

The Agony Of Defeat

Joshua 7

Pastor John Miller

"But the children of Israel...", verse one, "...they committed a trespass in the accursed thing, for Achan took of the accursed thing and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel...", verse two, "And Joshua sent men from Jericho unto Ai." Now Ai was about 10 miles to the west of Jericho. It was the next place up in the high hill area to the east that they were going to take. "...Which is beside Beth Avon on the east side of Bethel." And he's taken to them saying, "Go up and view the country, and the men went up and viewed Ai. They returned unto Joshua, and they said unto him, let not all the people go up, but let two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai, and make not all the people to labor thither...", here's the reason, "...for they are but a few." It's not a big city, it's not well fortified, two or three thousand can go up and easily we can take Ai. "And so there went up thither of the people...", verse four, "about three thousand men. And they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote them about 36 men, for they chased them from before the gate, even unto Shebrim, and smote them in the going down, whereof the hearts of the people melted and became as water."

I heard the true story of a man, it was in Texas, that was accused of purse snatching. He was arrested and went on trial, and he opted to defend himself. Now it's never a good idea to be your own defender in a courtroom when you don't know what you're doing, So his overconfidence and his self-confidence kind of led him to do this foolish thing. As he was cross-examining the victim, he actually said these words, "Did you get a good look at my face when I took your purse?" (Congregation Laughing) And you don't want that guy defending you, right? Let it go on [record], you're stupid! You know [what] his problem was? He was self-confident. He thought he could handle it. You know, "I can handle, I can take care of this." And he was put in jail for some time for his crime as is obvious.

We come to Joshua chapter seven today. Joshua, the children of Israel, have just experienced the thrill of victory. But notice verse one, but it says "the children of Israel committed trespass in the accursed thing." Now we have the agony of defeat. So we go chapter six from the thrill of victory, the walls came a tumbling down to the agony of defeat in the city of Ai. Now remember I told you the first three cities that they go into conquer were Jericho, Ai and Gibeon. I believe that they represent the world, the flesh, and the devil, the three enemies of the believer. As we talk about victorious Christian living, we need to be victorious over the world. Faith, the walls came down, faith is the victory that overcomes the world, and then the second enemy we face, and this is one of the real difficult ones, the real challenge is our flesh. J. Vernon McGee said "he hides himself within us." If he would fight like a man, I could take care of him, but he hides. And you know, we have problem with dealing with our "Ais," the flesh. It's the worst enemy that we have is our self.

There are two factors that make dealing with our "self" difficult. Number one, we're reluctant to recognize and identify "self," and we hate to label our "self" as being the enemy. The truth is,

most of us rather like ourselves. Bible says no man ever hated himself or hated his flesh. So we really kind of like our self, and we think, "I can do it. I can handle it. I'm okay. I can candle to temptations." Then the second problem we have in self is that he's on the inside. You know, I found out wherever I go, I take me with me. You ever notice that? Maybe if I go to Hawaii, I'll be okay. When I graduated from high school, I thought if I live in Hawaii, I'll be happy. I went to Hawaii, I wasn't happy. You know, if I have this, I'll be happy. Problem is wherever I went, I went with me. And my biggest problem was me. My flesh, and maybe you're here today and your biggest problem is yourself and you won't admit it. I pray today the spirit of God will speak to your heart and that you will do some soul searching and self-examination. And you'll say, "Lord, is it I?" When Jesus said, "One of you are going to betray me" to all of his disciples. It went around the circle: "Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I?" "Lord, is this message for me today?" I'm sure that God brought you here today to hear this warning in Joshua chapter six.

So we are given spiritual blessings that we need to go in and conquer by faith, but many times our flesh prevent us from enjoying the blessings that God has for us. Now the first question I want to ask and seek to answer is, what was the cause of their defeat? The men of Israel fled from before the men of Ai, 36 men died and then going down as they fled from Ai, going down the hill, it's possible more of them were killed. But what would cause this defeat? Well the simple answer and I'll come back to it is sin in the camp the children of Israel. Verse 1, "committed a trespass, they took of the accursed thing and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel."

