



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Joshua 7: 1-26

Lesson 7

Fall 2020

"Lust Of The Eyes"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth, and good morning. Our text is Joshua, chapter 7. I'm not going to read the entire chapter; it's rather lengthy. I'm going to read the first half and then the final verses, beginning with verse 24. But to set a little context, you'll remember from last week, from chapter 6, that Israel has conquered Jericho. It's the first city in Canaan that was conquered. And so a special city because as the first of the conquests the LORD had a requirement for the nation; and that is, that all of the spoils of war were to be given to the LORD and put in His treasury. All of the spoils of all of the other conquests were for the nation—for the people. But at Jericho, they were for the LORD, and He made the point back in chapter 6, in verse 18, that should they take the spoils of war for themselves, the nation would be "accursed".

Well, as we read through and studied through the passage of chapter 6, all went well, just as the LORD has prescribed. And the chapter ends, "So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land." Then chapter 7 begins,

¹ But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

² Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, (*sometimes that's pronounced 'A' 'I'. I think the correct pronunciation, according to my Hebrew professor is 'I'*), which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." So the men up and spied out Ai.

³ They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, *only* about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few." ⁴ So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. ⁵ The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

⁶ And Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, *both* he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. ⁷ Joshua said, "Alas, O LORD God, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, *only* to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan! ⁸ O LORD, what can I say since Israel has turned *their* back before their enemies? ⁹ For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"

¹⁰ So the LORD said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? ¹¹ Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have put *them* among their own things. ¹² Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn *their* backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst. ¹³ Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, "There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst." '

And this is what Joshua did. Through a procedure of casting lots, Achan was discovered; he confessed his sin; and justice was carried out. Verse 24,

²⁴ Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. ²⁶ They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

Joshua 7:24-26

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of studying it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, it's a great privilege to be with Your people on a Sunday morning. It's what You instruct us to do; we're not to forsake the gathering together of the saints. And so we are here and we're glad to be here, as we continue this transition back to normalcy. And we hope it continues. And to that end, we pray that You would bless this church and bless this city and land, for that matter, all of the citizens of this nation, with health. And that this virus, this pandemic, would be brought to an end, so we can return to normal things and meet without any hindrance. We thank You for everyone that's here, and I pray that this will be a blessing this morning, spiritually, that we be built up in the faith, and we be equipped for the week to come.

And that's not an idle or perfunctory request. We live in difficult times. We live in dangerous times. And we live in days of decision; and I pray that You would give wisdom to Your people. And I pray that You would make us a witness before this nation and the world; that we would be unambiguous ambassadors of Jesus Christ. And to that end, I

pray that You would equip us this morning. Teach us the important lessons of this unusual event; but one that has very strict application to each of us individually—and as a church. And so I pray You would bless us and build us up in the faith. In so doing, bring us into conformity to Christ, advance us in maturity, and equip us, as I said, for the things that lay ahead—today and throughout the week—and really throughout our lives. This is how we prepare ourselves for the battle that we are in, which is constant. It's spiritual. It's unseen, but it's real. And the only way we can be equipped for it is through Your Word and through prayer.

And then, Father, we do pray Your rich blessings on us materially. We do pray that you would bless those who have been sick, and those who are dealing with this virus; some in our congregation. Bless them. Bless those who are recovering from illnesses. LORD we pray that You would bless and strengthen them, and keep all of us safe from that. And then, LORD, bless those that are grieving. And we know these are members who, LORD, as You know that are full of hope; their loved one is with You. And they have every reason to believe that and to be confident, since they gave clear professions of faith and actually lived the life before You. But You brought them home, and we miss those that were with us. We pray that You would comfort us and comfort the family.

But what a joy it is to know that Your people while they leave this world, (and we all must do that someday, it's appointed unto man once to die), that we can avoid the judgment that's also appointed, because of Your Son, and what He's done for us. We thank You for Your grace. And LORD, may we see grace in all that we will study this morning, and be reminded of who You are and what You've done for us, and what we have escaped through the blood of Christ.

