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My Achan, Breakin’ Heart

Text: Joshua 7:1-26

There is a rarely a personal act that doesn’t affect, directly or indirectly, someone else. Verse 1 fleshes this out in a pre-Christ culture. The text says the children of Israel (corporate body) committed a trespass. However, it was not “all Israel” that transgressed or violated God’s laws. It was one guy: Achan.

**The story:**

Achan was part of a reconnaissance mission effort. A group of warriors were to go spy out the city of Ai (v. 2; Numbers 13:17-20). They checked it out and concluded that this would be an easy win. “The people of Ai are few”, they said. “We don’t even need to send a full army to Ai. Let’s spare our human resources”, they said (v.3). About 3,000 men go up to defeat Ai and Ai fights back, killing 36 men of the tribe of Judah. It was humiliating for Israel.

**What’s at stake:**

1. Joshua is concerned for Yahweh’s great name (v. 8-9). There is a theological issue at stake.

**Illus.**

1 Kings 18:36-39.

B. There is also a moral/integrity issue at stake. Achan has a hidden side, but his actions are affecting others. Joshua begs Achan to confess his transgression (v. 19).

With few exceptions, our morning service always includes a corporate confession of sin. Confession is therapeutic. Confession is floss for the heart. Through confession we remove the plaque, the hardness, caused by our behavior.

Achan fesses up (v. 20-21). I would like this narrative to say that after Achan confessed, a great weight was lifted from his conscience and that all was now well. However, Achan still had to suffer the consequences of his actions.

**Contrition and Consequence:**

Contrition does not absolve us from responsibility and consequence. God does not despise the broken, contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). Such a heart honors God. God *also* does not despise the sowing/reaping principle. Achan, though confessional in his posture, still must experience the reaping of that which he has sown. Part of God’s response to the sin of Achan is the threat of withdrawal of the presence and help of The Eternal. The end of vs. 12 contains some of the saddest in all of Holy Writ: ***Neither will I be with you anymore,*** *unless you destroy the accursed from among you.*

Consequence*:* Achan’s *personal* act affects his entire family (v. 24).

A Matthew 25 church is a confessional church. It is a group of people who serve with gladness and who consider the consequences of not doing so.

Note that Joshua is told to stand up/get up. It’s a direct contrast to the Israel that cannot stand (v. 10, 12).

As a Matthew 25 church, we intend to stand up and do that to which we are called.

Our hearts ought to break when we are made aware of our personal and corporate failing. Our hearts ought to break when we note a failure to embrace the power of confession.

**Illus.**

Being general director of the New York opera took a toll on Beverly Sills; she ballooned into obesity. "It made me sick to look at myself. I'd reached the point where I didn't want to have my clothes made anymore. It was too embarrassing. So, I ordered everything from catalogues." Eventually Sills was forced to face the problem. "I woke up one day and realized I was really ill." She went to see a specialist. "He put me on the scales. They read 215 pounds. 'I cannot possibly weigh that much!' I gasped. And the doctor said, 'Please look down. Are those two fat feet on the scale yours or mine?'" Beverly smiled. "Once I accepted the problem, I was on my way."

Beloved, are those hands committing that act *yours* or *mine*?

Is that wagging, lying tongue *yours* or *mine?*

Let us own up to our actions, confess before our God and watch God work among us…..even when we are Achan.

Amen.