Now what led up to this sin was first of all self-confidence in verse 3. They said you don't need to send everyone out, we can handle it on our own. By the way, we discover in chapter 8 verse 25 that Ai had 12,000 fighting men. And Israel only sent 3,000. That's not a very smart thing to do. Never want to underestimate the power of the enemy. So they were self-confident. The proverb says, "Pride comes before..." what? —"A fall and a haughty spirit before destruction," right? Take heed lest you fall. Any time I have a young Christian say, "Pastor John, I got it together. I can handle the temptation. I know I'm okay." I want to cover my eyes and just go, I don't want to watch. And after the crash and the dust settles, "Lord, I'm sorry, get them back on track." Don't be overconfident. Don't be overconfident. In yourself, you do not have the ability to resist sin, to resist temptation. If it weren't for the grace of God, you would sin. God has to keep you by His grace. But you need to trust Him, obey Him, and rely upon Him. Don't become overconfident.

They depended on human wisdom, the counsel of the spies. Then they got impatient. Oh, how impatience will get us defeat. Rushing into things and we don't pray. And by the way, notice there's no reference to prayer here. That's another element. Lack of prayer, verse two. Joshua didn't pray. The spies didn't pray. No word from God. God clearly spoke to Joshua, told him how Jericho was going to be conquered, but he didn't wait on the Lord. He didn't pray, he just rushed right into it. Whenever I talk to young people that aren't married, it's like, "Pastor, I want to get married, I just want to get married, I just really want to get out there, I got to find someone to marry." I didn't talk to people; I want not be married anymore. I tell young people, if you're not married, don't go beating the bush looking for a mate. If you do that, you'll get one that looks

like it's been beat out of a bush. (Congregation Laughing) Look at my new wife, look at my new wife, yeah, right. I can tell you didn't pray about that one. (Congregation Laughing) You should have fasted and prayed before you buried that one. Don't be hasty, don't rush into things. Wait on the Lord. I believe God gives the best of those who leave the choice to him. It's not your choice, "Lord, is this the right person? Is that the right person? Lord, give me wisdom, guide my life, Let me follow your direction."

The real problem was not self-confidence, it wasn't dependence on human wisdom, it wasn't impatience, it wasn't a lack of prayer, it was secret sin. Unbeknownst to Joshua, Achan from the tribe of Judah, he had taken some of the spoils in Jericho, which was forbidden by God. Turn with me back to chapter six, and I'll show you what I'm talking about in verse 17. In chapter six, verse 17, "And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein. It'll be accursed to the Lord, for only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in her house, because she hid the messengers that were sent. And you, in any wise, you need to keep yourselves from the accursed thing." God very clearly, very explicitly forbade them from taking spoils when they conquered Jericho, "Lest you make yourselves accursed, when you take of the accursed thing and you make the camp of Israel accursed and trouble it." Notice verse 19, "But all the silver and the gold and the vessels of brass and the iron, they are to be consecrated to the Lord, they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." So the spoils of Jericho, go back with me to chapter seven, were to be consecrated to the Lord. They were to be like a first fruit offering.

So what happened was, is Achan disobeyed this covenant, this command, and he took some spoils. He took a garment, took some silver, he took some gold, and he buried them in his tent, thinking that he could hide his sin. And we know better than that, right? You can't hide your sin, you can't hide your sin from God. You may be able to hide it from someone else, but not from God. Joshua didn't know what was going on. Now why would Achan do such a wicked thing? Well perhaps he was dissatisfied with the way God had ordered his life and the affairs of his life. You know dissatisfaction and discontentment can lead to disobedience. Be careful. I'm dissatisfied with my marriage, so you disobey God and get a divorce. I'm dissatisfied with God's provision, so you steal to get more. I'm dissatisfied with my life, I'm not happy, so you take drugs, you're getting alcohol, or you live promiscuously. You try to fill the void that only God can fill. Find your satisfaction in the Lord. Find your satisfaction in the Lord. He's the only one that can satisfy the deepest longings and joy of your heart. Many times dissatisfaction can lead to disobedience. So today say, "Lord, help me to be thankful." Paul said, if I have learned in whatever state I am in, there with to be content.

Perhaps he [Achan] rationalized that no one will ever know. No one will miss these spoils of war. And besides, it won't hurt anybody. How many times people disobey God and sin with that kind of a rationale? No one will ever know. If you could sin and get away with it, would you do it? If you could commit adultery, get away with it, would you do that? If you could steal and get away with it, would you do that? If you can, it doesn't matter if people know, it doesn't matter if people see. God knows and God sees. We have to have a reverential fear and respect for God and want to please God and not do anything to dishonor God or to grieve the heart of God. God knows our sins do affect others. It's interesting in verse one, he says, "The children of Israel

committed a trespass.” You say, “Well, wait a minute. Achan’s the one that sinned, why would He indict the whole family of God or the whole congregation of Israel? It means because they were one unit. Did you know your sin affects the church? My sin affects this church. Our sin affects each other, my wife, my kids, my church, this community. If I sinned, not just because I’m a pastor, every one of us as believers have a responsibility to the family of God and to the glory of God. And we need to realize God sees God knows.

