You're ad-libbing. And you know what? You can always tell ad-libbing. It's bad.

They're impressed with themselves, but it is bad luck. You know why? It's got an attitude of heart. You better come to this pulpit trembling.

You better go in the streets evangelizing, humble, or I'll come across to sinners. They'll go, he's arrogant. He's proud.

He thinks he knows everything. He knows nothing about me. You ever been on the streets and you speak to someone and they melt? And you go, what have I just said? I don't even know what I'm saying.

You know why? You're there in the will of God. You're there dependent on God. God can use you.

And so here is the entire army. Just send 3,000. And so the 3,000 go up and they're utterly defeated.

They turn tail, their hearts melt, and they run for their lives into this valley of Achor. They're defeated. Israel's defeated.

You know what Joshua does? He is devastated. How can our people be defeated? Do you know what? He underestimated them. Do you know how many soldiers there were in Achor? 12,000.

You underestimated the enemy. People are doing it all across the church. They go, oh, we've had revivals and we can do this and we do all of that.

And the enemy can't touch us. You know one of these days when you play games and become presumptuous, the devil can burn you so bad you'll never forget it. And you know I believe in authority over Satan and I believe in the bloodline that the devil can't touch me.

But you play with this. You think you can play with holy things and change God's word and be fine. You will not.

So here's an entire nation broken. And Joshua goes to prayer. He can't understand it.

He's like, Malcolmson, you know, I can't understand. How can this possibly happen? We're at a standstill. Now the heart's fainting.

Remember the prayer I read to you at the beginning? Lord, what about your name? Lord, what are the nations going to say? Beautiful prayer. Do you know what the Lord says? Joshua? Yes, Lord. He's waiting for the answer.

What's the key to the spiritual warfare? Stand up. Israel has sinned. Don't lie on your face, putting ash on your head, repenting.

Oh God, look at the state of us. How could this happen to us? You know, I've met a lot of Christians. Oh, look at the state of us.

Look what's happened to me. Look, I prayed. I'm seeking God.

Nothing's changing. I don't know what's wrong. Really? Really? You don't know what's wrong.

Nothing ever changes. I'm here. Says Joshua, get up.

Israel has sinned. That's the issue. And you know, in that walk between Jericho and Ai, here you are turning up saying, just send three thousand.

Look at the heart of Joshua. Are you telling me it was just an Achan issue? It was not just an Achan issue. It's also a Joshua issue.

You know, God used Achan to reveal something in the heart of the entire nation. And in the heart of Joshua, becoming presumptuous. Oh, we've got the numbers.

We've got the money. We've got the skill. We've got the ability.

We've got to preach him. Sure, Keith will come and preach on Sunday. He always preaches, always comes with a word.

Yeah, you'll kill me next Sunday. You'll watch me get here. And God will say, no, thank you.

You know what God says to Joshua? I won't even be with you. I won't go up with you until you remove the cursed thing. Until you deal with Achan.

Until you remove that Babylonish garment. I won't even walk with you as an entire people. Remember, it says God got angry with him.

This is a valley of God's anger. Oh, God doesn't get angry anymore. Do you know what the answer was? He said, sanctify yourselves.

As a people, sanctify. And that includes dealing with issues in your midst. That's why do you think we deal with issues in this church and have done from day one? Remember at the beginning, we taught six months into starting this church, we taught 15 messages on how to judge biblically, how to deal with things between a brother and sister, the biblical way to do it.

I don't have a right to decide that. I don't get to pray about that. We are commanded how to deal with issues in this church, how to put out, how to keep in.

It's not an option. It's not great love to keep everyone in here who's troublers of Israel. That isn't love.

It actually could be showing that you have no love for God, no love for his word, no love for his people. If you tolerate certain kinds of sin and rebellion. Let me finish third and finally.

You say, where's the good news in this? God's redemption in the valley of trouble, God's redemption. So there's a valley of trouble, a valley of discipline, a valley of death, but never forget it's a valley of redemption as well. See, God spoke to Joshua and said, until you defeat Ai, you've got to defeat Ai.

See in your life, you can have a place of defeat and you try to go in around it and carry on the journey. I'll just keep living my Christian life and I'll leave Ai, I got defeated. It was disaster, but you know what? I'll just veer around Ai, leave it alone and I'll just keep walking with God.

You better not do that. You know what God says? You cannot move forward. You cannot advance until you defeat Ai.

You've got to defeat Ai. You've got to get this victory. Then you move forward.

It says in Joshua 8 verse 1, and the Lord said unto Joshua, fear not, neither be thou dismayed. Take all the people of war with thee and arise and go up to Ai. See, I have given it into thy hand.

You see, God never said that before. You don't read that in chapter 7. God nowhere in chapter 7 says, I've given you Ai. It doesn't say it.

It happens in chapter 8. No, he says, don't fear. Don't be dismayed. I have given you Ai.

