

Achan's sin - Jesus' salvation!

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see everybody here. If there are any visitors with us this morning, then you're especially welcome. I'm looking around but I've not seen any at the moment.

Tea and coffee at the end of the service and all are welcome to that. Evening service will be at 6 and will be conducted by myself, God willing. And the Kirk session will meet tomorrow. That's Monday at half past 7 in the Mans at 2 Kylos.

We're in the process of moving at the moment. Session may need to bring their own chairs. But just on that note, thank you to everybody who helped yesterday. We were moving furniture and there was cleaning happening yesterday in the New Mans.

So thank you for everybody who helped with that. And if anybody's able to help over the next few days, lifting pianos and the like, please get in touch. Your help will be much appreciated.

A few things happening in the course of the week as usual. The Ladies Bible Study on Monday and the First Fruit Fellowship on Tuesday as usual. Usual time, usual place. Road to recovery also at the usual time and place.

[1 : 1 3] On Wednesday evening, we have the prayer meeting, but it's a prayer meeting stroke harvest Thanksgiving service. So that's half past 7 here in the hall.

And that will be a Thanksgiving service, but there will also be various people who will be asked to pray in the course of the meeting. So please make a note of that and be encouraged to come to that.

But Christianity Explored continues at half past 7 in the Hotel Hebrides on Thursday. And the service is next Sunday in the morning will be conducted by myself at 11am.

And the evening service is noted here as Don John Morrison, Dan Married, but it's actually not Dan who's taking the Galactic service next Sunday evening. It's Don McSween.

He was keeping very quiet on that. But when I asked him, he confessed. So that's next Sunday evening. The Free Church is appointed the 30th of November to be a national day of prayer.

[2 : 1 7] And to mark that, there will be a special service of prayer and worship in Stornoway at half past 7 on the 30th. And all congregations are encouraged to come to that.

There will be something that happens here as well. There will be details given next Sunday about what will be happening on the 30th in the locality. And just advance notice also of the Western Isles Evangelism Conference.

2nd and 3rd of December. David Meredith, he was with us recently, will be speaking. And also Neil McMillan. And there's details on the back of the sheet. I'm not going to take the time to read through these just now.

I think these are all the intimations. So we're going to begin by singing to God's praise for Mission Praise 578. 578 in Mission Praise.

And the words also on the screen. Revive thy work, O Lord. Thy mighty arm make bare.

- [3 : 22] Speak with the voice that wakes the dead. And make thy people hear. We stand to sing. We sing to God's praise. Let's unite our hearts.
- Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you once more that we are gathered in this place on your day. Gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour, our Lord, our King.
- And gathered with expectation. With that sense of expectation. Because you've promised, Lord, that where we meet in your name. Even if it just be a few of us.
- You've promised that you will be in our midst. And that you will work. And that you will bless. And so as we've sung, we pray that you would indeed revive your work.
- We ask, Lord, that you would revive your work in our nation. We pray that you would revive your work in the Church of Jesus Christ.
- [4 : 24] We pray that you would revive your work in this particular Church that we are blessed to be in. And Lord, we pray that you would revive your work in our own hearts.
- We're conscious that as we pray for revival, we pray asking that you would begin the work in us. And so we bow before you this morning as the God who is holy and righteous.
- The God who is powerful and just. Our Creator. The Maker of all things. The One whose glory is reflected only dimly in the wonder of the beauty of the creation that we are in the centre of.
- And Lord, we thank you that you are the God who sustains us. The God who reveals yourself to us.
- In and through your word. And supremely. In and through the word made flesh, Jesus. And we pray that this morning as we open your word.
- [5 : 35] As we sing your praise. As we come in prayer. We pray that we may encounter. That we may meet with. And see Jesus more clearly.
- We pray that we may have a clearer vision of the atonement. The cross of Christ. And all that he did in Gwenda on our behalf.
- To take our sin. To pay the price of our sin. To take the punishment that we deserved. So that we could be made righteous.
- That we could be made holy. Not in and of ourselves. But in him. Rock of ages cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee.
- So Lord we pray that we would be found hidden. In Christ this morning. Not seeking to stand. On our own merits.
- [6 : 30] Not looking to any other one. But looking to and trusting in him. And hiding in Christ. Christ. And we ask Lord. That in all that is said.
- In all that's done. That Jesus would be lifted up. And that we would be drawn to him. That we would trust him more fully. And Lord that we would resemble him.
- And bear his image. And share his fragrance. In the community that you have placed us. We pray for any here this morning. Who haven't yet trusted Christ.
- We thank you that we live in the age of grace. We thank you that. Still the invitation of the gospel is extended. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And to be saved.
- To believe that he. Rose. For us. And Lord we pray that we would believe in our hearts. That we would confess.
- [7 : 29] With our lips. And that we would be assured. Of that salvation. That is guaranteed in him. We pray Lord for every effort.
- That is made. To come and worship. Every effort that is made. To reach out. With the gospel of Christ. We've read many things. On our own notice sheet.