Now, I want you to notice the results of Achan’s sin as we move through the story. In verse four, there was defeat. Sin always leads to defeat. Sin brings a loss of power and a sense of God’s presence. Notice in verse 12, we’ll get there in just a moment. “Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but they turned their backs to their enemies because they were accursed. Neither will I be with you anymore, except you destroy the accursed from among you.” So they lost power and they lost the presence of God. God says, “I won’t even be with you.” You want to lose power to live the Christian life, then bring sin into your life, disobedience. You will become impotent to walk with God, and you will also lose a sense of God’s presence. I would say God’s arm is not short, God’s eye cannot see, His hand cannot reach, but it’s your sins that have separated you from God. God’s ear can hear you, but your sins separate you from God. I don’t want anything to come between my soul and my savior. I want to see his blessed face, I want to hear his blessed voice, and I certainly need his power in my life. So I want to keep my life free from deliberate intentional sins. I want to try my best to walk in obedience to God. I want his power and his presence in my life.

Not only did it bring defeat, but it brought death. We read that in verse five, 36 men lost their lives. Sin always affects others. They died because of Achan’s sin. Not to mention, we’re going to see at the end of the chapter, Achan’s family all died because of his sin. I want to talk to parents for just a moment. If you’re parents, you have children. You don’t want to sin in such a way that it affects your children. You know, that’s actually for me, it is a motivation. I love my children. I want to give them a dad that faithfully loved their mother, faithfully served the Lord, and was committed to obedience to Christ my whole life. That’s more important to me than success in the ministry. More important to me than being a pastor is that I be a husband and I be a father and that if the Lord carries and takes me home, my kids can say my dad trusted the Lord, lived for the Lord and lived an obedient life to the Lord. Because my sins... (Congregation Applauding) My sins affect my family. It’s not just about me. It’s about my kids. I can’t imagine looking in the faith of your children, facing saying, you know, dad did this, or dad did that, and breaking their hearts. I don’t want to break their hearts. It motivates me to be committed to my wife because I love her and I want to bless her and I want her to have a faithful, committed husband. It motivates me for you, the congregation. I love you and I want you to have a pastor that is committed to obedience and holiness and godliness. My sin would affect this church adversely, and I take that very seriously. I have a great responsibility. If you sin, you affect me, you affect others. You weaken the body of Christ and we need to be concerned about that.

Notice the dismay that came. How did Joshua respond? Verses six to nine, Joshua ripped his clothes. So there was defeat, there was death, and now we have dismay. He rips his clothes, he throws dirt upon his head before the ark of the Lord at eventide, he and the elders of Israel. Put

dust upon his head in verse seven, Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord, God, wherefore hast thou brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us?" Notice the question mark. "Now what are you doing God, what's happening God? Why did you bring us over the Jordan? You parted the waters, you brought the walls of Jericho, and now we're defeated."

Now remember, Joshua doesn't know about Achan and sin. Joshua has no idea that there was anything wrong, but why were we defeated? Why do we lack power? Why did God let this happen? And he begins to even question, maybe we should have stayed on the other side of the Jordan and not even crossed over. "Oh Lord...", verse eight, "...what shall I say when Israel turns their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it and they shall encircle us round. They shall cut off our name from the earth. And what will thou do unto thy great name?" So here Joshua is pouring out his heart to God, man I can feel his pain. The end of chapter six tells us that Joshua's fame was heard throughout the land. And God exalted Joshua in the eyes of the people and now he's broken and he's humbled and he's like God what's going on? Sometimes we're in that same place and I encourage you to be honest with God. You know no prayers are pretense but prayers from the heart. Lord, show me, teach me. Lord, reveal to me why is it that we lack power? Why do I lack the presence of your presence in my life? Lord, is there something in my life? Is there something in the congregation? There's something that we need to correct or amend?

