

Armed for Battle 6

The Vulnerability of Victory

Text: Joshua 7

Introduction

Church, we have walked with Israel
from wilderness and preparation...
into consecration and submission and promise...
and into victory.

We have learnt principles of:

- His Presence
- Consecration
- Obedience
- Remembrance
- Covenant Identity
- Redemption
- Perspective
- Divine Strategy
- Praise
- Dependence on God

Joshua 6:3-5 (NIV)

March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in."

Joshua 6:20 (NIV)

When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city.

When God comes through...
we assume the hardest part is over.

When breakthrough happens...
we assume things will get easier.

1. The Principle of Hidden Compromise

Joshua 7:1 (NLT)

*1 **But** Israel violated the instructions about the things **set apart** for the LORD. A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated things, so the LORD was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, a descendant of Zimri son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah.*

Set apart: The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by **destroying them** or by giving them as an offering

Do you remember the instructions?

Joshua 6:17

17 Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the LORD.

“But...”

That word is heavy.

Joshua 7:1 (NIV)

1 But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel.

Joshua 7:19-21 (NIV)

19 Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honour him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.” 20 Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: 21 When **I saw** in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, **I coveted** them and **took** them. They are **hidden** in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

Because sin always moves toward concealment.

“I saw... I coveted... I took... I hid...”

Genesis 3:6-10 (NIV)

6 When the woman **saw** that the fruit of the tree was **good** for food and **pleasing** to the eye, and also **desirable** for gaining wisdom, she **took** some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they **hid** from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I **hid**.”

Eve saw...

desired...

took...

hid.

James 1:14-15 (NIV)

14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Because nothing done privately
escapes the vision of an all-seeing God.

Joshua 7:1 (NLT)

1 But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the LORD. **A man named Achan had stolen** some of these dedicated things, so the LORD was very angry with **the Israelites**

2. The Principle of Self-Reliance

In stature and size, it was completely insignificant compared to Jericho.

Joshua 7:2-5 (NIV)

2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

Joshua 5:13-14 (NIV)

*13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." **Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"***

Joshua 7:3-5 (NIV)

3 When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there." 4 So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 5 who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water.

Ai represents:

1. "Small" battles that are actually strategic

- Looks insignificant.
- Feels manageable.
- Seems like something you can handle.

But it determines future progress.

2 Samuel 11:1 (NIV)

"...at the time when kings go off to war... David remained in Jerusalem."

2. Gatekeeper issues

Ai was small.

But Ai was a gatekeeper.

1 Samuel 15:22-23 (NIV)

"To obey is better than sacrifice..."

Saul kept moving as king...

but lost alignment with God.

Numbers 13:33 (NIV)

"...we seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes..."

That was not an enemy problem.

That was an identity problem.

And it kept them from entering the land.

3. High-ground battles

Harder than expected.

Require dependence, not confidence.

Mark 4:37-38 (NIV)

"A furious squall came up..."

Even the experienced fishermen were overwhelmed.

Matthew 14:30 (NIV)

“But when he saw the wind, he was afraid...”

Peter shifted from dependence
to self-awareness—and began to sink.

Some battles are uphill...
not to defeat you—
but to deepen your dependence.

Joshua 7:2–3

“Send two or three thousand men...”

Conclusion:

Victory is not guaranteed by what God did yesterday...
Or what He promised....
but by our ongoing alignment with Him today.

Reflection:

- 1. Hidden areas**
- 2. Self-reliance**
- 3. “Small” things in strategic places**
- 4. Gatekeeper areas**
- 5. Dependence**