And there are many things happening. Not only in our own church. But in the other churches. Around this community. Across these islands. In the nation. And across the world. And whether it is.

A work of youth outreach. Youth fellowship. Sunday school. Whether it is. A work of support. And outreach to those who are struggling with addictions.

Whether it is. The week by week. Preaching and teaching. Of your word. Across the world. We pray. Lord that you would add your blessing.

[8 : 27] And that you would use these methods. To bring people to Jesus. We pray for those. We pray for those in particular need this morning. We are mindful always.

Of those who would desire to be with us. But who are not able to be with us. Some who are at home. And we ask that you would bless them where they are. We pray for others in hospital.

And we ask Lord that you would minister to them. And meet with them. In the struggles that they have at this time. We pray for those who are weighed down.

In terms of the responsibilities of this life. And are unable to be present because of that. And we ask that you would meet with them. For those who desire to be here Lord. But who cannot be here.

We thank you that you can be with them. And we ask Lord that you would meet with them. We thank you that we can pray for people. In our own village. We can pray for people in the other end of the world.

[9 : 24] In the Amazon jungle. Knowing that you hear our prayers. And that you will meet with them. So bless each one we pray. And we pray for others who have opportunity to be here.

But have no desire. And we ask Lord that you. As the God who quickens. As the God who speaks with a voice that wakes to them. That you would speak into their lives.

And that you would awaken their souls. And create a thirst that will be quenched only in Christ. Hear our prayers.

Cleanse us Lord we pray. Of our sin. We acknowledge it. We acknowledge that we cannot stand before a holy God. Unless we are confessing our sin.

And asking that Jesus takes it away. And so once more we confess. And ask that you would cleanse us. That you would purify us. And Lord that you would receive us in Christ.

[10 : 27] We pray for those who are struggling. In dark times. We pray also for those who are rejoicing. Those who await new life.

And we ask for your protection over them. We pray especially for Marion. And pray that you would watch over her. Over these next few days. We thank you that even in the womb you know us.

And so we commit her to you. And the whole family. Hear our prayers. Continue with us. We ask in Jesus name.

Amen. Boys and girls. Would you like to come out please? Right. I want to tell you a story today. It's not a story that I made up. It's a story that happened in real life.

It happened just a few weeks ago. I think it was about two weeks ago. Have you been up to the new Mass yet? Put your hand out if you've been up to Halloween yet.

[11 : 27] Even if you've seen some of you. Even in the garden. Have you been in the garden? Of the new house. Well. Go and have a week. Be careful where you stay. Because a couple of weeks ago.

Grace. And one of our friends. We're up. At the match. And the boys from Scalpley. And everybody else. We're working away. Taking down trees.

And pulling out roots. And leveling out the ground. And the trees had all come out. And the digger had been in. And it flattered all the ground. And everything looked so smooth.

And everything looked so nice for walking on. And so there was one little girl. I won't tell you her name. And she walked.

Off the hard road. Onto a bit. Of dark mud. And it was steady enough. And then she took another step.

[12 : 28] Into the dark mud. And it seemed to be a still steady enough. Weebert's quelching. Another step. Another step.

Another step. Into the dark mud. And do you know what happened? Ailey Dallas. Her what?

Her boot got stuck. How stuck did her boot get? Very, very, very stuck.

Liz, are you there as well? Or not you? Yeah, you were witness to this. Liz arrived when it happened. Liz arrived when it happened. So there is this poor girl.

And she's away from the road. And she's not very heavy. She's probably about as heavy as Bella or Ailey.

[13 : 26] Not very heavy at all. About the same size, I would say. And she's out stuck in the mud. Up past her wellies. And along comes Liz.

And other people. And she thought. This poor girl. How is she going to get out? And I won't go into all the details.

Liz, you can relax. But tell me. How could she get out? How could she save herself? Could she save herself a day?

No? Did she try? Did she try to get out of the mud? She tried and she tried and she tried and she tried and she tried. And she was super, super stuck.

