

Life Lesson 42
A Man Called Trouble
Text: Joshua 7

Introduction

How would you like to be named “Trouble?” The man in our story today was named “Achan” which means “trouble.” It was an appropriate name for him, because he got himself and a lot of other people into trouble because he thought he could keep a secret from God.

The Story

Achan was one of the children of Israel. He had been wandering in the wilderness all his life. Now he was ready to help Joshua and the rest of God’s people fight and take possession of the promised land.

God gave Joshua special instructions about how to fight their first battle. They weren’t to attack Jericho, but march around the city for seven days. Then on the seventh day they would march around seven times and blow their trumpets. God promised to make the walls fall down so they could go right in and fight the people of the city.

God gave them one warning. He told them not to take any of the treasures of the city. Those belonged to God.

Achan marched around the city of Jericho with all the other soldiers and was there for that exciting moment when the trumpets blew and big, high walls came down with a crash. Achan went up with the other soldiers and fought just as God had told them to do. Then something caught his eye. It was a fancy set of clothes, the kind the people of Jericho wore. They must have been gorgeous with lots of jewels and fancy embroidery on them. Then he saw something that really made his eyes pop out – a big pile of silver money. It was probably more

money than Achan had ever seen. And there was a big hunk of solid gold.

When Achan saw those things he wanted them more than anything else in the whole world. He wanted them so badly that he did something foolish. He knew those things belonged to God and God had forbidden him to take them, but he thought he could get by with disobeying God.

Is it possible to sin and not get caught? No, God always see us and is aware of every sin, no matter how hidden it is from other people. And all sin is punished, sooner or later.

Achan sneaked home from the battle and dug a hole under his tent. There he buried those treasures. No one saw him do it and maybe he thought he was going to get by with his sin without being caught. But God knew where those treasures were and He knew the sin that was in Achan's heart.

Soon it was time for the children of Israel to fight another battle. This time they were going to fight a little city called Ai. It wasn't anywhere near the size of Jericho. They felt confident about winning this city.

"There's no need for all of us to go," the scouts told Joshua. "Just send a few men. They can take care of it."

Joshua agreed, forgetting that it was God that gave the victory before and entirely neglecting to look to God for direction. A few of the men went to fight the people of Ai. Did they ever get beaten! They were chased half-way back home again.

Joshua was upset! He asked God, "Why did you let them beat us? Now everyone will think we're weaklings and easy to beat."

God answered, "There is sin in the camp. You won't be able to win until it is set right."

Achan thought he could hide from God, but that isn't possible. God knew Achan's sin and the time for his punishment had come. The drew lots to see who had committed the sin. God pointed them straight to Achan.

"What have you done?" Joshua asked him.

At last Achan confessed, but it was too late. Punishment had come to his people because he had sinned and now Achan must be punished, too.

They took Achan and all his family and all his belongings to a valley. Then all the children of Israel stoned them and burned their bodies and all their possessions with fire.

What a terrible ending to a terribly sad story! But it taught the Israelites an important lesson. You can't sin and get away with it. God sees and will always judge sin.

The Life Lesson

That's an important lesson for us, too. Sometimes we think that we won't have to answer for our sin because we aren't punished right away, but God says we will one day have to give account for our every word, thought, and action.

Do you know how badly God hates sin? It's so bad that the Bible says that even one sin makes a person worthy of hell's torment for ever and ever. We all have sinned much more than that, so it looks like we are all hopeless, doesn't it?

That's why Jesus came to die on the cross. It's like He went to hell for us and took the punishment we deserved for all those sins. God put all of our sins on Jesus when He was there on the cross. All of God's anger and the hell those sins deserved was endured by Jesus as he hung there in pain.

Just knowing that Jesus did that for us doesn't save us, though. The Bible says we must see our sins as God sees them. They aren't just a little something we did wrong. Each sin is a horrible thing, worthy of hell. We need to turn from our sin and ask for God's forgiveness and surrender to Him as our Lord.

Remember the lesson we learned from the man named "Trouble." We can't hide our sin from God, because He always sees us, and He will always judge sin.

Review Questions

Who was the man called Atrouble?"

Achan

What three things did he take from Jericho?

Clothes, silver money and a wedge of gold.

Where did he hide his treasures?

Under his tent.

What was the next little city the Isrealites fought against?

Ai

Did they win against Ai?

No

Why were they defeated?

Because there was sin in the camp.

What punishment did Achan receive?

He was stoned and burned.

Can we hide our sins from God?

No, he sees everything.