

## Timeless Truths for Taking on Temptation

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone Is Tempted</li> <li>2. God Makes the Rules</li> <li>3. You Can't Hide Anything from God</li> <li>4. Confess Before You're Caught</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Sin Starts in the Heart</li> <li>6. Sin Has Deadly Consequences</li> <li>7. One Action Affects Many People</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

*Timeless Truths for Taking on Temptation*

- 1<sup>st</sup> in Lent. While lots give up, we take something up, Bibles; today. Don't often, but today take up pew Bibles. Turn to **pg. 308, Josh 7** (or phones) **Achan's Sin**, 1<sup>st</sup> lesson. Bookmark; we'll flip around Bible. Here in book of Josh: Israelites conquering, settling in Prom Land. Moses led them out Egypt; then wandered 40 years. Moses now dead; Joshua leader; they're coming into Prom Land.
- Flip back one page, **ch. 6, Fall of Jericho** – marched around city 7x, walls tumbling down. Great victory. But very next thing that happens in ch. 7: Achan's sin. What do? Coveted, stole what didn't belong him; gave into tempt; lost life bec of it. And this whole incident teaches us very powerful lesson (actually several lessons) re tempt and how deal with it. Today I want call them: TTTT.
- **#1.** Achan; I'm sure other Israelites; you/I; everyone! Even J! In gospel, famous acct of J tempted by Satan in wilderness. Everyone has take on tempt. And what Bible say re tempt? **Jas 1:14 (p. 1840)**. So tempt = when enticed by Satan or by own evil desires. J, of course, has no evil desires; but we do. And Satan uses those evil desires to tempt/entice us sin. He tempted Achan; us, too. 1<sup>st</sup> TTTT: **#1**.
- **#2. Josh 6:18 (p. 307)**. Very specific rule: don't plunder Jericho. "Devoted things" (tech term in OT). If something "devoted" to Lord, meant you completely destroy or put into Lord's treasury. **6:21** (destruction). **6:24** (treasury). At Jericho, everything "devoted" to Lord. That was God's rule; and **#2**. But Achan prob thought: "Dumb rule. Wasteful. Why destroy everything – all livestock, weapons, equipment, furniture? We could use this stuff! And why should all precious metal go to Lord? Couldn't some of it go to soldiers/fams? I could use some that silver/gold; more than enough here." Achan didn't like rule; so in mind, rationalized that he had legit excuse to break rule.
- Sometimes we don't like God's rules, either; and so, in our minds, we rationalize that we have a legit excuse to break God's rules, too. "Don't have sex unless married? What dumb rule! We're in love; this imp part of our relationship. Nothing wrong with this." You rationalize an excuse. Just one example. But very often, when we disagree with God's rules (which always meant our good!), we rationalize excuses for breaking them. We think we're exception. But story of Achan reminds: God is one who sets standard for what's right/wrong; not Achan, not us. These are God's rules, not ours. **#2**.
- **TT #3. Josh 7:16-18 (mid p. 309)**. See what Lord's doing: going by tribe/clan/fam to find perpetrator through methodical process of elimination. Like: pew section 2, row 8 from front, 5<sup>th</sup> from left. (Not saying you're guilty!) Now imagine you're Achan. You know in heart you're guilty; you hope know one else finds out; and hope God didn't notice what you did either. But as Lord zeros in on you (first tribe, then clan, family, you), throughout that agonizing process, you realize: **#3**.
- That's still true today! **Ps 69: "You, God, know my folly; my guilt is not hidden from you" (69:5)**. God is omnipresent = everywhere, at all times. That can be very comforting, bec we want Lord to be with us always, guiding us, protecting. But also very scary, bec when you sin, God knows it; he sees everything you do; you can hide nothing from him. Listen carefully: if you right now involved in sin that you're trying keep hidden (if having an affair on spouse; if staying up late looking at porn on computer; if you're secretly stealing from employer), know this: God sees what doing. **#3**.
- And bec that's true, here's another TT: always better **#4**. Exact opp what Achan did. **Josh 7:19-20a**. Confessed, but already caught. If parent or teacher, you've seen children do this: Did you take that? (No, down, yes/cry.) You've seen in news, celebs do this: deny did anything wrong, then caught, then confess. We do same, too. But always better **#4**. Here's why: confession is not negotiation. When you confess sins to God, repent them, you're not negotiating with God for reduced sentence. Often in

court system, attorneys will try nego plea deal, where if defendant confesses, sentence gets reduced. That's using conf as nego. Sometimes we think same way: if confess, that'll get us out trouble.