And so what needed to happen. Once Liz came along and raised the alarm. What needed to happen. Was. Somebody. Somebody. Had to get some planks. And lay the planks along the mud.

[14 : 31] Until they could get close enough. And then they put their hand out. And she had to take their hand. And they had to.

Cool. And she got pulled out of the mud. Her wellies were still stuck in the mud. She couldn't save herself. She tried and she tried. She tried and she tried.

But she couldn't save herself. But she needed somebody who was stronger than her. To come along. And take hold of her. She had to take hold of the hand.

And day left to the night. Now what do you think that reminds us of? Who do you think that reminds us of?

John Roddy. Jesus. Give me the sermon John Roddy. How does that remind us of Jesus? Because Jesus is stronger.

[15 : 31] Come up here John Roddy. Stand on that for a wee second. Jesus is stronger than us. Jesus is stronger than us. That's point application number one.

Stronger than us. So the one who reached out to take hold of the girl who was stuck. Was stronger than her. Jesus is stronger than us. How else does it remind us of our Jesus?

He looks after us. He looks after us when we get stuck in the mud. Not stuck in the mud. But what do we get stuck in? Hell. We get stuck in sin.

Sin. We get stuck in sin. And Jesus is the one who looks after us. And he's able to lift us out of the mud of our sin. And he's able to put us in a safe place.

So that we don't go to hell. But when we die we go to heaven. And when we're going through this life. We don't get stuck deep down in the mud. But he gives us a firm place to stand.

[16 : 34] Thank you John Rory for that sermon. There's a verse in a psalm that we're going to sing. Not right now but in a wee minute I think.

And it's Psalm 40. And Psalm 40 says. Are you listening to this? Psalm 40 is the verse that came to me when I was thinking about what happened in that mud.

It says there. He took me. Jesus. Who it's talking about. He took me from a fearful pit pit. And from the mighty clay.

And on a rock. He set my feet. Establishing my way. Making me able to walk forward steadily. That's Jesus.

He keeps. Boys and girls. We need to trust in him. And he's the one who can save us. And he's the one who can keep us walking.

[17 : 34] So let's pray that. Lord God we thank you for the fact that when we could never save ourselves. You came Lord Jesus into this world to save us.

Jesus came to seek and to save sinners. We thank you that you don't leave us the sink down into the mud and the clay. But you call us to be full of your hand.

And you lift us up. And you save us from sin. And you set us in that steady place. When we are trusting in you. So help us we pray.

Whether we are young. Or whether we are old. We trust in you. Because we know that there is no one else. No other name. Through which we can be saved. So help us.

We ask Lord. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing now. And we're going to sing a hymn that's on the screen. It's not in our books. Bless the Lord.

[18 : 31] Oh my soul. 10,000 reasons why we should bless him. So we'll stand to sing in just a minute. If you can turn in your Bibles please to Joshua chapter 7.

And we'll read in actually just from the end of chapter 6. It's been a few weeks since we've been in Joshua now. And you will remember that with Joshua chapter 6.

There is that huge victory. Where the nation are able. They are enabled to take Jericho.

That city that looked to be so impenetrable. They were able to take it in God's strength. And so there's great elation. There's great joy.

At the end of chapter 6. And we read at verse 27 of chapter 6. So the Lord was with Joshua. And his fame spread throughout the land.

[19 : 30] Chapter 7 verse 1. But the Israelites acted unfaithfully. In regard to the devoted things.

Achan son of Carmi. 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. Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai.

Which is near Beth-Avon. To the east of Bethel. And told them. Go up and spy out the region. So the men went up and spied out Ai. When they returned to Joshua.

They said. Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it. And do not weary all the people. For only a few men are there. So about three thousand men went up.

But they were routed. By the men of Ai. 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 the slopes.

[20 : 32] At this to heart. So the people melted. And became like water. Then Joshua tore his clothes. And fell face down to the ground. Before the ark of the Lord. Remaining there till evening.

The elders of Israel did the same. And sprinkled dust in their heads. And Joshua said. Ah sovereign Lord. Why did you ever bring this people. Across the Jordan.

To deliver us. Into the hands of the Amorites. To destroy us. If only we had been content. To stay. On the other side of the Jordan. Oh Lord. What can I say.

Now that Israel has been routed. By its enemies. The Canaanites. And the other people of the country. Will hear about this. And they will surround us. And wipe out our name. From the earth. What then will you do.

For your own great name. The Lord said to Joshua. Stand up. What are you doing down your face. Israel has sinned.

