

Joshua 7:1-13 - A Church In Sin Can't Win

INTRO - Today we end the series on *Ecclesiology & Messy-ology*. We spent 5 weeks defining the church and the last 4 looking at problems with-in church leadership & membership. I'm going to end this series with a practical application & a probing question. The scripture is a mirror by which we are to examine ourselves and I want us to look at ourselves through the account of Ai. 1 Cor. 10:11 "...as an example and were written for our instruction." When I prepare a message, I try to cut off the rabbit trails and aim for a clear, cohesive, and coherent train of thought. My preparations this week have seemed eclectic, so I hope my train of thought isn't a train wreck.

The Account of Ai & The Application from Ai

THE ACCOUNT OF AI

1. Ai... is not artificial intelligence. Ai is a place...a place of defeat for the OT church
 - a. "...the church (congregation) in the wilderness" Acts 7:38 - KJV
(*ekklesia*)
 - b. Ai is the 2nd town the transient church came to in the Promise Land
2. God gave a great victory at the first town....Jericho.
 - a. The entire town of Jericho was to be devoted to the Lord
 - i. No plunder was to be taken personally. All the *first fruits* belonged to God
 - b. Achan stole some of what was devoted to the Lord - Joshua 7:1
 - i. He lived up to his name. Achan = "*to trouble*" or "*troublesome*"
 - c. The congregation was unaware of Achan's secret sin...but God saw it Jer. 16:17
 - i. God's anger burned against the whole church for one member - Joshua 7:1c
 1. Your sin never just affects yourself Joshua 6:18
3. Gods anger toward them was shown in that God no longer guided their decisions
 - a. The "*victorious church*" assessed their next battle from a *purely human perspective*
 - i. Ai was a small enemy...." *no problem for us strong victors*" (Matt. 16:18; Josh. 1:5-7)
 - ii. "*The whole assemble need not bother with this battle*"
 1. "*a partial assembly can take care of this puny enemy*"
4. If God is not for us, then our best intuition and efforts will fail us
 - a. Mighty Israel was routed by scrawny Ai Joshua 7:5
 - b. Man's strength and wisdom is nothing if God does not bless it and isn't behind it
 - c. Past victories can lead to future defeat if we are deluded into trusting in our own strength. Zech. 4:6 Eph. 6:10
5. Joshua goes to prayer because he knows something is wrong Joshua 7:6
 - a. He humbled himself and poured out the problem in prayer until evening
 - b. God answers his prayer by saying that praying wont be solving their problem
6. Joshua 7:10
 - a. God tells him to "get up" for there are some things you don't need to pray about
 - b. *Sin in the camp* is what kept GODS stamp of approval away from their maneuver

- c. God's face no longer shined upon them, so their enemy easily defeated them
- d. If God is against you, it matters not who is for you Lev. 26:17,36-37 Deut. 28:25
- e. Isaiah 59:1-2
- f. A church in sin can't win

THE APPLICATION OF AI

- It is one thing to talk about these things in the abstract...theoretical or historical...but let's get personal and practical and focus on the local church (CBBC not just SBC)
 - Victory remains at bay if sin stays.
 - Stagnation without confession
- **Is there some sin in Classen's past that is shackling us in the present?**
 - Let me connect the dots in my eclectic line of reasoning
 - We just celebrated our 70th anniversary
 - Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9...he confessed the sin of fathers after 70 years
 - CBBC began from a church split/fight (mess)
- I am just thinking out loud...
 - Do we need to make things right with Britton Baptist? (any animosity?)
 - Does there need to be an official confession and reconciliation?
 - Are there other sins other than from our origin?
 - Ignoring sins in leadership or whitewashing sins in membership?
 - Has Classen condoned sin?covered it up or confessed it up?
- We know what Jesus' message to His church is.....REPENT! (8 x's in Rev. 2-3)
 - Consequences to the unrepentant church
 - Loss of light and ability to shine.....the church goes dark
 - Jesus would fight against them. World as their friend but God as enemy
 - Sickness and great tribulation. Take away what little life they have left
 - Lose the next generation & Lose their reward in heaven
 - Make their Savior sick
- With confession comes freedom from the constrains of past sins
 - When you weed out a garden is has more room to grow, bloom and be beautiful
 - Spiritual growth more easily happens when sin no longer chokes out the church
 - 2 Chron. 7:14 James 4:10
- Ai was a place of great defeat for the OT church...but also a great victory (Joshua 8)
 - God gave His people a great victory on the very ground of their greatest defeat
 - God's grace works that way Rom. 5:20-21
 - Out of the ashes of our failures God shows His unfailing love and mercy
 - He sends the locusts & restores what the locust have eaten – Joel 2:25; Ps. 90:15
 - God uses our very sin to sanctify us and grow us
 - God uses our messes to make a masterpiece of His grace
- If there is sin to be dealt with at CBBC... then lets deal with it
 - If we've been defeated at Ai, then let's ask God why
 - Let us get right with God and He may grant a great victory on the very ground of our greatest defeat. A messy church can be end up God's masterpiece