

Sermon Study

Joshua 8:1-29

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)

Several things in these passages stand out to me.

Achan received justice and God's wrath was averted. The second battle of Ai and the victory gives us a striking example of how God's chastisements for sin often pave the way for the bestowing of benefits that had been withdrawn or withheld due to sin.

When we have faithfully put away the sin that separates us from God, we again receive God's comfort and direction in our Christian work and warfare. (See also I John 1:5-10)

Gather (your group getting to know each other)

How foolish the sin of Achan seems now! He could have had all his heart desired if he had waited and trusted God. We, like biblical men and women of old, think we know better than God and we run ahead of Him. (Helpful biblical examples: Jonah 1:1-3, Abraham and Sarai, Genesis 16:1-2)

- Share a time when you "ran ahead of God" and tell what happened. Were there consequences? Did you repent? Do you feel forgiven and restored and see God working in your life?

Go
(your group on mission)

You've heard the saying "Be kind because everyone you meet is fighting a battle." This week, comfort someone in his/her battle by sharing the TRUTH that "the battle belongs to the Lord." Share your own battle and God's Hand of grace in it with someone who needs this encouragement.

Give (your group serving each other)

Serve each other *during* your discussion of this lesson by affirming one another's transparency on some difficult issues this scripture leads us into.

Discussion:

1. Start with prayer and have someone read Joshua 8:1-29.

2. In Joshua 8:1, God's reassurance to Joshua is that the battle is His own. Read these "battle" scriptures from King David: 1 Samuel 17:46-48, where a young King David states this truth. Then Psalm 24:8, 55:18, 140:7

- Tell of a battle in your life; in your personal relationships, in work, in the spiritual realm, where God intervened and directed your steps.

3. Note God's allowance in letting the Israelites take the plunder of this battle in Joshua 8:2. Have you thought about the fact that God was no longer raining manna down for His people anymore? (Helpful scriptures: Exodus 16:35, Joshua 5:12)

- Talk about how this battle might have provided for God's people in many areas of need.

4. Joshua 8:3-9 have Joshua sharing God's battle plan with Israel's warriors. It was a very creative and specific plan.

- Has God ever given you very specific instructions? Tell us about the situation and the outcome.

5. Joshua 8:10-17 describe the success of the plan. Take note that obedience was followed by victory when it was God's plan. When we ask God to oversee our plans, we don't need to make the same mistake twice. (Helpful scriptures: Luke 11:28, James 1:25, 1 Peter 1:14-15, 1 John 5:3-4)

- What "bad habit" have you been able to break as you've trusted Christ to help you gain victory?

6. The Implications of Joshua 8:15 nearly get lost in the excitement of the battle. But read it closely. Joshua "yielded" to the appearance of being defeated.

- As we approach Holy Week, mention some of the ways Jesus did the same thing during his trial and crucifixion. (Helpful scriptures: foreshadowing in Isaiah 53:4-9, the trial in Matthew 27:14, 39-44, Mark 15:3-5, John 6:38, Philippians 2:5-11.)

7. Some commentators compare these careful preparations for war, and God's very specific instructions, to Jesus and His direct training and discipleship of the twelve. He told them they had to count the cost of following Him. (see Luke 9:23, 56-62, 14:30-33)

- Have there been costs in your life to following Jesus? Share the cost, and also the rewards you have reaped. (read also 1 John 2:15-17)

8. Look at Joshua 8:18-20. Joshua is holding up a "javelin" during the battle. What other Biblical episode does this remind you of? (Helpful scripture: Exodus 17:10-13; note that Joshua was involved here too!)

- Your thoughts on the significance of Joshua's action during the battle for Ai?

9. Joshua 8:22 says that the Israelites battled "until there was left none that survived or escaped."

- Discuss again what our pastors have explained about the need to destroy the pagan civilizations existing in the land that He had promised to Israel. Are you still struggling with this concept? Let others help you to clarify.

Grow

(your group growing as Christ-followers)

Key scripture:
Joshua 8:1

Remember (from Joshua 7:6) how grieved Joshua was at the defeat at Ai. Yet God saw him through this leadership test and now the Lord reaches out to Joshua in love and encouragement.

God Himself gives the instructions for this battle; He is the directing general. The first attempt to take Ai was a disaster but God's strategy this time was a complete change. Don't expect God to work or lead in the same way over and over. As the sovereign God of the universe, He has endless ways to accomplish His purposes.