

Achan's Sin

(Joshua 6:18, 19; 7)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever done anything wrong secretly, hoping no one would find out? [Teacher, give several scenarios – gluing together a vase you've broken, borrowing your brother's toy without permission and putting it back in the closet so no one will know, and so on.]

Listen to our story today to discover a secret that someone buried, thinking no one would ever find out.

Opening Prayer

Father, there are no secrets before You. You see everything we do and You know the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. I pray this morning You will help us to listen to this important lesson You have for us today because we want to learn the importance of living a life that is pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Lesson

The children of Israel were now in the Promised Land, but the land had not been sitting empty all the years they were down in Egypt. They were going to have to take the land back from the Canaanites before they could safely settle there. They would have to face many battles and take the land city by city.

Last week we learned that the Israelites were able to conquer Jericho because God miraculously made the walls fall down. The defeat of Jericho was a great victory for Israel. They set fire to the city and

destroyed everybody and everything in it except those things that God had told the people to set aside for Him.

In those days, when soldiers defeated a city, they usually got to take the valuable things from the city for their very own as a reward for winning the battle. But God was the one who had defeated Jericho, so everything in Jericho belonged to God.

Joshua 6:18-19 [Teacher, read from the Living Bible...]

Don't take any loot, for everything is to be destroyed. If it isn't, disaster will fall upon the entire nation of Israel. But all the silver and gold and the utensils of bronze and iron will be dedicated to the Lord, and must be brought into his treasury.

Joshua ordered that nothing was to be taken from the city except silver, gold, bronze or iron. These were to be used for the house of God. The soldiers were not to take anything for themselves.

So after they entered the city of Jericho, the soldiers went through the rubble, collecting the gold, silver, bronze and other riches. And every soldier brought everything he found to the treasury of the Lord. But, Joshua did not know that one man, Achan (AY-kuhn), disobeyed.

When Achan saw a beautiful robe, some silver and gold among Jericho's treasures, he desired them for himself and decided to steal them. When no one was looking, Achan took the robe, silver and gold and buried them underneath his tent!

Have you ever seen something that wasn't yours that you wanted so much? What was Achan thinking about when he buried his stolen treasures under his tent? [Teacher, draw ideas from children. To get them thinking, relate an example of someone wanting something he can't or shouldn't have.] He may have thought, "Who's going to know if I keep just a couple of things for myself?" But, did God see Achan bury the treasure? How do you think God felt about Achan's actions?

Joshua 7:1 [Teacher read from the Living Bible, as follows...]

But there was sin among the Israelites. God's command to destroy everything except that which was reserved for the Lord's treasury was

disobeyed. For Achan...took some of the loot for himself, and the Lord was very angry with the entire nation of Israel because of this.

Even if no one else sees your sin, God does. He knows all things!

Meanwhile, Joshua didn't know about Achan's sin. And he was getting ready to take the next city which was called Ai. So, Joshua sent some men to spy on the city just like he did with Jericho. And when they returned they told Joshua that this city would be easy to take.

Joshua 7:3

And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few."

Ai was a small fortified city near Jericho. And the Israelites thought that since the taking of Jericho was so easy for them, that Ai would be a chinch. But they didn't ask God about this; they didn't get the Lord's battle plans, like they did for Jericho. They relied on their own skills and strength. [Teacher, refer to last week's memory verse and point out that they leaned on their own understanding and didn't acknowledge God.]

So, Joshua only sent a small army into battle at the city of Ai. He was expecting God to give them another victory like the one at Jericho.

Joshua 7:4-5

So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

The men of Ai came after the Israelites and killed some of them and chased them away. Israel lost the battle! This stunned the Israelites and they became afraid! The text says their hearts melted. How could Joshua hope to conquer the other large cities of the Promised Land if he and his army could be clobbered by a little city like Ai?

Joshua was horrified! He called his leaders to an emergency prayer meeting. He fell to the earth on his face before the Lord and cried out.

Joshua 7:8-9

O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?

Joshua told God that when news got out about their defeat at Ai that the rest of the people in the land would think they were weaklings! He asked God how they would ever conquer the rest of the Promised Land. The Lord told Joshua that they were defeated because there was sin among the people.

Joshua 7:11

Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived and they have also put it among their own stuff.

Joshua was shocked; this was a very serious crime! Who would steal from God?

Then God gave Joshua specific instructions about what to do. Early the next morning, Joshua called each of the twelve family groups of the children of Israel to come before him one by one. God showed Joshua that the thief came from the tribe of Judah. That was Achan's tribe.

Now Achan, having heard what the problem was, could have admitted to Joshua right then and there what he had done. But he didn't. Why do you think Achan didn't admit his wrong? Maybe he was afraid, or maybe he thought he could fool Joshua. Whatever the reason, He just kept silent.