- But conf is not nego. True conf/repentance when: you recognize/admit you've sinned vs God; then tell God you're sorry (apologize what done); then believe/trust that God has forgiven all your sins bec of J' death cross; finally turn away from those sins, strive not commit again. That's true repent/conf.
- **1 Jn 1 (p. 1856). Vs. 9.** That's the gospel: God forgives sinners. That's why we confess. We confess bec God forgives sinners! We confess at beg of service; privately in prayers. And when sins really weighing heavily on hearts, it's very appr (this not Catholic thing) that we come talk to our pastor in privacy of his office, verbally confess our sins, out loud – bec **1 Jn 1:9**. Does that through prayers & pastor. That's why we confess. And I'm not saying you can't have true conf after caught, or that God won't forgive you if you confess after caught. But it's always better to #4.
- **#5. Josh 7:21a (p. 309).** But first the coveting, which was sin took place in heart. Achan was guilty even before picked up plunder. Same true for Eve in Garden Eden: guilty even before touched fruit – bec #5. Jesus taught same thing. **Mk 7:21-23 (p. 1534).** #5. Now, you're never going be convicted in courtroom of thinking re stealing/adultery, feeling greed/hatred. Nevertheless, Jesus calls that sin, even if you don't actually steal, murder, commit adultery. In your mind, in heart – this's where sin starts. Achan saw the plunder, coveted what wasn't his; that was beg of his downfall.
- And you know how it all ended. Achan was punished with gruesome death: surrounded him, hurled rocks/stones until dead. May sound cruel/unusual, maybe even barbaric. But does highlight TTTT #6. But what really is the deadliest consq of sin? Really, deadliest consq is not earthly punishment or even death penalty. Really, deadliest consq of sin: eternal death in hell. That's what makes sin so dangerous: eventually destroys saving faith in J, w/o which can't go heaven. If we purposefully, willfully sin vs God/conscience, that destroys faith. **Heb 10:26-29 (p. 1832)** – that's hell; that's Achan; that what happens when know something wrong, purposefully/willfully do it anyway – faith dies, conseqs eternal. So don't take sin lightly. You may never stoned death. But #6.
- Finally #7. **Josh 7:25.** Achan's sin affected whole community; God was angry at whole nation, bec what Achan did. #7. And that's still true today! One sin can affect countless lives. Think: if drunk driver that kills someone on road (fam/friends); if you cheat on or divorce spouse (children); if you gossip re someone (many people look down on person). Our sins have ripple effects that are wide ranging, long lasting, and impact many people. I shudder to think re all lives hurt, hearts broken by our sinful, self-centered actions.
- But I also rejoice to know: #7. Think of J. J' action (or mission) impacts us all. Today we're talking re taking on tempt. Jesus took on tempt but never gave into tempt. Never sinned, ever – think re that! His life constant struggle; he knew if gave into sin just once, whole world be lost. But our Savior bravely faced tempt for us. Remained steadfast; never gave into Satan's tempts – not in wilderness, not ever. And bec J essentially transfers his sinlessness/holiness/perfect record onto us his people, now when God looks at us, doesn't see our sin; instead sees J. J stepped in, did what we could not do, lived life we could/do not live, and gives us credit for it. So now before God we as Xians have sinless record bec Jesus gives us his sinless record. #7.
- TTTT. And we all have take on tempt. So take these TT with you as you take on temptation, and as you trust in J, who took on tempt for you, and triumphed.