So bless us now, LORD, as we look to our lesson. I pray that You would bless us through the study of it; that the Spirit of God would illuminate our hearts and He give us an understanding of the text—and the application of it to us. And then prepare our hearts for a time of worship, as we take the LORD's Supper at the end of the hour. So we look to You to bless, now, and pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

One of the best-known lines in English literature was written by John Donne. "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent." The poem is actually about death and ends with another famous line about a funeral bell. "Never send to know for who the bell tolls. It tolls for thee." But what the poet was saying is, none of us is an individual only; separate, an island, self-sufficient. We are all connected in some way. What affects one affects another; affects all.

That's actually a biblical principle. The church is a body. Paul describes us as "the body of Christ". If one part of the body hurts, the whole-body hurts. Well that was true of Israel as well. One sin could affect the whole nation. That's the story of Joshua, chapter 7; how the secret sin of one man rippled through the nation with tragic consequences, so that 'the bell tolled for him'.

It's a lesson on the seriousness of sin. In Joshua 6, verse 18, before Israel attacked Jericho the LORD gave strict instructions that the people were to keep themselves from the spoils of victory. Otherwise the nation would be accursed. Everything in Jericho was the LORD's; and for His treasury. All went well. They conquered Jericho, burned the city. And in verse 24 says, "Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD." (Jos 6:24).

Then chapter 7 begins with an ominous statement. "But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel." One man's sin affected God's relationship to the sons of Israel.

That sets the stage and explains what follows when the nation moves to the next city on the path of conquest, Ai, located in the central hills of Canaan, about 13 miles northwest of Jericho. It was a smart strategy. Victory would give Israel control of the hill country and would divide the land, north and south, in their effort to conquer it. So, Joshua sent men to go up and spy out the land. They returned with a very good report.

They told Joshua, "Do not let all the people to go up; *only* about two or three thousand men need go up..." 'It's not necessary. It has very few people.' (vs3).

The nation was riding high. It had defeated the Amorite kings, Sihon and Og. They conquered the east side of the Jordan. Then Jericho, the walled city, had fallen to them. They were unstoppable, rolling up victories. Ai was nothing. Just a small town they would roll over on their blitzkrieg through Canaan. They were confident. And why wouldn't they be? Verse 4, "So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water." Now they resembled the Canaanites who were so fearful of this army of Israel.

What happened? The nation was devastated. Was it a problem of pride? Well we know from the Scriptures, for example, Proverbs 16, verse 18, that 'pride goes before a fall'. Pride's always a problem. But that's not the problem given here. And Joshua didn't suspect it was. He couldn't explain what had happened; and was shaken to the core. The people had trusted the LORD, all that He had said. They'd gone out in faith, and victory had occurred easily. Now suddenly, unexpectedly, defeat. And defeat at the hands of a small, insignificant town.

The lesson that has been suggested from this is, 'Don't underestimate the enemy.' And that's always good advice. But that's not the lesson here. It wouldn't have mattered if they had gone into those hills respecting the army of Ai, and gone out in complete humility. In fact, it wouldn't have mattered if they had gone out with 10,000 more troops. —It was a different problem. It was a problem of undetected sin.

Confused, humiliated, in deep sorrow, Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothes. They threw dust on their heads in genuine contrition over the setback that the nation had experienced, this humiliating defeat. And then Joshua fell on his face before the ark of the LORD and he put his feelings into words with a prayer that bordered on despair. Verse 7, "Joshua said, 'Alas, O LORD GOD, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, *only* to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only

we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan! O LORD, what can I say since Israel has turned *their* back before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?' " (vs7-9).

Joshua prayed with passion; but without understanding. Israel had gone to battle assuming victory was assured. That was the promise; so what had become of the promise of God? Joshua's despair sounded like Israel's complaint against Moses, when they said that 'God had brought them out into the wilderness to destroy them. They should have stayed in Egypt'. In fact, they wanted to go back. (Ex 14).