Notice at the end of verse nine, Joshua's one burning desire was the glory of God. "And what will thou do unto thy great name?" Lord, they're going to laugh at you, they're going to mock you, they're going to defame your name. Whenever a spiritual leader falls, the world laughs and it mocks and it goes, "See, I told you there's no reality there." When we fall into sin, the world looks on and mocks and laughs. And Joshua's going, "Lord, we don't want to defame your name." So Joshua, who had been magnified, was now mortified and dismayed before the Lord.

God answers Joshua in verse 10 to 15, "So the Lord said unto Joshua...", finally for the first time in this chapter, God begins to speak. "...And the Lord said unto Joshua, get up, why are you lying upon your face?" Now I like that. It's actually, and hang on to your hats, it's actually God saying "It's not time to pray right now." You know, I believe that there is a time not to pray. There is a time not to pray. The time not to pray is when you know what is right, when you know the path you should take, and you don't deal with sin in your life and you don't obey God, you're praying to cover your disobedience. Many times pious prayers can be a cover for true service and action and living for God. Sometimes we pray and we come before the Lord and we say, "Lord, I just pray that you'll send more missionaries." And God says, "I want you to go." Lord, I pray for more missionaries. (Congregation Laughing) "Here am I, send my neighbor." (Congregation Laughing) We love that prayer? "I just got a new house. My neighbor has an old beat-up house. He needs to go to Africa." (Congregation laughing) "I make a lot of money. He doesn't make much money, so send my neighbor." You ever had somebody come to you and go, "Wow, I really need some, you know, I've been out of work for a long time and I don't know how I'm going to pay the bills this month?" And you just got a bunch of extra money in your wallet. I mean, you could pull out your wallet and answer their prayer. And you put your

hand on them. Go, "Lord, we just pray right now that you'll provide." In the name of Jesus. And all the time the Holy Spirit's saying, "Just take out your wallet, Dodo bird." How many times I pray for people and God's told me, "You can answer their prayer right now. You got the money to meet their need." What are you praying about? Lord just kind of slaps you in love. And you pray, Lord I pray, our church needs Sunday school teachers. Lord just send the Sunday school teachers. Lord says, why don't you go, "No Lord, no Lord, my gift is prayer, I'm an interceder. Lord send the Sunday school teachers. You can answer the prayer. You can answer the call." And many times we need to say, Lord, am I just covering my disobedience by my prayer?

God says, Joshua, get up. Why are you lying on your face? Verse 11, "Israel has sinned. And they have also transgressed." So it was a willful, deliberate disobedience. I call it a WDD, willful, deliberate disobedience. "They've broken my covenant, which I commanded them. They've even taken it to the accursed thing. They've also stolen and dissembled also. They've put it even amongst their own stuff. Therefore, the children of vigil cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies because they are accursed. Neither will I be with you anymore except you destroy the accursed thing that is among you." So God says, "Deal with your sin." And I believe God does that for us. We start to pray and we wonder, why is it going the way I wanted to go? Why is my marriage going right? Why aren't my kids cooperating? Well, why is it that I, you know, going through all these things? And God says, you know what? There's sin in your life. There's things hidden in your tent. You've disobeyed God. And you need to confess your sin and you need to forsake your sin. By the way, when they did confess their sin and they dealt with their sin, a new sense of God's presence and power. And in chapter eight, they took victoriously the city of Ai. But you're not going to walk in victory until you're willing to confess your sin and realize the folly of trying to cover your sin.

So there is now the discovery in verses 16 to 26. The discovery of the sin. Notice in verse 16 to 18, we have the discovery of the sinner himself. It says in verse 16 that "Joshua rose up early in the morning...". And again, I like that. God had actually told Joshua that you have to parade all the tribes by and all the families by. He would take them, first of all, he would take the tribes and then he would take the families and then he would take the house and then he would zero in on the man who had sinned. So Joshua doesn't delay. Prompt obedience, verse 16, "Rose early in the morning, he brought all Israel by their tribes. The tribe of Judah was taken, and he brought the family of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites, and he brought the family of the Zarhites by name, man by man, and Zabdi was taken. And he brought his household by name, and here it is, Achan was taken, the son of Carmi, the son of Zedai, the son of Zara, the tribe of Judah was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan...", verse 19, "...my Son, give I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him and tell me now what thou hast done and hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, I indeed have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and thus have I done. I saw...", verse 21, "...among the spoils, a beautiful Babylonian garment and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold and 50 shekels weight, then I coveted it. I took and I hid them in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, they ran to the tent and behold it was hidden in the tent. The silver was under it and they took them out of the midst of the tent. They brought them unto Joshua and all the children of Israel and laid them out before the Lord."