[21 : 29] They have violated my covenant. Which I command them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things. They have stolen. They have lied. They have put them with their own possessions.

That is why the Israelites cannot stand. Against their enemies. They turn their backs and run. Because they have been made liable to destruction.

I will not be with you anymore. Unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted. To destruction. Go. Consecrate the people. Tell them. Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow.

For this is what the Lord the God of Israel says. That which is devoted. Is among you. O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies. Until you remove it. In the morning.

Present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe that the Lord takes. Shall come forward clan by clan. The clan that the Lord takes. Shall come forward family by family. And the family that the Lord takes.

[22 : 27] Shall come forward man by man. He who is caught. To devoted things. Shall be destroyed by fire. Along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the Lord.

And has done a disgraceful thing in Israel. Early the next morning. Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes. And Judah was taken. The clans of Judah came forward.

And took the Zerahites. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward. By families. And Zimri was taken. Joshua had his family come forward man by man.

And Achan. Son of Carmi. The son of Zimri. The son of Zerah. Of the tribe of Judah. Was taken. Then Joshua said to Achan. My son.

Give glory to the Lord. The God of Israel. And give him the praise. Tell me what you have done. Do not hide it from me. Achan replied. It is true.

[23 : 27] I have sinned against the Lord. The God of Israel. This is what I have done. When I saw. In the plunder. A beautiful robe. From Babylonia. Two hundred shekels of silver. And a wedge of gold.

Weighing fifty shekels. I coveted them. And took them. They are hidden in the ground. Inside my tent. With the silver underneath. So Joshua sent messengers.

And they ran to the tent. And there it was. Hidden in his tent. With the silver underneath. They took the things from the tent. Brought them to Joshua. And all the Israelites.

And spread them out before the Lord. Then Joshua together with all Israel. Took Achan. Son of Zerah. The silver. The robe. The gold wedge. His sons. His daughters.

His cattle. Donkeys. His sheep. His tent. And all that he had. To the valley of Achan. Joshua said. Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.

[24 : 25] Then all Israel stoned him. And after they had stoned the rest. They burned him. Over Achan. They heaped up a large pile of rocks. Which remains to this day.

Then the Lord turned. From his fierce anger. Therefore that place. Has been called the valley of Achan. Ever since. Amen. This is God's word.

And may he give us understanding. As we meditate upon it. Don't look sweet. He's going to read us now in prayer. And gather. Today. He's going to say he's going to be helpful.

I stopped topic I am wondering why those are discouraged like a hill I support them and then come to me Look to my full heart and doredom He's done with nothing anymore.

He took yards away. If the Lord is living, everything is mise auto ne 2020 Everything is broken Everything is Everything in the air Das garland ist schlaugier, wir gebär, die die Biblia Seite geht es doch.

[26 : 38] but I studied in Williamsburg, and I studied in Williamsburg. The Jewish bullying Joe reden people and kids had to become a gay.

He is urine and who's behind him?

.. is not I can't see why I call it.

To help I feel for the torch, Because I feel as though I live intimately, humanity from being able to find their thinking.

I it, Yet he has given us this life. Thiessen Look in one shall ug the past. Thiessen Your Honor's God. This is part of the Master. Michael Owens, brotherinnen.

[28 : 33] Yayles, tomaen.100 .

All kyros rr O' prize, make me mad. Susan Boruto, an Indian So for each other Euhti we must recognize.

You didn't talk to me either or do others. Imagine the poortake of the create an autumn ofavanish fringe people.

Even your bagus open and beautiful Janet and Cloud with Nosfer Formatter. we sing again to God's praise we sing this time from the psalm that quoted just a minute ago psalm 40 and the first two stanzas of the psalm we sing in Gaelic I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear it lent to me he didn't climb my voice and cried to hear he took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty plain and on a rock he set my feet establishing my way these two stanzas in Gaelic in God's praise and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way and on a rock he set my way negotiate Você n

Thank you.

[33 : 40] If you could turn please with me to Joshua chapter 7 and we'll pray before we begin. Heavenly Father we thank you for the fact that we gather with your word open.

We don't have to look for thoughts that we can encourage each other with or speak to each other with. But we have your word and it is our daily bread.

Man cannot live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. We acknowledge and we bow before you because we gather around your word.

Sometimes we find it hard to understand. Sometimes we struggle with the passages that we read and yet this is your word and you have given it to us.

And so we pray that you would help us. The Holy Spirit himself is our teacher. He is the one who inspired the word and he is the one who teaches us and applies it to our lives and gives help and unction in preaching.

