

Trinity Home Teams

Sermon Notes / Jan. 18, 2026

The Book of Joshua / Embracing Reconciliation

Joshua 8:1-35

1. God previously was silent regarding Ai, but later assures Joshua that Ai is his to take. Why the wait? What practical help in my life is this story?
2. How were Israel's battle plans different between taking Jericho and capturing Ai? Why? Is that important?
3. How does Yahweh take Israel's shame and turn it into victory? Can you describe this in your own life?

After a breach of trust, relationship healing takes time. This is where we find Joshua and Israel. After a grievous transgression led to a disastrous military campaign, Israel's sin had been dealt with; Achan had confessed. That taken from Yahweh was returned and devoted to destruction. "The Lord turned from his burning anger." How long would his anger persist? What more would Yahweh require of them to make things right? What would be the price of reconciliation?

Confidence is restored.

Yahweh is not governed by emotion. He is holy and righteous in character and actions. This is why Joshua's lament in ch7 is so alarming; it fails to account for Yahweh's absolute faithfulness.

Through the account of Achan's exposure, confession, and punishment, Yahweh does not change or waver in his holiness or righteousness. They understand Yahweh's anger is appropriate. Because sin in the camp had been dealt with thoroughly, the cause of God's anger was gone. He could once again relate to his people as before. However, Joshua needed his confidence reestablished, so "*the Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not fear and do not be dismayed.'*" (Same as Josh.1:9: *Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*)

As he promised Jerico, here in Joshua 8, God promises Ai. Not merely battle instructions; these words spoken were meant to instill Joshua with confidence.

HENRY: "When we have faithfully put away sin, that accursed thing, which *separates between us and God*, then, and not till then, we may expect to hear from God to our comfort; and God's directing us how to go on in our Christian work and warfare is a good evidence of his being reconciled to us."

Conquest is resumed.

It is one thing to say we believe the word of the Lord; it is another to act on it. In fact, true belief is expressed, not in mere *confession*, but in *obedience*.

Joshua immediately relays the Lord's commands to the people. He delivered confidence the Lord would be with

them and go before them. The conquest of Canaan begins again. ***Only Yahweh can take shame and turn it to victory.***

JOSHUA'S JAVELIN=YAWEH'S POWER -- V18, 26 "Then the Lord said to Joshua, "*Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.*" And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city... Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction.

First, this reestablished Joshua as Yahweh's chosen leader, just as Moses had been used. In Exodus 14:11, 27, Moses stretched out his hand, and the waters of the Red Sea parted. In Exodus 17:8-13, Moses stretches out his staff so that Joshua and the Israelite army can defeat the Amelikites. Joshua raises his sword/javelin at the command of Yahweh; Israel is fighting, but this is Yahweh's victory.

Why was Joshua and Co. instructed to take no spoils in Jericho but keep spoils in Ai? -- Jericho was the first city taken in Canaan. It was the firstfruits, wholly devoted to the Lord. Since Ai was not the first city taken, it's plunder could be kept, though the people and city were still devoted to the Lord for destruction. Why? The taking of plunder was Yahweh's provision.

The king of Ai was brought to Joshua, where he was killed and hanged on a tree, like the king of Jericho. This was a sign that Ai and her king suffered this defeat because they were the enemies of Yahweh and were cursed (Deut. 21:23; Galatians 3:13).

Covenant is renewed.

In response to Yahweh's faithfulness to himself and to his people, it was fitting that their former sin (taking devoted things) be met with renewal of the covenant.

The victory came through obedience; the defeat had come through disobedience. Drawing from the Book of the Law of Moses, Joshua led Israel through a covenant renewal. Everything was carried out "just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded."

The emphasis of the word of the Lord is evident: "he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law..."

Joshua learned that every word of the Lord is important: commands in battle, command to be a holy nation. Yahweh showed himself faithful to his covenant and people. Ceremony was Israel's response to Yahweh's gracious action toward them.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.