

JOSHUA 7:7-9 -- THE PROBLEM AND DANGER OF SELF RELIANCE; SIN IN THE CAMP; PRAYING SECOND RATHER THAN FIRST!

Jos 7:7 And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!"

Jos 7:8 O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies?

Jos 7:9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

The Biblical Setting: - In chapter 6, God gave Israel a tremendous victory over Jericho! Now they are approaching their second battle, over a much smaller and less protected city.

Notice their immediate move to self reliance, rather than relying on God! "Lord, now I know how it is done!"

We'll just take a few men and wipe them out!

What happened to their total reliance on Him?

Where is the presence of prayer first?

But notice, we don't grow further away from needing God as we go forth, but we grow increasingly more in need of Him!!!

So Israel goes up to take Ai with just a portion of their army; in their own strength; without prayer; without relying on the Lord and they are soundly defeated!!

We have here **an account of the deep concern Joshua was in upon this sad occasion**. He, as a public person, **interested himself more than any other in this public loss**, and **is therein an example to princes and great men, and teaches them to lay much to heart the calamities that befall their people**: he is also a **type of Christ**, to whom the blood of His subjects is precious,

I. How he grieved: He **tore his clothes** (Jos_7:6), in token of great sorrow for this public disaster, and especially a dread of God's displeasure, which was certainly the cause of it. Had it been but the common chance of war (as we are too apt to express it), it would not have become a general to droop thus under it; but, when God was angry, it was his duty and honor to feel thus. Joshua did not fall foul upon his spies for their misinformation concerning the strength of the enemy, nor upon the soldiers for their cowardice, though perhaps both were blameworthy, but his eye is up to God; for is there any evil in the camp and he has not done it? His eye is upon God as displeased, and that troubles him.

II. How he prayed, or pleaded rather, humbly expostulating the case with God, but much affected; his spirit seemed to be somewhat ruffled and discomposed, yet not so as to be put out of frame for prayer; but, by **giving vent to his trouble in a humble address to God**, he keeps his temper and it ends well.

Jos 7:7 And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!"

Now he wishes they had all taken up with the lot of the two tribes on the other side Jordan, Jos_7:7. He thinks it would have been better to have stayed there and been cut short than come over to be cut off. This smacks too much of discontent and distrust of God, and cannot be justified, though the surprise and disappointment to one deeply concerned for the public interest may in part excuse it. Those words, wherefore You have brought us over Jordan to destroy us? are too like what the murmurers often said (Exo_14:11, Exo_14:12; Exo_16:3; Exo_17:3; Num_14:2, Num_14:3); but he that searches the heart knew they came from another spirit, and therefore was not extreme to mark what he said amiss. **Had Joshua considered that this disorder which their affairs were put into no doubt proceeded from something amiss within the camp, which yet might easily be redressed, and all set to rights again, as often in Moses' time, he would not have spoken of it as a thing taken for granted that they were delivered into the hands of the Amorites to be destroyed. God knows what He does, though we do not; but this we may be sure of, He never did nor ever will do us any wrong.**

Jos 7:8 O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies?

He speaks as one quite at a loss concerning the meaning of this event (v. 8): “What shall I say, what construction can I put upon it, when Israel, Your own people, for whom You have lately done such great things and to whom thou hast promised the full possession of this land, when they turn their backs before their enemies” (their necks, so the word is), “when they not only flee before them, but fall before them, and become a prey to them? **What shall we think of the divine power? Is the Lord's arm shortened? Of the divine promise? Is His word yes and no? Of what God has done for us? Shall this be all undone again and prove in vain?**” The methods of Providence are often intricate and perplexing, and such as the wisest and best of men know not what to say to; but they shall know hereafter, Joh_13:7.

Jos 7:9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?”

He pleads the danger Israel was now in of being ruined. He gives up all for lost: “The Canaanites will environ us round, concluding that now our defense having departed, and the scales being turned in their favor, we shall soon be as contemptible as ever we were formidable, and they will cut off our name from the earth,” Jos_7:9. **Thus even good men, when things go against them a little, are too apt to fear the worst, and make harder conclusions than there is reason for.** But his comes in here as a plea: “Lord, let not Israel's name, which has been so dear to You and so great in the world, be cut off.”

He pleads the reproach that would be cast on God, and that if Israel were ruined His glory would suffer by it. They will cut off our name, says he, yet, as if he had corrected himself for insisting upon that, it is no great matter (thinks he) what becomes of our little name (the cutting off of that will be a small loss), but what will You do for Your great name? This he looks upon and laments as the great aggravation of the calamity. He feared it would reflect on God, His wisdom and power, His goodness and faithfulness; what would the Egyptians say? Nothing is more grievous to a gracious soul than dishonor done to God's name. This also he insists upon as a plea for the preventing of his fears and for a return of God's favor; it is the only word in all his address that has any encouragement in it, and he concludes with it, leaving it to this issue, **Father, glorify Your name. The name of God is a great name, above every name; and, whatever happens, we ought to believe that He will, and pray that He would, work for His own name, that this may not be polluted.** This should be our concern more than anything else. On this we must fix our eye as the end of all our desires, and from this we must seek our encouragement as the foundation of all our hopes. We cannot urge a better plea than this, Lord, What will You do for Your great name? Let God in all be glorified, and then welcome His whole will.

SUMMARY:

- **Who do you rely on first? Yourself or the Lord?**
- **At times when you are “flush with victory” and a similar opportunity comes up, do you pray first? Or second?**
- **How sensitive are you to “sin in the camp”?**
- **We don’t grow further away from needing God as we go forth, but we grow increasingly more in need of Him!!!**

I NEED THEE EVERY HOUR

1. I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord; no tender voice like thine can peace afford.

Refrain: I need thee, O I need thee; every hour I need thee; O bless me now, my Savior, I come to thee.

*2. I need thee every hour; stay thou nearby; temptations lose their power when thou art nigh.
(Refrain)*

*3. I need thee every hour, in joy or pain; come quickly and abide, or life is vain.
(Refrain)*

4. I need thee every hour; teach me thy will; and thy rich promises in me fulfill. (Refrain)