[34 : 42] And so we ask Lord for that help in preaching and listening. And we pray that in all things you would be glorified and that we would be blessed as we look in faith to Christ.

And we pray these things in Jesus name. Amen. There's two texts which I would like to just quote as we find a route into Joshua chapter 7.

And they're familiar texts both to us as a congregation and familiar texts to myself as I often return to them. The first is from Proverbs chapter 3 and it's verses 5 and 6.

And we've quoted this a lot in our own journey as a congregation. It says, The second text is a text where Jesus is addressing his disciples in John chapter 15.

And he says to his disciples very starkly and yet necessarily he says to them, Apart from me, you can do nothing.

[36 : 09] And it's that second text in particular, but both together that I want to underline as we find our route into Joshua chapter 7.

I want to make a few observations as we pass through the chapter. And the first observation, the first point that we hang our thoughts on is on the screen, I think.

And that is a reliance on self. Really, if I'd been sensible, I would put a question mark on the end of that point.

Because we're kind of reading into this and thinking about what was going on in the mind and the heart and the private closet of Joshua.

Look at chapter 7, verse 2. We'll come back to verse 1. It says there, And what I want to highlight from these two verses that we've read, verses 2 and 3 of Joshua 7, is not so much what's there, but I want you to think about what's not there.

[37 : 55] And what's not there was the prospect of this next attack. What's not there is prayer. At no point in these two verses, as they consider Ai, the next place that they have to go and take.

At no point in this plan do they seem to lay out the whole plan before the Lord. So perhaps there's a reliance on self here.

Perhaps in the light of chapter 6, their confidence is high. You have to remember they've just taken Jericho. And Jericho seemed to be absolutely impossible.

You can imagine them cowering at the prospect of Jericho that was all boarded up. That was absolutely impossible for them to penetrate. And yet the Lord set out before them the plan.

They acknowledged him at every stage. And prayerfully and obediently they proceeded. And what seemed to be impossible, miraculously and gloriously became possible.

[39 : 11] And what a blessing that must have been to all the people. As they thought about how great their God is. And how he had enabled them in a way that they could never have imagined.

They've just taken Jericho. Their confidence likely is high. Adrenaline is rushing through their system.

As they all turned to each other and said, Can you believe what just happened there? And maybe the momentum of past victory caused them to crack on without seeking the Lord.

But rather relying on self. Relying on their own military capability and understanding and strategy. So the first point is reliance on self.

Question mark. And I want to make that point because I think that we are all prone to falling into this pitfall.

[40 : 23] And especially after a period of blessing. I'm always really conscious of this after a few services of blessing. We had a wonderful communion season.

Such a blessed time. You've had blessed preaching the last two weeks. You're back to bread and butter today. But after we have had a period of blessing, we are vulnerable.

Because think about it. When you and I are going through difficult times, whether it's as a congregation or as individuals or as families, when we are going through difficult times, we know our weakness.

Nobody has to tell us. We feel it. We are struggling. And so day by day, we are on our knees and we are looking to the Lord for strength.

When we are going through battles at work, when we are wondering what today is going to actually hold and how we're going to be able to negotiate in this meeting and how we're going to face that person, we're looking at the diary and we're thinking, Lord, I need you.

[41 : 30] And so we're relying on him, not ourselves. But when things are going well, when we've just had a period of blessing, when all is calm and bright and happy in our world, the danger is that we can very quickly begin to rely less on the Lord and more on ourselves.

And that always leads us into trouble. And that's the second point that we come to hear as we just follow on to the chapter. The first point is a potential reliance on self.

The second point is they are routed. As an army, reduced as they were, they are routed. I'm just picking up the word from verse 4.

We see them going forward and they're going forward with great confidence. They're going forward with a reduced army because they've gone there, they've looked, there's not that many men.

It's not that big a deal. But verse 4 says they were routed by the men of Ai. Incidentally, just a wee, wee little detail here.

[42 : 52] Ai means the ruin. It's what the city, that's what the name of the city actually means. It means the ruin. And that's what the nation faced.

That's what Joshua encountered in Ai. They were routed by the men of Ai who killed about 36 of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes.

One of the things that I think is so, that lends itself so much to us believing scripture is just the grim reality of the accounts that we read.

See, when we, if you follow a political party or you follow some kind of media story and there's a political party that may be making progress and they're going up and they're getting higher and they're gathering momentum and then they hit the wall and something awful happens and it's reported in the media.

The way they report it and the way they release statements always tries to play down the defeat. It always tries to spin the defeat in a way that you, they save face.