But Joshua wasn't grumbling. His concern was not only for Israel and its conquest. His concern was also for the LORD's reputation—His glory. "...what will You do for Your great name?", he wondered. This was not a prayer of unbelief. It was a prayer of confusion. And it's far better to go to the LORD with our confusion, even our self-pity, than turn away from prayer altogether. —That is unbelief. Prayer is an act of faith; and Joshua was a man of faith. And like many men and women of faith who are confused by the circumstances of life, he wrestled with God in prayer. But as Joshua would discover, the problem was not with the ways of the LORD, but with Joshua's lack of understanding. It's always that way.

There are examples of that in the Bible. One of my favorite examples of that is Jacob; and it's a favorite because it's like so many of us. In Genesis 42, during the great famine when his sons returned from Egypt, Jacob was told that Simeon, his son, had been held back in Egypt, and the ruler there, the man, the prime minister, demanded that the brothers bring back their youngest, Benjamin, if they wanted more grain and if they wanted to see their brother Simeon again.

Benjamin was his youngest child, Jacob's prized son, his last living link to his beloved Rachael. And he feared losing him to this 'man' in Egypt. So he cried out, "All these things are against me." (Gen 42:36). It was the opposite. All those things were for him. Simeon was alive. Joseph, his most loved son, was not only alive, he was

'the man'. —He was the prime minister who was calling them down to Egypt and to safety. No, 'all those things' were for them.

Elijah experienced despair. Jezebel had chased him into the desert. And in exhaustion he prayed, "It is enough now, LORD. Take my life." Now, you think about that; that was a completely irrational prayer. He wanted the LORD to take his life because wicked Queen Jezebel threatened to take his life. Irrational—but typical. Later he declared to the LORD, "I alone am left." 'I'm the only faithful one in Israel. I'm an island.' He was not, because the LORD told him there were still '7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal.'

The reason for these troubles among the saints was not the LORD's failure. It was a lack of understanding and a lack of faith on their part. But even though he was confused and lacked a correct understanding, still, Joshua had gone to the LORD with his concerns. And because he had, because he'd gone to the LORD in prayer, the LORD answered him. His answer was abrupt, but gave correction, Verse 10, "The LORD said to Joshua, 'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put *them* among their own things.' " (vs10-11).

That was not only an answer to the problem; it was not only an explanation for why defeat occurred in spite of the great promise of victory that the LORD had given. But this was not only that, it was a rebuke to Joshua, not for his prayer, but for his failure to detect sin as the reason for the defeat. Joshua, who had seen the consequences of sin in Israel in the previous 40 years, should have detected the symptoms of the disease that was in the camp—this spiritual problem.

But what we see here, and in verse 1, is Israel has sinned. That's what the LORD says, "Israel has sinned." When in fact, only Achan had sinned. So what are we to make of that? Some have referred to this as corporate solidarity. And what they mean by that is this is a case of one person, Achan, being seen as a representative of the whole group of all Israel. And there are other examples of that. The LORD spoke of the nation Israel as

"His son". He did that early in the Book of Exodus, when He promised that He would bring them out of Egypt from their slavery. And then much later in the Book of Hosea, in chapter 11, verse 1, The LORD said, "When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son." He looked at the nation as an individual.

So the nation is seen that way. And here an individual is seen as the nation. What we can say is, while people are individually responsible for their actions, they're still united in a community or society. So what we do affects others. God called Israel His son. The church is called Christ's body. We are connected. And the things we do individually affect one another. Here Achan's sin affected the whole nation, so that the nation shared in his guilt. When there is sin in the church, it affects the entire church. Just as when we have a virus in our body, it affects the whole body.