Oh, but sure, it's only a handful. It's only a small dump of a place. We can do it.

No, no. I have given it. You can't take it.

With 600,000 men, you'll never take Ai. You'll never take it. Church Today says, if we can get the worship right and the numbers right and the preaching right and organize this right.

Do you know every revival in history never come out of a thousand people? Never. Come out of 2, 10, 20, 50. Let me take you through the histories.

Day of Pentecost, 120. Never a thousand. All across America, they think we, it's so highly organized.

Listen to them. Listen to the strategy. We are highly sophisticated, organized.

We know the greatest revivals coming. This is mass organization right across the church, and I'm not ridiculing that. I'm not ridiculing the motive behind it.

They want a move of God, but highly organized. You honestly think that's going to do it? God will move in another Azusa street with a one-eyed black preacher on a dirt floor. God will move with another Evan Roberts in a youth meeting because no pastor would let him preach in any of their churches.

So here's a youth meeting. They can't cause much trouble there, and there's 17 people there, and revival begins that changes the nation in six months. Do you want me to give you the history of revivals of the two old ladies up on the island of Lewis who tell Duncan Campbell, say, write a letter to Duncan Campbell.

Revival's coming. So the minister, the elders write a letter to Duncan Campbell. The two old ladies told us to write to you.

They can't even get to church. They can't get out of their house. One's bent over with arthritis.

The other's blind. Two sisters, Peggy and Susie or something, and they pray all through the night. Revival.

Can't even get to church. Write Duncan Campbell. Tell him to come.

Duncan Campbell gets the letter. He says, I'm too busy for that. I've got all my meetings and my conferences and my traveling.

I can't go there. So he writes back a polite letter. Sorry, I can't come.

Could be a few years. They said, write another letter. Tell him this.

Mr. Campbell, if you lived a little bit closer to God, he would also tell you his secrets, which obviously he's not doing. Obviously, you're not living close enough to him to hear from him. But here's two old ladies who are.

And you know what? God spoke to him, made him leave a conference, a missions conference. I think it was Bangor in Northern Ireland. He was right in the midst of conferences.

He says, God's told me to go. And he left there, got on a boat, traveled over, arrived in Ireland, had a meeting that night. Nothing happened.

And one of the young men said, don't be worried, Mr. Campbell, the Lord is coming. He's told us. And then heaven came down.

Revival. A move of God. Souls swept in in that community.

You've got two old ladies who knew God. Do you know what I'm telling you? When God gives you it. Do you know over in Isaiah 65 and 10, it talks about making the Valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie

down.

For all of those who seek me. In Hosea chapter 2 and 15, and I'm just closing on, because I don't even have time to touch on this. It calls the Valley of Achor a door of hope.

Do you know both the verses in Isaiah 65 and Hosea 2? Listen carefully as I close. In both places, it first begins to talk about God's judgment pronounced against Israel. It's the Valley of Achor.

Judgment on them because of their sin and rebellion and disobedience. In both chapters, Isaiah 65 and Hosea 2, read it. But in both places it says, but the Valley of Achor is going to be where you lay down the sheep herds.

And it's going to become a door of hope. A door of hope is going to be opened in this valley into the future. What we see in Joshua chapter 7 is the Valley of Achor becoming a place where the people of God march against Ai and gain the victory.

There's a valley where your sin gets dealt with. The old sin, it's been said many times way back, no one can be quoted as its originator, that sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and it'll cost you more than you want to pay. Sin is the best investigator in all the world.

It gets to the depths of things. Saints of God, I'm telling you, there is a valley. You don't like this valley.

You don't want this valley because your sin gets dealt with and it's either going to be disaster or it's going to mean redemption. Because I want to tell you, I don't care how low you get, how impossible, how bad your sin is, there's a place called Mount Calvary. There's a place where Jesus died.

His blood was shed and the vilest sinner, the vilest offender, the worst lawbreaker can be absolutely forgiven, absolutely made clean. Your chains can be broken. Your prison door can open.

You'll rise, go free, absolutely free. Saints, redemption is real and it's in the valley of Acre as your sin is dealt with, as it is condemned, as it is confronted. That's where you find real redemption.

That's where you find God. That's where you find the reality of this Savior. Please stand with me here this morning.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. My God, my God, Father, we're asking of you that you bring your church back again to this valley in the mighty name of Jesus. We're asking for a sovereign work right across the body of Christ, right across the church, nor, God, where Aachen is going to get dealt with, whether it's our old nature, whether it's rebels who have been blocking the blessing of God in the church, whatever it is, we're asking, O God, for a sovereign moving of the Holy Spirit.

We're asking, O God, that you're going to begin to blow on your church one more time, that you're going to begin to revive your church again, that you're going to send floods of blessing. But, O God, we're asking here this morning, search our heart and see if there be any wicked way within us. Be gracious unto us, O God.

You know how weak we are. And if you should mark iniquity, who could stand before you in Jesus' mighty name.

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