[44 : 07] not in the scriptures. Think about the disciples. How much of a failure they often were and yet it's all there for us to see.

And think about Israel as a nation here. The Bible is not like Hollywood. There's a grim, gritty reality about these accounts.

There's a starkness about this. This is not the best of Israel. This is Israel warts and all. And so we read that when they came to Ai it wasn't that they had one or two small difficulties.

It wasn't that they had a tricky negotiation. It wasn't that they had a minor setback. There's no clever words. There's no smoke and mirrors to veil the facts of what happened there.

The Bible tells us they were routed. They went there with confidence. They went there expecting to win and they were absolutely annihilated.

[45 : 10] They were routed. They were humiliated. They were defeated thoroughly. And that brought a relapse of faith.

That's point number three. Reliance on self? Question mark. Routed. They're in ruins. And that brought this relapse of faith.

And we see the relapse of faith in two aspects here. There's a relapse of faith in the nation, Israel. And then there's a relapse of faith in Joshua and the elders as leaders of the nation.

First of all, look at the relapse of faith of the nation. Verse five. With all that happened in verse five. After they were routed, after there was these 36 who were killed, after they were chased out of the place, the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

So it's always important that we pause. We try and put ourselves into the position of those who experienced all of us.

[46 : 25] Think about this. Yes, they experienced such a thorough defeat here, but do you notice how quickly the whole nation forgot God's promises.

notice how quickly the promises of Joshua chapter one dissolved. Notice how quickly the people forgot the miraculous power of God that took them over the Jordan without even their socks wet.

Notice how quickly they forgot about the amazing power of God that was able to take this city of Jericho that looked so impossible.

Notice how quickly their faith evaporates and fear overwhelms them as a nation, as God's people.

As those who experienced such miraculous power, and within five minutes they're acting like absolute pagans without a trace of faith.

[47 : 47] And let's be honest, what was true of them can also be true of us. Because how quickly we can forget the faithfulness of God.

how much we have experienced in our lives the faithfulness of God. Every breath you take, God is faithful.

He's given it to you. Every meal you and I eat, God is faithful. He's given it to us. Every sip that we take reminds us that God is faithful.

Every time we return to Calvary, as we must daily, we see that God is faithful.

And yet, how quickly we forget that. Forgetfulness is one of the enemies of faith. but in the word, which we are called to every day, in the sacrament, which we come to celebrate a couple of times a year, in the service, for example, on Wednesday evening, in a particular way, what are we called to do?

[49 : 17] We are called to stop forgetting and start remembering how faithful God is. We are called to remember how faithful and how gracious and how good and how powerful God is.

As we remember, we're thankful, surely. And so we see this relapse of faith on the part of the nation as they forget the power and the faithfulness of God.

But we don't just see this relapse of faith in the part of the nation. We see a relapse of faith in Joshua and the elders in that place.

Look at verses 6 to 9. Joshua gets the news of all that has happened. and it says in verse 6, Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell face down to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening.

The elders of Israel did the same and sprinkled dust in their heads. And Joshua said, Ah, sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring us across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?

[50 : 37] If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan. O Lord, what can I say now that Israel has been routed by its enemies?

The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?

Joshua and the elders, they are struggling at this point. They are struggling to reconcile the promises of God, Joshua chapter 1, with the reality of the defeat that they were experiencing.

Joshua and the elders, as they bowed before God, falling face down, all day until evening, they are wrestling with all that they can understand.

God promised them victory, victory, and here they are in the face of defeat. God promised them a land, they can't get into the land. God promised that he would be with them and assumed that in Ai, he was nowhere to be seen.

[52 : 01] Everything was falling apart. The whole nation are looking to Joshua and the elders saying, what is going on here? So what did Joshua and the elders do?

Well, they pray. From morning till night, they pray. They don't call an emergency meeting. They don't call a summit or a conference.

They pray. As Joshua tries to keep his head above water, as the waves of doubt we hear crashing in on him, does his prayer is full of doubt.

Joshua does the right thing. He prays. Joshua, even though he can't understand what is going on, because Joshua doesn't have verse one, we have verse one.

Joshua doesn't have verse one. So Joshua comes to the Lord and he pours his heart out in prayer. He speaks to the Lord. He comes with his fears.

[53 : 12] He comes with his doubts. He comes with his despairs. And he hides nothing and he spreads it all out, the whole mess out before God in prayer.

And that's what we should do. Approach my soul, the mercy seed, where Jesus answers prayer. Have we trials and temptations?