Now the Hebrew word for 'sin' is an interesting word. It's a word that, in a sense, defines itself. In the Book of Judges, chapter 20, in verse 16, this word for sin is used in a military context. It's not used in the moral sense. But the way it's used gives us a sense of the meaning of sin. It's used of warriors of the tribe of Benjamin. They were left-handed men who could "sling a stone at a hair and not miss." The word '*miss*' is the word for 'sin'. Sin is 'missing the mark'. Now these warriors didn't miss the mark. They were so accurate they could hit a hair at a great distance.

The target for us is never that narrow or difficult; and it's always broad and obvious. And it was for Achan. There's no mistaking the target. Don't take anything from Jericho. Anything. 'Keep yourselves from the things under the ban'. But Achan couldn't do it. It was just too tempting.

Now we might be inclined to go easy on Achan, recognizing how inviting all of that was—how inviting and tempting the glitter of gold and silver are. But the LORD does not go easy on him. There are no small sins to God. It is all serious. And the seriousness of the sin, and the LORD's anger over it, is indicated in verse 11, where He used six words, six verbs, to describe what Achan did. They build progressively to the end. They include Achan, but then they include the whole nation. He 'sinned'. He 'transgressed'.

And then, as the nation, he says they have 'taken' the stuff, 'stolen', 'deceived', 'put it', (meaning 'hidden it'). Achan did it, but it's ascribed to the nation. 'Israel has sinned.'

And so the LORD told Joshua to 'Get up! Get up and fix the problem. Why are you here before the ark, Joshua, when you should be out in the camp dealing with the sin?' "Rise up!" To show how serious all of this was, the LORD gives the consequences of it in verse 12. There would be no blessing from the LORD until the sin was dealt with, and all of the treasures that had been stolen were removed from the camp. "I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst." (vs12b).

What a change that is from chapter 1 and the statement, "I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you." (vs5). It's the same with us. We cannot expect the LORD's blessing on ourselves individually, we cannot expect the LORD's blessings on the church if we are living in disobedience.

I heard a sermon not long ago in which a preacher, a man that I know, spoke of a minister in his community who had just left a church that was thriving. Had about 500 members. Ten years earlier he had been sent to that church to bury it; it was dying. When he arrived it had about 20 members. But he discovered that there were two families among that small group that were feuding. So he talked to them; they agreed to meet; the division was cleared up; and the church was blessed and it began to grow.

God requires of His people unity and love, and unity not only in love for one another, but unity in doctrine. That's what He blesses. Sin has consequences for us, personally, and as a church, and as a nation. It results in loss of power, loss of influence, loss of joy and growth. It results in defeat. —Did for Israel.

And so, in the next verses, the LORD directs Joshua in the process that would expose the guilty person. First the people were to be consecrated, set apart and dedicated to the task. And then next, they were to draw lots. Verse 14, "In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes *by lot* shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near

man by man." And so, through the process of drawing lots, the guilty person would be found. And then thirdly, he was to be executed.

So 'consecrate yourselves'. Secondly, 'cast lots'. Thirdly, 'carry out justice'. It was a lengthy process that through the process and the length of it would have impressed on the people the seriousness of the moment and the violation. But also it gave the guilty man time to repent. So we read in verse 16, "Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes..." At this point, Achan may have felt safe, hidden among the thousands of the 12 tribes. But then we read that the tribe of Judah was taken. Now the noose begins to tighten (and you can just imagine that Achan's heart rate went up).

So Joshua brought the tribe of Judah near. And he took the family of the Zarahites. Then Joshua brought them near. Now the circle was very small. But Achan was silent, thinking he might still escape. If that was his thinking, if that was his hope, it was foolish, and proved to be because we read in verse 18, "...Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken."

All through this process we read, "was taken." Taken by lot, probably, but more to the point, 'taken by God'. Captured. Moses warned Israel, "...be sure your sin will find you out." (Num 32:23). God sees all, and knows all. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3). What we do in secret we do openly before the LORD. He can see things; He knows things; He's omniscient; He knows everything. And through a strange providence, or through a process like this He can make it known.

