

THE CAUSE AND CURE FOR SETBACKS

Joshua 7:1-26

Introduction: After the walls of Jericho fell, Israel was successful in all ways in inhabiting the promised land. Enemies fled before them and great fear was in the hearts of all those who heard of the Israel it their God. However something happened that caused a defeat in a minor battle that Israel lost. Had God deserted Israel? Was the enemy and their god too powerful for Israel and their God? Was Israel really too weak to go any farther? The name of God was being dishonored by the enemy now, no longer feared but now mocked. Didn't God want Israel to have the land?

Applying this thought to the Christian sometimes the thought comes that maybe God has left the Christian to his/her own for it seems He is distant, even gone away and all the battles are being lost. What causes the setbacks in our lives? What is the cure?

I. ISRAEL HAD BECOME SELF-CONFIDENT AFTER JERICHO

1. Ai was nothing compared to Jericho and look at what had happened at Jericho.
 - Israel forgot that it was not THEM who had defeated Jericho. They had only marched around the city walls, shouted and blew trumpets. God had defeated Jericho.
 - The fall of Jericho was not a testimony of the strength of Israel.
 - Israel did not have some mysterious quality of strength about them.
2. Christians need to remember this:
 - There is no moment so dangerous than immediately following a victory. Pride, a big head sneaks in.
 - Boasting of one's greatness, abilities, skills, etc...is quick to follow, "Look at me..."
 - As Israel felt, so do we often, that God has imparted some great, divine power to us.
3. How contradictory! Apart from the blood of Jesus Christ and the grace of God, the Christian is NOTHING! Victories of yesterday do not bring the victories of tomorrow.
 - The reason Israel was defeated at Ai was their SELF-CONFIDENCE...EGO...

II. ISRAEL HAD NEGLECTED TO PRAY AND SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE

1. Flushed with victory at Jericho, nobody went back to Gilgal to counsel with God.
 - Israel, even Joshua, made their own plans, never consulting God.
 - Had Joshua been as humble after Jericho as he was before, he would not have been defeated.
2. If one prays and is humble in time of victory, one will NEVER have to beg and plead with God in a time of defeat.
 - Defeat is NOT the time to be praying. It's too late. It is time for ACTION. What went wrong? Why defeated?
 - When one thinks that he/she is strong and well that God need not be bothered, in that hour he/she will fall.
 - How many Christians have been defeated because of their lack of prayer?

III. ISRAEL WAS DISOBEDIENT

1. ONE person had disobeyed and taken things God said not to.
 - Achan sinned and the whole army of Israel was defeated.
 - God looked at Israel not just as individuals, but as a nation, they were ONE in His sight.
2. God views His Church in the same manner. Not just individual members, but a living family.
 - When one of our church family sins, God says, "**MY children have sinned...**"
 - No single one of us can sin without it affecting the rest of the Church family.
 - Just as victory of one is victory for everyone, so sin affects the whole Church family.
3. The world makes it's judgment about our Church family by the actions it sees from just ONE of us. Good or bad, they think everyone is the same.
 - IF THE CHURCH COULD ONLY GRASP THIS TRUTH

IV. GOD'S REMEDY FOR RECOVERY

1. Achan confessed his sin.
 - How awful he must have felt when he saw how Israel was defeated, many died because of his disobedience.
 - Achan saw, coveted, and then took.
2. Sin has a far-reaching effect.
 - One's sin always affects others and always it follows the same pattern as Achan's.
 - Lust of the eyes, flesh and pride.
 - Achan's whole family was destroyed. A whole nation suffered because of the sin of one man.
 - When will we ever learn that God detests sin and that sin will be punished.
 - God's way to deal with sin is to get it out in the open and then blot it out.
 - Acknowledging one's sin is not enough. One must realize WHY it happened and ask the Lord to correct that weakness. Confess it. Realize that without God's help, it will happen again.

CONCLUSION:

1. Have you ever considered that perhaps reasons why things are not as spiritual as they should be around our Church is because of sin in our midst?
2. All it takes is a SINGLE Christian of our Church Family to be out of God's will through disobedience and our whole Church family is affected.
3. Israel searched out is' Achan and brought him before God for judgment.
 - Perhaps we need to start searching for an Achan in our midst, BUT start with our OWN SELF FIRST!