Yes. Is there trouble anywhere? Often. We should never be discouraged, and yet we are. To what do we do in our discouragement?

We take it to the Lord in prayer. prayer. The fact is we will all have seasons and periods and experiences where we feel routed.

That like Ai, we are in ruins. And when we have that crisis point, when we hit that critical point, when we are in that crisis of faith, faith, what do we do?

[54 : 23] We do what Joshua did. We do what David the psalmist did, time and time and time and time again. We pray. We do what the disciples did.

We take our doubts, we don't hide them, and we find Christ. We lay it all out before Christ, and we take our questions like Thomas did. We take them to Jesus, like Peter in John 21.

Jesus comes to him and deals with it all. John the Baptist, remember in Luke chapter 7, he's wondering, is Jesus really the Messiah? As he's in prison at this point, John, what does John do?

He says, send a message to Christ. Ask him, are you really the one? And Jesus hears his doubts, and he comes back to him.

he tells him, the blind are seeing, the deafer hearing. He deals with his doubts, and he gives him assurance. Remember the man who brought his son to Jesus?

[55 : 31] Lord, if you can do anything to help, please, please do. Jesus said, if I can, anything is possible for him who believes, and so he responds with great honesty and a wonderful prayer, Lord, I believe, help me in, or help me overcome my unbelief.

And so in this relapse of faith, they do the right thing, they come in prayer. There's one line in this prayer that I would like to just highlight before we move on from this point, and it's in verse 9.

Joshua finishes the prayer by saying in verse 9, what then will you do for your own great name?

Matthew Henry, the commentator, says, we cannot urge a better plea than this. Lord, what wilt thou do for thine own great name?

Is that a line that we should be importing into our prayers? church? Because at this point in time, as a nation, we are a nation who have seen several generations of spiritual decline.

[56 : 52] We are a nation who look so poor spiritually. We are a nation that looks like it's been routed spiritually. So what do we pray?

What do we pray on November the 30th when that day has been set? What do we pray as a nation? Well, why don't we pray this? Lord, what will you do in our country for your own great name?

Revive thy work, O Lord. Exalt thy precious name, and by the Holy Ghost, our love for thee and thine in flame.

so there's a relapse in prayer in our faith, but that is dealt with, it is worked through, it's managed through prayer.

We need to move on to verse point number four, and point number four takes us to a revelation of sin. And what was hidden from Joshua, as I said already, in the prayer that he comes so desperately with, is revealed to us in verse one.

[58 : 10] We know why there was a defeat. It may have been partly because of a high confidence, a self-reliance, but we know that the crucial point that is revealed to us, that wasn't clear to Joshua, at the point of defeat, was that there was sin.

Verse one, the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things. Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zimli, son of Zerah, the tribe of Zerah, took some of them, and so the Lord's anger burned against Israel.

That's hidden from Joshua. And then Joshua comes in prayer, and he says, Lord, what is going on? And what will you do for your great name? And the Lord answers Joshua in verse 10, and says to Joshua, stand up.

What are you doing down in your face? Israel has sinned. They have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things. They have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions.

This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

[59 : 30] Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says, that which is devoted among you, O Israel, you cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it.

Imagine Joshua's heart sink as he hears that. The reason for this rout fundamentally was there was sin at the heart of the nation and God revealed it.

And revelation of sin is never a nice thing, but it is a necessary thing. When the body becomes sick and we start to feel the ailments, the struggles that that sickness causes, we go to the doctor and they assess us and they take tests and they examine us.

And then they give us the diagnosis. And when we hear about an illness that is in us, that is having an effect that we're struggling with, we never like to hear about that.

It's not a nice thing, but it is a necessary thing because until we know we cannot treat. And it was necessary for the Lord to reveal to Joshua that the sin that was such an offence to him was focused on Achan.

[61 : 25] And yet, although it was focused on one man, Achan, it had affected all of Israel, 36 men dead, 36 widows, children without fathers, friendships, shame, grief, turmoil, struggles, and it all comes back to the actions of one man.

one point to note here in application. It's a sobering point, but it's necessary that we note it. If we accommodate sin in our lives, of course we are all sinners, we are all struggling with sin, we all seek to daily repent of sin and confess sin and ask that the Lord will take that sin away.

but if we are those who have a struggle with a particular sin, maybe, and rather than confessing it, and rather than asking that God will take it away, we accommodate it in our life, and we harbour it in our hearts.

when we do that, the logic in our minds, isn't it, is, well, I shouldn't do this, but I'm only harming myself.