Now with Achan's sin exposed, Joshua encouraged him to confess. Verse 19, "Then Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.'" The idea of this confession is it's a way of honoring God—He knows everything. But in confessing, 'What we know He knows', we're honoring Him. Well Joshua's words give a sense of real concern and compassion. They seem genuine. They are genuine. He has

compassion on this man. And Achan, maybe moved by that, didn't deny the crime. And how could he? He'd been found out.

He came clean and explained everything. Verse 20. "So Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight...' " , (Man, that's impressive, isn't it? You look at that and you say, 'Yeah. That's a nice collection of stuff.')

he says, "... then I coveted them and took them. And behold they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."

"When I saw," he said. As I thought about that I thought about the eye, and what an amazing gift of God it is. Jesus called, "The eye the lamp of the body", (Mat 6:22). As a lamp shines light into a dark room the eye transmits information of the world to the mind. A more clinical description of the human eye is, '127 million cells called rods and cones, lined up in rows as the seeing elements that receive light and transmit a message to the brain.' Well David didn't know all of that, but he knew enough to say of the body, in Psalm 139, verse 14, in all of its complex parts, "...I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works..." And that is so true.

But man, fallen man, always turns God's wonders into a curse, so that the same eye that gives us a window on the world and a glimpse of the beauty of God's creation, is made an instrument of sin for our soul. John wrote of it, 1 John 2:16, "...the lust of the eyes..." Joshua 7 gives an example of that, and its consequences, which had already cost Israel 36 men. "When I saw," recalls Genesis 3, verse 6, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that was a delight to the eyes...she took and ate, and gave also to her husband..."

There it is—from the beginning, 'the lust of the eyes'. Through that great blessing of the eye, sin entered Adam. And through Adam it entered the whole human race. We have all be infected by his sin. And because we are a piece of the continent, all part of a single race, Adam's race, now, as John Donne wrote, "the bell tolls, it tolls for thee." —For every one of us.

Now it would toll for Achan. Following his confession, Joshua sent two men to verify his account and to retrieve the treasures. They brought them back, and poured them out before the LORD, (probably there at the tabernacle). Then, with the trial complete, and Achan's guilt established, his sentence was pronounced and carried out. Verse 24, "Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones."

Does that seem harsh? Admittedly it does to many—too harsh. We're inclined to give Achan a pass on this since we realize how easily we could fall into the same sin of coveting—and do. You might have even sensed that as you read these treasures that he had seen and that he coveted. Nevertheless, Achan was guilty. He confessed his guilt. "Truly I have sinned against the LORD." And all of Scripture teaches what Paul wrote in Romans, chapter 6, in verse 23. "The wages of sin is death." And God chose to demonstrate that by enforcing justice rather than showing mercy, because it was necessary to teach Israel the seriousness and the wide spread effects of sin.

But still, why his family? Maybe, we wonder, they had some involvement in this. We don't know, but you think about it, they may have been accomplices. After all, he buried the treasures in his tent. Seems unlikely that it would have been a secret to them. Well, that's one explanation that's been given for including the entire family, and all of his possessions in this penalty.

We can wonder about these things without second guessing God, or questioning His justice. Abraham asked, "Shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly?" It's a rhetorical question. And the answer to that is "Yes". He will always deal justly. And that's where we begin in our understanding of such things.

But again, there is a purpose to all of this. It's for us as much as it was for Israel. And it is to show us how serious sin is; and how it affects others, how the things that we

do have wide ranging consequences. And so to make that a lasting lesson for the nation, the stones they piled up over Achan and his family were left as monuments to the event and a reminder to them of the consequences of sin.

