

The God of a Second Chance  
Basis=Joshua 8:1-29

Intro:

1. How would you feel if you were Joshua?
  - a. on the heels of a great victory came an embarrassing defeat.
    - (1) his army had over 30,000 mighty soldiers, 8:3
    - (2) the city of Ai, pop 12,000, sent them running, killing 36.
  - b. from our vantage point, we can see why they were routed.
    - (1) the battle strategy was theirs, not God's, 7:2-3
    - (2) there was sin in the camp, 7:10,11
  - c. How would you feel if you were Joshua?
2. The Bible says he was afraid and discouraged, 8:1
  - a. that's probably how I would feel, too!
  - b. what should he do now?
    - (1) retreat back across the river?
    - (2) settle at Gilgal
    - (3) attack again
    - (4) skip Ai and attack another city?
3. God didn't leave him wondering long.

I. Failure Is Not Final, 8:1

1. "Israel had sinned, but I'll give you a second chance"
  - a. those guilty of sin had already been dealt with, 7:24,25
  - b. now Israel has a second chance to defeat Ai.
  - c. their failure was not final!
2. Neither do our failures need to be final
  - a. the true character of a person is seen in how defeats are handled.
  - b. Joshua and Israel did not turn away from God
  - c. Joshua teaches us to bring our failures, mistakes, doubts to God.
  - d. "Bring Christ Your Broken Life", (vs 1-3)
3. Many of God's people had to overcome defeat to gain victory.
  - a. Abraham (lying)
  - b. Samson (women)
  - c. Peter (arrogance)
  - d. John Mark (quitting)
  - e. Lam 3:22 (Niagara Falls..never ceases)
  - f. David (Bethsheba)
  - g. Jonah (runing from God)
  - h. Elijah (self-pity)
4. God will give you a second chance, 1 Jn 1:9
  - a. over alcohol
  - b. over fornication
  - c. over poor example
  - d. over divorce
  - e. over greed
  - f. over gossip
  - g. over selfishness
  - h. over poor decision
  - i. over everything

II. The Sinner's Triumph is Only Temporary, 8:2-29

1. 8:2
2. The sinners' triumph is only temporary
  - a. Ai had done what no one else had been able to do... defeat of xxxxxxxx

- (1) they must have been celebrating
- (2) thought they had it made
- b. all this time God is saying "Ai is yours...take them by ambush"
- 3. Many people think they have it made
  - a. they have prosperity and success...they celebrate their accomplishments.
  - b. yet God says an ambush is coming
  - c. do you ever longingly look at the prosperity of the wicked?
    - (1) Asaph died, Ps 73:1-28
    - (2) SONG: "Sing and Be Happy" vs 2 + 3, by Emory S. Peck.
 

"often we are troubled and tired, sick with sorrow and pain, there are others living in sin, blest with earthly gain; take new courage we cannot tell, what the morrow may bring, when the dark clouds vanish away then your heart truly can sing."

"oft we fail to see the rainbow up in heaven's fair sky, when it seems the fortunes of earth frown and pass us by; there are things we know that are worth more than silver and gold, If we hope and trust Him each day, We shall have pleasure untold".
    - (3) "Go Ahead. Sin, lie, cheat, steal, whatever. But an ambush is coming.
- 4. The Defeat of Ai
  - a. this time Israel listened to God
    - (1) their sin had been discovered and removed.
    - (2) their arrogance had been shattered.
  - b. God's plan was different than at Jericho
    - (1) Jericho sheer demonstration of His power.
    - (2) Ai was more a military strategy
    - (3) God does not always have to do things in the same way.
      - (a) Jesus healed many blind men...Mudites, Spitites, Touchites, Speakites.
      - (b) God encourages variety
      - (c) Last words of a dying coach, "We never did it that way before!"
  - c. Tell of the battle, 8:3-29
  - d. Ai is a picture of what God is going to do to the devil and his workers.

Conclusion:

- 1. The lessons of the defeat of Ai are clear:
  - a. to the people of God: failure is not final
  - b. to the ungodly: an ambush is coming
- 2. Which of these messages is directed to you?