My walk with God is struggling, but it's only my walk that's struggling, it's only me that's losing out. Well, let me tell you from scripture, it's not. It's not just you.

[63 : 10] Your sin and mine will cripple us, but it will affect many other people, because Christians are all connected.

We are the body of Christ, and if one part is infected, the whole body suffers. And that was painfully evident in AI, where there was a revelation of sin.

And of course, the next step in this gruesome process is that the sin that is revealed must be removed. Fifth point is the removal of sin.

Romans chapter 6 and verse 23 is a verse that we know well. The first part of the verse says, for the wages of sin is death. For the wages of sin is death.

And we see that so graphically, and we see that so painfully, in the uncomfortable account of Achan. In verses 14 through to verse 26, as we see the whole process unfold.

[64 : 29] We step back just to chapter 6 and verse 18, we hear how God so expressly, so explicitly says to Israel, when you go into Jericho, do not take, do not touch the devoted things, no matter how shiny, no matter how desirable they look, do not touch them, because if you touch them, you will be in destruction upon yourself and your people.

and in he went and he saw and when he saw he didn't look away but he wanted, he coveted and then he took it and then he hid it and in doing so he brought destruction, he brought death on these 36 men on himself, on his family.

Take a step back for a moment. We always need to think not only about the immediate context but where this fits in all of scripture. Think about this, are there any other parallels in scripture with an account like this?

Is this ringing any biblical bells with us? Can we think of any other scenarios where God says do not do this one thing or you will die?

And then someone does it and death crashes in to the world. Well of course it rings a bell. It rings the bell of Genesis 3. It rings the bell of the fall.

[66 : 18] fall. Takes us back to the garden of Eden. To the very beginning and the fall of man. And so we see a parallel there as we look in the scriptures.

We see a parallel and it rings a bell not just in there but it rings a bell in here doesn't it? Because this point is not just back the way.

This point is right into my life and yours. church because we have the law and God has told us what to do and what not to do.

And yet time and time again we have done it. And so as children of Adam and as sinners in our own right we have brought death and destruction upon ourselves.

death as Achan did upon him. That's the values that we need to grapple with.

[67 : 28] The wages of sin. Romans 6 23. The wages of sin is death. We see it.

But praise the Lord. That is not where the verse ends. The verse continues. The wages of sin is death, bad use, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So our final point, praise the Lord, is redemption. redemption. There is a redeemer. Jesus, God's own son.

There is forgiveness offered. There is one who takes the wages of sin upon himself for us. And that's Christ.

And where do we see our redemption being worked out? Well, we see it being worked out on the cross, where Jesus hung in the place of the guilty sinner like Achan.

[68 : 40] Where Jesus hung in the place of the guilty sinner like me. Where Jesus paid the wages of sin and died in our place so that we could be forgiven.

so that we need not die. But so that we could be offered eternal life.

Joshua 7 is a hard place for us to look. Joshua 7 is a hard chapter for us to read and process because there we see the gruesome reality of Achan paying the price for sin.

But the cross equally is a hard place for us to look. It should be anyway. Because there we see Jesus paying the price not for his sin.

He had no sin. But we see him paying the price for our sin. He died so that our sin could be removed.

[69 : 55] He died to redeem us. And if we look to him, if we trust in him, if we receive the grace that is gifted to us in Christ, then we are assured against the dark backdrop of this passage, we are assured that if we trust in Christ, we will not die in our sin like Achan, but we will rise to eternal life in Christ.

Redemption. There is a Redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son. That's the good news. So let us hear it.

And let us trust our Redeemer and receive the eternal life that he paid so dearly for. And I've said enough, let's pray.

Amen. Lord God, sometimes there are passages which we come to with great trepidation because we see the grim, gruesome reality of the effect of sin.

We are prone to take sin so lightly and yet you are the God who is holy and who cannot look upon sin and God cannot tolerate sin.

[71 : 43] And as we look at Achan we see the horrific effect that sin has when it is left untreated in life.

God we thank you that we don't stop in Joshua 7 that we are pointing forward to Jesus. We thank you that there we see one who took the punishment for us, who took the sin away from us and died so that we might have life.

What a price, what a cost. We stand forgiven at the cross. Enable us we pray by faith to receive the forgiveness that was purchased so dearly and is offered to us freely in Christ.

Amen. We're going to sing now the power of the cross to finish. Mission praise number 1217 and the words on the screen as we sing of the power of the cross.

And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all, both now and forever more. Amen.