Verse 26 ends, "...Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day." Achor is a play on the name Achan. It's a pun. It means trouble, because Achan brought Achor on Israel, the LORD brought Achor on Achan—that's the idea. Remember the trouble that comes with sin. And so, Israel had another stone monument, like the one at Gilgal. But this one was to remind the people of the consequences of sin. Nothing is hidden from the LORD. Psalm 139, "Darkness and light are alike to you." (vs12). "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth." (2 Chr 16:9).

Our eyes move to and fro as well. And that is often the problem. The lust of the eyes. The problem, though, is not with the eye, it's with the heart, the mind and will, that acts upon the information transmitted to it. And James gives a development of that, the development of sin and its consequences, in James chapter 1, verses 14 and 15. It's a kind of anatomy of sin, tracing the development of sin. "...Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then, when lust is conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." In other words, sin kills. It may kill physically, or spiritually. But the result of sin is, it always has destructive consequences on a person's life, as we have seen here. And among the people of God.

We are not islands. We are all a piece of 'the continent'. Christians are members in the body of Christ. That's what the church is. And as Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 14, "The body is not one member, but many." Each member is dependent on the others. We are a whole. When one part is sick, the whole body is sick. But also, when we are healthy, we are a blessing to the rest. That's Paul's point. If one member suffers, he says, all members suffer with it. If one member is honored, all members rejoice with it. That should be our goal. We are joined together intimately in a body. It should be our

goal to make the members of that body rejoice, to make the body healthy and whole and useful.

In Romans chapter 6, verse 11, Paul gives the first command in the book. He's developed doctrine in the first five and a half chapters, and in the development of the doctrines, the prominent doctrine that stands out, the main theme of those chapters, is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. We, through faith in Christ, are made right with God, forgiven and righteous in His sight. But also we are new creatures in Christ. The power of sin in us has been broken. So Paul says reckon that to be true, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (vs11).

He develops that in the next two verses, in verses 12 and 13. "Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God." Now that word 'instruments' is also the Greek word for 'weapons'. Don't use the members of your body; your eye, your ears, your hands, your feet, as weapons of unrighteousness but of righteousness. Be careful what you look at and where you go.

We need to understand who we are—and live according to it. We are new creatures with new abilities, members of one body, the church. We are joined together in Christ. We have the life of Christ in us. We have the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity in us. We have ability to live a supernatural life. As we do that we bless the church and we make it rejoice. That's to God's glory, as well as to our benefit, and the benefit of others. A witness to the world.

We have time to do that. We have opportunity to do that; God has given us that. But the time and the opportunity is short. We're mortal. 'The bell tolls. It tolls for thee.' It tolls for all. That's serious.

If you're here without Christ it's very serious. If you have not recognized that you are Achan, that you are a sinner under the sentence of death right now—realize it,

because it is true. It's what the Scriptures teach. The sentence has been passed on the whole human race. Escape the punishment, which is physical and spiritual, which is temporal and eternal. Escape by coming to Christ who died in the place of sinners. All who believe in Him, trust in His sacrifice alone for salvation, are saved. Their sins are paid for—in full—at the cross. They are forgiven. They are given eternal life.

Give glory to God by confessing your sin, and your need of the Savior, and trust in Him. He receives all who did. May God help you to do that, and help all of us to be careful in our life and our walk; and seek to honor Him through our obedience—it will be a blessing to each other, to the church, and to the world.

Let's close in a word of prayer. And in doing that, let's give thanks for the Supper that we are about to enjoy. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank You for Your Word, what we have considered—a difficult passage Father, but one that reminds us of the seriousness of sin—not only to ourselves but to others. But we, Father, also know that Your grace is great, and You cover a multitude of sins through the sacrifice of Your Son. We thank You for the LORD Jesus Christ. Left to ourselves, we would all be Achan; and we would be destroyed. But through Him, because He took the punishment in our place, we have life, and have life everlasting. We thank You for that.

And we thank You for this LORD's Supper that we're about to enjoy and partake of, because it reminds us of what He did for us, and what we have as a result of His sacrifice for us. Bless us now as we turn to that, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)