Now can you imagine having your sin laid out before the entire congregation. We find something in your house and we pull it out and we set it on the stage Sunday morning, put your pictures on the big screen. We're not going to do that by the way. This week's featured sinner, hypocrite. (Congregation Laughing) "I ain't going to church today, I ain't going to go to church today, I'm just ain't going to go to church today." So they tried the tribe, they go by all the congregation to take the tribe of Judah. And the whole congregation, and then they go from the tribe of Judah, they take a certain family and certain family and ends up with [Achan], now can you imagine? Was that dude sweating bullets or what? The minute they took the tribe of Judah, he's like, ooh, little uncomfortable, but he looks around. "Maybe I can [get] out the back, Jack," you know, I can get out of here. And then his family's taken. He's thinking, "Oh, no, oh, no." And then his name is taken. Now, it doesn't tell us the process, whether they drew straws or God just spoke audibly, or maybe the priests used the Urim and the Thummim to discern, but the lot fell on Achan. Achan realized that God saw, God knows, God sees. What a sad and tragic thing this is.

Then we have his confession of the sinner. Notice in verse 21, "I saw, I coveted, I took, and in essence I hid." This is the progression of sin. Starts with the eyes, I saw. It's called the lust of the eyes. Do you know that you actually have to be careful about what you look at? Did you actually have to get your eyes away from sinful things? You may be looking at magazines or things on the computer, or things on the television, or you go into a theater and you look at things that your eyes shouldn't see. It's not okay to look at things that are [not] pleasing to God. As a boy growing up in Sunday school, I never forget the song, "Be Careful, Little Eyes, What You See." "There's a father up above looking down on you in love, be careful little eyes what you see." For us, it's be careful big eyes. Now that you're an adult, your eyes are just as important as a child. Be careful little feet where you go. There's a father up above looking down on you in love. Be careful little feet where you go. So you need to guard your eye gates. He said, "I saw." When David saw Bathsheba in the next courtyard, he was on the rooftop. He saw this beautiful woman taking a bath. He was married, she's married to someone else, she's married. David should have said, "Time to go off the roof, in the house and play checkers." Time to like go inside and take a cold shower, pull the shade, get off the roof. The Bible says he saw and then the Bible says he looked. I've had guys say, "I don't take a second look, I just take one long first look, is that okay pastor?" (Congregation Laughing) No. And David took one long good first look, and he lost it, and he sent an inquirer, and he took Bathsheba, and then he committed sin with her. David's life spiraled down from that time on. Sin does not elevate us, sin degenerates us, it destroys us, it brings death, it brings despair, and it brings destruction. So guard your eyes.

Then what does it say? "I covet it." What a graphic description of the progression of sin. "I covet it." The tenth commandment in the Decalogue, "Thou shall not..." what? -"Covet." Oh, that's a hard one. Of all the commandments, that's the one that's inside. That's the one that's in here. And covetousness can lead you to commit all the, to violate and break all the other commandments. All the other nine commandments will be broken if you're covetous. Take the name of the Lord in vain. You're going to lie. You're going to steal. You commit adultery. You'll murder if you're covetous. The Bible says that the love of money is the root, and this is the way it would read in the Greek translation, of all kinds of evil. Not the root of evil, it's the root of all

kinds of evil. For many people who love money err from the faith and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. That's why Paul, speaking those words to his young protege, Timothy, said, "So avoid those things, flee youthful lust, follow after righteousness and truth. Guard your heart, guard your eyes, guard your heart from covetousness.

Then thirdly, his hands. His eyes, his heart and his hands. "I took," I took. Verse 21. And then to top it off, he hid. So the act of sinning began with the eyes, moved to the heart and then with the hands, and then he tried to hide his sin. You can't hide from God. You look this way, you look that way, you look around, no one's looking, but you forget to look up, amen? God looks, God sees. This is why the foundation for your life must be the fear of the Lord. Who are you when no one is looking? What do you do when no one's around, when you're home alone, when you're traveling alone, when you're in the car alone, when you're in some distant city alone. It's going to take a foundation for your life to keep you obedient to God, fear of the Lord. That's the beginning of wisdom. So the sin, it's described in James chapter one, drawn away of your own lust, it starts in us, enticed, the trap is set. Then when lust has conceived, we sin, it brings forth what? Death. Disobedience leads to death. We need to wait on God and obey God. Then we have the judgment, the death of the sinner, verse 24 to 26 in conclusion, "Joshua and all of Israel took Achan, the son of Zari, and the silver, and the garments, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters, and his oxen and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent." Interesting that Achan had all this stuff, so it doesn't satisfy, you always got to have more. He didn't covet out of a poverty situation, he coveted out of plenty, but there's never enough to satisfy. "And all that he had, and they brought them to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why have you troubled Israel? The Lord shall trouble thee this day, and all Israel stoned him with stones. And they burned them with fire. After that he had stoned them with stones. And so they raised over them a heap of stones until this day. So the Lord turned from his fierce anger, and wherefore the name of the place is called the valley of Achor unto this day." The valley of Achor, meaning the valley of trouble. The valley of trouble.