Next Joshua called the members of the tribe of Judah to come before him. Achan knew he was the guilty one, yet he continued to keep

quiet. He obviously didn't know that God was all-knowing. Finally, God showed Joshua that Achan was the guilty one.

Joshua 7:19

So Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me."

Finally Achan confessed...

Joshua 7:20-21

And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: when I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

At last Achan had no choice but to admit what he'd done. Joshua sent some men to search his tent and they found the stolen goods hidden just where Achan said they were. This, I am sure, made Joshua very sad.

Joshua 7:25

And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

What a shame that Israel had suffered defeat in the battle at Ai because of Achan's greed. Achan had to be punished; he had disobeyed God's command. Joshua put Achan and his whole family to death then burned all of his possessions. God showed the Israelites that disobeying Him has serious results.

Do we make God angry when we do wrong? Yes! Our sin has serious results, too. You may think that God's rules in the Bible are not important or that if others don't know what you've done no one will be hurt. But sooner or later, your sin will find you out.

God is a perfect, holy God who cannot allow sin to go unpunished. But the good news is that because God loves you, He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to earth to take your punishment.

If you have never received the Lord Jesus as your Savior from sin, you need God living in you to give you power to do what's right here on earth and to give you life forever in heaven (John 20:31).

This week when you are tempted to do wrong, stop! Think of the consequences of your choice; then thank God for His power as you do what's right. Remember you can't keep any secrets from God; He is all-knowing and all-seeing. But, never forget that God is also all-loving and merciful!

Do you know what to do when you sin? All you need to do is talk to God about it. Confess your sin to Him and He will forgive you. And, when He forgives you of your sin, He throws that sin into the sea of forgetfulness and He will never bring it up again! Isn't He wonderful? Aren't you glad that Jesus came and took the punishment that you and I deserve?!

Closing Prayer

Father, please help us to remember it is not worth it to try to keep our sins a secret. You see everything and You will find us out. Our sin always causes trouble. But, thank You, Lord, for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to come to earth to die on a cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Thank You, also, for sending the Holy-Spirit Who gives us the power to do what's right. Please help us to say "No" to sinful desires so that we might live holy and righteous lives that are pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Verse Match Up Card Game

1. Draw playing-card sized squares on a large piece of paper.
2. Print the words (or phrases) of a memory verse onto the "cards".
3. Copy a set for each player and cut out the cards.
4. Divide class into groups of four to play a game similar to *Go Fish*.
5. Players in each group shuffle their sets of cards together and then distribute the cards evenly among the players.
6. To play, player compares the cards he has to the verse to determine which cards he needs to complete the verse.
7. First player names any another player in his group and asks for a needed card.
8. If the player asked has the card, he must give it to the player who asked for it.
9. If the player does not have the card, the next player takes a turn, asking for a needed card.
10. Play continues until all the players in the group have the cards needed to complete the verse.

Musical Numbers

Preparation:

- Number construction paper squares, one for each review question, and tape them randomly to the walls.
- Number slips of paper, one for each review question, and put them into a lunch sack.

Procedure:

- Have the children walk around the room as you play music.
- When the music stops, have the children quickly place their hand on one of the numbers on the wall. Only one student per number.
- Pick a number slip from the sack.
- Whoever has his hand on the number drawn from the sack must answer that review question. For example, if you pick a slip that has the number 2 on it, the student with his hand on the 2 must answer the second review question.
- Remove that number from the sack and repeat procedure.

Or, Use the following review questions in a discussion or game of your choice.

1. What did Achan do after the battle at Jericho? What attitude do you think Achan had toward God when he did these things?
2. What are some reasons people choose to sin, or do things that are wrong? (They are selfish and greedy. They don't know about Jesus' gift of salvation and how He helps us to do right.)

3. Why do you think God's forgiveness is important? (Everyone does things that are wrong. We all need to be forgiven so that we can be part of God's family.)
4. What do children your age need to do to receive God's gift of salvation? (Ask God to forgive our sins, believe in Jesus and trust Him to save us.)
5. What does it mean to be saved from our sins? (We don't have to pay the penalty for our sins.)
6. What is a way to show thankfulness to God for His gift of salvation?

Sword Drill

1. Read **Romans 5:8**. According to this verse, how does God show His love to us? What happened when we were still sinners?
2. Read **Romans 6:23**. According to this verse, what is the result, or wages, of sin? What is God's gift to us? What did Jesus do so that we could be given this gift? (God's Son, Jesus, loved us so much that He came to earth to die on a cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Because Jesus died for us and came back to life again, we can be forgiven and live forever with Him.)
3. Read **1 Corinthians 15:3-5**. What does Paul say is the most important thing he wants to tell others? How can you show that you believe in Christ's death and resurrection for our sins?
4. Read **1 John 1:9**. What happens when we ask God to forgive the wrong things we have done?

