



August 2, 2026

“Little” Sins Cause Big Problems!

Joshua 7



1. Sermon Outline:

- a. One Man's Sin Brought Disaster On Israel
 - i. Israel suffered a humiliating and dangerous defeat
 - ii. It was all caused by Achan's sin
 - iii. Achan paid for his sin with his life
- b. There are No "Little" Sins!
- c. Understand and Crucify Whatever Sins Tempt You
 - i. Understand what tempts you into sin
 - ii. Break the sin cycle as early as possible
 - iii. Crucify whatever tempts you

2. **Sunday** – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:

- a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

3. **Monday:**

- a. Read Joshua 6:27 – 8:1.
- b. With Joshua 6:27 setting the stage, how do you think you would have felt if you had been one of the Israelites following the defeat of Jericho? What did they have going for them?
- c. What does the first word of chapter 7 signal to the reader? Why is this word so important?
- d. What were your first reactions to the events recorded in chapter 7?
 - i. How did they change as you read through the chapter?
 - ii. Did you find any portion of this account particularly difficult to understand or accept?
- e. How do Joshua 6:27 and 8:1 provide literary bookends around the events reported in chapter 7?

4. **Tuesday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 7:1. Then read Joshua 6:18-19.

- b. What problem does the first clause of verse 1 introduce?
 - i. What does it tell us the "people of Israel" did?
 - ii. What does it mean to "break faith" ("were unfaithful" in the NIV and CSB)? With whom did they "break faith"? How?
 - iii. How does God view "breaking faith" and how should we (see verse 11)?
- c. Of all the soldiers involved in the defeat of Jericho, how many "broke faith"?
 - i. Would we consider that percentage a good or a bad outcome in our society? What was God's view of 99.999% being faithful?
 - ii. Who was it and what did he do to be guilty of "breaking faith"?
 - iii. Although Achan performed the actual act, who is held accountable (consider also Joshua 22:20 and 1 Chronicles 2:6)?
- d. In our western culture dominated by an individualist worldview, how do we tend to feel about an entire group of people being condemned for the failure of a single member of the group?
 - i. Read Romans 5:12 and 17. What does Paul teach us about the effects of one man's (Adam's) sin?
 - ii. In what way is the situation Paul describes fundamentally different (see the last phrase of verse 12)?
 - iii. How does 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 describe our situation as Christians? How do you see verse 26 relating to the passage we are studying?

5. **Wednesday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 7:2-5.
- b. As we read about the first battle for Ai, what do we know that Joshua did not know yet?
 - i. What does it seem that Joshua failed to do that might have resulted in Joshua learning the true situation described in verse 1?
 - ii. What does the spies' report and Joshua's willingness to follow their recommendation tell us about the attitude of the community, the leaders, and Joshua?
 - iii. Why did they have no reason to be cocky? What great military success had they accomplished?
 - iv. Read Joshua 8:25. How far off does it seem that the spies were in their estimate of the size of the force they faced at Ai?
- c. How decisive was the first Battle of Ai?
 - i. What did the Israeli army do?
 - ii. Since the casualties (36) don't really seem that high, what does it suggest about what the Israelites expected?

- d. As bad as the deaths were, what are we told is the greatest effect of the loss (see verse 5b)? How does the emotional state of the Israelites differ from that of the people in Jericho before their defeat (see Joshua 2:11)?