You need to deal with sin, and when we deal with sin, the Lord begins to bless. The Lord turned the fierceness of his anger. Now, a lot of people have trouble with this judgment upon Achan and his family. Why would his family be judged? The only conclusion that we make, and I think it's a good one, is that they were privy or partners with his sin. The Bible doesn't say that, but what the Bible does say in Deuteronomy chapter 24, it says that the children should not be held responsible for their parents' sins. God doesn't do that. So the inference to me is clear is that his wife and his children and his family were party to it. You know when you commit one sin, you have to commit another sin and lie to cover a sin? I imagine Achan was digging a hole in his tent and his wife walked in. She said, "What are you doing?" Never mind, doesn't matter. I just felt like digging a hole in the tent today. He lies to his wife. "Where'd you get that gold? Where'd you get that garment?" Now granted, the dude had been in the wilderness for 40 years, wearing the same shirt for 40 years. I mean, if you've been wearing the same shirt for 40 years and you see a Babylonian garment, "This is like the thing, man. This is like, I am going to be so awesome in this Babylonian coat." You're going to be tempted to take that. But he probably lied to his wife and then she discovered it and she was party to it. She didn't confess it to Joshua. His kids probably saw it too. "Dad, where'd you get the gold?" Shh, we're going to bury it. You

want to go to college, don't you?" (Congregation Laughs) Want me to buy you a new Corvette? Don't tell anybody, "Okay, okay."

Now I believe his family was party to the sin and they were all judged. Can you imagine you, your wife, and all your children destroyed? Stoned with stones and then burnt in the valley of trouble. What a horrible, horrible ending. This means that God takes sin very seriously. This means that we learn the high cost of hidden sin. The high cost of hidden sin. One of the hard things about being a pastor is seeing people who God has blessed and God has provided for, harden their hearts, turn away from the Lord and sin and destroy their lives. Can't tell you all the lives I've seen destroyed by disobedience, by sinful behavior. Marriages, children, families. And in all the years that I've fasted, I've seen tragedy after tragedy, heartbreak after heartbreak. I've seen God do some marvelous things. But sin brings defeat, brings death, it brings dismay and despair. If you're contemplating sin, Maybe you're contemplating an adulterous relationship. Maybe you're contemplating lying or stealing. Maybe you're contemplating getting involved in drugs or you're already taking drugs. My question to you is, you think you can hide it in your tent? Maybe there's a phone number in your wallet right now. There's a phone number that you need to throw away. Maybe there's a magazine hidden under some things in the house under a drawer that you don't want your wife to find or no one else knows, or you got them stashed somewhere. Maybe there's a website on your computer that you want to keep covered, you [don't] want anyone to know about. Maybe there's a person that you meet for lunch and you talk together that you don't want your husband to know, your wife to know, that you've been going out to lunch with this person. Sin leads to death. Sin leads to shame. It dishonors God. And the Bible says, "Be sure your sins will find you out." Be sure your sins will find you out.

If you're here this morning and you have something hidden in your tent, some secret sin you think my parents don't know, my boyfriend doesn't know, my husband doesn't know, my kids don't know, my wife doesn't know, maybe you're in ministry. And you say well those I serve with they don't know. Maybe you're serving here at Revival Christian Fellowship. God knows. God knows. And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. I love what Jay Sidlo Baxter said. He said, "The electric wire of fellowship between God and Israel had been cut by trespass in the accursed thing, and the current of power therefore ceased to flow." Has the electric wire of fellowship between you, with you and God, have been cut by your disobedience and sin? Then today, confess your sin, forsake your sin, and you will find an abundance of mercy. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.