

Sermon Study

February 18, 2018

JOSHUA: Salvation Story – Achan (Humbled)
Joshua 7:6-15

vision

Eastview
Christian
Church is a
fearless church
of Christ
followers whose
ridiculous love
and dangerous
witness are
irresistible.



AUTHOR'S NOTE (summary of key points for this study)

In this passage, Joshua and the elders are typically commended for responding to a military defeat by sincerely falling before God in humility and mourning. And while it's certainly good to pour yourself out to the Lord in the midst of difficulty, the larger idea of our study will be the delicate and hopefully uncomfortable task of discerning when your prayers need to move into action. Are you still on your knees when God has clearly told you to get up?

Gather (your group getting to know each other)

Can you think of a time (at work, home, or school) where you knew exactly what to say or do, but in the moment...you froze, didn't act, and missed an opportunity?

Go
(your group on mission)

The secular world regularly criticizes Christians when we respond to tragedies by “sending our thoughts and prayers” instead of taking action. How have you handled these conversations? Do you leap to defend the value of prayer...or do you acknowledge the value of both?

Grow (your group growing as Christ-followers)

Key Scripture

“The Lord said to Joshua, ‘Get up!’” (Joshua 7:10, ESV)

Discussion

1. Have someone begin the discussion time by leading the group in prayer, then read Joshua 7:6-15.

2. Upon losing the battle of Ai, Joshua tears his clothes, puts dust on his head, and wails before the Ark of the Lord *until evening*. Consider how this compares to your experiences with crying out to God? How long do your “mourning sessions” last? Do you do anything remotely similar to tearing your clothes and dusting your head? When you wail and cry out and fall to the earth on your face before the Lord, are you done in 5 minutes? When was the last time you even did that *at all*? Joshua and the elders dramatically mourned this defeat “until the evening.” Should we take mourning as seriously as they did? Why or why not?

3. How would you summarize Joshua’s first question to God (in v.7)? What’s he basically saying? When have you felt this way?

4. Read Numbers 14:1-4 and compare it to Joshua 7:7. Do you think it’s human nature to avoid “risks” and instead stay in what feels safe and familiar? Or do you think it’s the opposite? When have you been tempted to settle for your current state (or yearn for a previous one!) rather than move forward with your part in God’s mission? Why does this happen?

5. How would you characterize Joshua’s overall sentiments in v.7-9? Can you relate? Is it mostly a whiny, complaining, self-loathing, pity party? Even if it is, is there anything “wrong” with that? Is he just honestly pouring his heart out to God? Share your thoughts on the overall content of Joshua’s outcry.

6. After Joshua’s heartfelt plea full of valid points, the Lord said to Joshua, “There there, my child. I’m sorry I’ve confused you. Come give me a hug. Everything will be okay...” Wait, no it doesn’t say that. Actually, the Lord said to Joshua, “GET UP! Get off your face, get up, and consecrate the people.” What do you think about this response? If you related to Joshua’s sentiments earlier, how has God given you this response?

7. How often do you say “I’ll pray about it,” when you should be getting up and acting? Why do we resist taking action?

8. God’s not done, of course. In v.11-13, he tells Joshua exactly why they lost this battle and what they must do to recover. How would you summarize what God explains to Joshua in these 3 verses? How is God saying this to you?

9. In v.14-15, God gives Joshua a specific method for revealing the sinner. God certainly could have just said, “Hey, it was Achan. Go round him up.” Why might God instead have chosen to dramatically cast lots by tribe, clan, and household? What impact might that method have on both Achan and the people of Israel?

10. To wrap up, sin has been committed and God’s covenant has been broken (v.11). And therefore, the people cannot be right with God or stand before their enemies (v.12) until a man pays the price (v.15). Where’s Jesus in this?

Give
(your group serving each other)

Serve your group this week by encouraging each other to identify areas in your lives where God has clearly called you to get up and act. Remember, praying is GREAT! But as you (hopefully) discussed tonight, we Christians can often use it as an excuse to avoid taking action, so lovingly challenge your group in this uncomfortable area this week.