6. **Thursday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 7:6-12.
- b. What was Joshua’s reaction to the defeat? What did he finally do that might have prevented the defeat if done earlier?
- c. After remaining facedown before the Ark until evening (one would assume in prayer), what three questions does Joshua ask God?
 - i. Of what do the first questions in verse 7 remind you (see Exodus 14:11; 16:3; 17:3; and Numbers 14:1-3)? What does it seem that Joshua is saying to God (paraphrase the question)?
 - ii. What does the question in verse 8 (presented as an explanation in the ESV but a question in most other translations) seem to show Joshua is most concerned about? Does he think his leadership role is in doubt?
 - iii. What does Joshua seem to be doing by asking the third question (verse 9)? Do you think he was really concerned about God’s “great name” or was he, as we too often do, trying to convince God to do what he wanted?
 - iv. Compare Joshua’s prayer with those Moses offered up in somewhat similar circumstances in Exodus 32:11-13 and Numbers 14:13-16. What insight or conclusions do you reach?
- d. How would you characterize the LORD’s response to Joshua in verse 10?
 - i. What sins did the Lord reveal had been committed (there are at least 4, perhaps 5)?
 - ii. What does verse 12 say has happened to the people as a result of Achan’s sin?
 - iii. What will happen to Joshua if he doesn’t take the necessary corrective action?

7. **Friday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 7:13-21.
- b. Verse 13 starts with an imperative. How would you paraphrase what God is saying to Joshua?
 - i. What was the first action Joshua had to take? What does it mean to “consecrate” the people (compare Exodus 19:10-15)?
 - ii. Who will be involved in identifying the one guilty of the sin? Since verses 14-15 make it clear that the Lord will do the choosing (by the system of lots), and He already knew who it was (Jeremiah 23:24), why do you think He directed the long process to identify the sinner?
 - 1. Who would learn from the process and what lesson would they likely learn?
 - 2. How do you think Achan felt as the field was steadily narrowed towards him? Although Achan didn’t, and God knew he would not, how might the

outcome have differed if Achan had come forward and confessed (consider 1 John 1:9)?

- c. Once identified by the investigative process God had commanded, how did Joshua address Achan?
 - i. What was Achan's reaction/response?
 - ii. Although Achan confessed that he had sinned, does his response sound remorseful or like he regretted anything except getting caught?
 - iii. What were the steps that Achan identified as leading to his own downfall?

8. **Saturday:**

- a. Read and meditate on the final verses, Joshua 7:22-26.
- b. How did the Israelites repent of their sin?
 - i. While this seems harsh to our modern sensitivities, why was it absolutely necessary (see Joshua 7:15)?
 - ii. If they had not followed the Lord's instructions, where would they have been?
- c. What was the Lord's response to Israel's repentance? Read 1 John 1:9 again. How does He respond to ours?

9. **Application:** Time and again the Bible shows us how absolutely terrible sin is, but still we continue to minimize it as evidenced by statements such as, “It’s just a little sin.” There are no “little sins” and no “respectable” sins. Every sin is a rebellion against the Almighty God, deserving of death – as Achan learned too late. All too often the pattern leading to sin in our lives includes the same steps that lead to Achan’s sin. First, we take our eyes off God and His word and look at something we shouldn’t. Then we rationalize by calling it something other than sin (it’s just a mistake), as Achan renamed the “devoted things” spoils of war. Along the path we give in to our desires and covet (James 1:14). If all that isn’t bad enough, we try to hide it from the One from whom nothing can be hidden, instead of confessing and accepting His forgiveness. And in it all we end up hurting not just ourselves but those we love and ultimately the body of which we are all members.

10. **Pray:** For the remaining weeks of the summer, we will be praying for some countries that we don’t as frequently think about when we discuss unreached people groups. This week the country is Japan. Of the 123 million people in Japan, only 0.5% (5 of every 1,000) consider themselves to be evangelical Christians. While many Japanese claim that they have no religion, in reality most actually follow the rituals of Buddhism and Shintoism; even the idea of a Creator God is excluded from the Japanese worldview. Young people, who are the most open to the Gospel, face a suicide epidemic, a soaring rate of teenage prostitution, and extreme peer pressure, resulting in very few conversions. With one of the lowest birth rates and longest life expectancies, the population is aging rapidly. By 2055, over 50% will be retired; a problem no country has faced, but opening opportunities for Christian organizations. Although there are 28 unreached people groups in Japan, including some Islamic people groups with no known Christian presence, all are overwhelmed by the Japanese people group, which is about 95% of the total population.