

PLEASANT SPRINGS CHURCH • SERMON • THE CONQUERING KING,
PART TWO

Hidden Things

Be sure your sin will find you out — Achan, the pattern of hidden sin, and the God who brings it to light

Hidden Things

A Sermon on Joshua 7:1 — Achan and the Hidden Sin

By A Disciple of Jesus Christ • Pleasant Springs Church • July 26, 2026

Key Texts: Joshua 7:1 • James 1:14–15 • Mark 7:21–23 • 1 John 1:8–10 • Ezekiel 33:11

Jericho has fallen. But at the next, smaller city — Ai — Israel is routed and thirty-six men lie dead, and no one can see why. The answer is buried in the ground beneath one man's tent. This sermon traces the anatomy of hidden sin — how it grows in the dark, how the unseen powers exploit it, and how the God who exposed the accursed thing under Achan's tent still brings hidden things to light — not to condemn, but so that we will turn, confess, and live.

THE BIG IDEA

The greatest threat to God's people isn't always the enemy outside the camp — it's often the compromise from within. Sin always follows a pattern: first we see, then we desire, then we take, then we hide. But we cannot hide anything from God. He brings hidden things to light so that we will agree with Him about them, confess, and be cleansed — “for God so loved the world.”

THE SERMON TEXT — JOSHUA 7:1

Joshua 7:1 (KJV)

“But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.”

THE SETTING

Jericho has been defeated, and the people were told not to take any of the spoils from Jericho, because the spoils — the precious metals — were consecrated to the Lord's treasury (Joshua 6:17–19). Now they are facing the city of Ai, which was small in size and population. Joshua sends out spies, and they come back saying there was no need to send the whole army — that two or three thousand should be sufficient. But the little village puts the Israelites on the run, having killed thirty-six Israelite soldiers!

The greatest threat to God's people isn't always the enemy outside the camp — it's often the compromise from within!

So many times we pray for victory over a particular sin or weakness that we face, and God shows up and shows out on our behalf, equipping us and giving us strength to overcome whatever we are facing at the time. But the next thing you know, we are defeated again! So what happened? **We let our guard down.**

That's exactly what happened with Israel. In verses 2–3 the spies come back from Ai saying they were few, and would only need two or three thousand to overcome them. Their focus seems to appear on their own abilities, which may have been a contributing factor. But the defeat happened because God's presence had been withdrawn because of covenant violation. **Achan broke the covenant with hidden sin.**

We too often get caught up in rejoicing in our victories that we lose sight of our own weakness, never thinking about what could be around the corner — and that's when the enemy plans a surprise attack, leaving us wondering, “How did I let that happen?” Too often that is when we are most vulnerable, because:

We stop taking inventory of our own hearts.

We stop praying.

We stop reading His Word.

We stop seeking Him.

We simply stop putting on the armour of God!

God was not only fulfilling His covenant with Abraham by giving Israel the land — He was also forming a holy people whose hearts belonged to Him.

INFECTION — HOW HIDDEN SIN GROWS

Once inside, it begins growing until it is either dealt with or manifests itself openly — consuming the individual and infecting those around them. Consider the example of Achan's sin (Joshua 7:19–21):

Achan coveted the spoils.

He hid them in his tent.

He thought no one would know.

He thought it would not affect anyone else.

He had no intention of coming clean.

Sin always follows a pattern. **First he saw. Then he desired. Then he took. Then he hid.** Every hidden sin begins long before anyone else ever sees it — and often what is on the inside will reflect on the outside.

COMMON THINGS PEOPLE ARE DRAWN TO

Galatians 5:19–21 (KJV)

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Mark 7:21–23 (KJV)

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

Manifest means: visible, evident, known, appear, shine, be seen.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT SIN?

James 1:14–15 (KJV)

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Notice: we are drawn away, and enticed. So who is doing the drawing and enticing? Even though the works of the flesh are present, we see it is the powers in the unseen realm who exploit our sinful desires.

Ephesians 6:12 (KJV)

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

What is lust? Lust is the longing for that which is forbidden. Even the Lord Himself was tempted:

Matthew 4:1–4 (KJV)

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

THE DEVIL — THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR

Ephesians 2:2–3 (KJV)

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

The prince of the power of the air ... a spirit.

GOD EXPOSES SIN

Just as God exposes Achan’s sin in Joshua 7:19–21, so God speaks in Matthew 5:27–28 of a man who looks upon a woman and lusts — he is just as guilty as if he had done it. And Numbers 32:23 warns, in the latter part of the verse, “be sure your sin will find you out.” Jesus looks on the motives of our hearts, not on our deeds or appearances:

Matthew 23:27–28 (KJV)

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

1 John 1:8–10 (KJV)

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

Before Jesus can free and save us from our sins, we must come into agreement with Christ about the sin. Once we come into agreement with Him about our sins, confessing them to Him, He is just and faithful to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **The bottom line is: we cannot hide anything from God.**

CLOSING — TURN, AND LIVE

Ezekiel 33:11 (KJV)

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

John 3:16–17 (KJV)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

SO WHAT?

You cannot hide anything from God — but you were never meant to. The same God who exposed the accursed thing under Achan’s tent has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; He brings hidden things to light so that we will turn, confess, and live. So bring it into the light: agree with Him about it, confess it, and He is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

AFTER THE SERMON — AUTHOR & AUDIENCE

To read Joshua 7 well, it helps to know the moment it describes and the word at its center. The following background is offered for deeper study — the same Author-and-Audience approach we use across the Discipleship School, with the Septuagint (LXX) and ESV set beside the preached text.

Jericho was the “firstfruits” of the conquest, and as such the whole city was placed under the **ban** — Hebrew *hērem*, “devoted thing.” Everything in it belonged to God: the silver, gold, bronze, and iron went into the Lord’s treasury (Joshua 6:19), and the rest was to be destroyed. To take from the devoted thing was not petty theft; it was to lay hold of what had been given wholly to God, and it brought the ban upon the taker himself. That is why one man’s hidden pocket of loot could bring defeat on the entire nation — Achan had made himself, and by extension the camp, *hērem*.

Joshua 7:1 (LXX & ESV) — The Accursed Thing

καὶ ἐπλημμέλησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ πλημμέλειαν μεγάλην καὶ ἐνοσφίσαντο ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀναθέματος...

“But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan... took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.”

LXX word worth keeping: anathema (ἀνάθεμα) — the Greek for Hebrew hērem, “a thing devoted / accursed,” set apart and given wholly over to God. Paul later takes up the very word for the severest of consequences (Romans 9:3; 1 Corinthians 16:22; Galatians 1:8–9). The KJV “accursed thing” and the ESV “devoted things” are two faces of the same idea: what belongs entirely to God is not ours to hide in a tent.

The threads in this sermon — the compromise within, the unseen powers that exploit our desires, the heart that must be made new, and the confession that brings cleansing — each open into a fuller study. Keep growing:

THE CONQUERING KING • PART 1

Conquering the Heart

The week before — the Captain of the Lord's host, the battle in the unseen realm, and the one battlefield every conflict leads back to: the human heart.

THE UNSEEN REALM

Paul & the Deuteronomy 32 Worldview

The principalities and powers who exploit our desires — the spiritual backdrop behind “we wrestle not against flesh and blood.”

A NEW HEART

Born From Above

“Out of the heart proceed evil things” — and the new heart only God can give. Ezekiel 36 and John 3 on the birth from above.

THE HIDDEN COUNTRY

Third World Souls

What is on the inside reflects on the outside — the renovation of the heart and the forming of the soul, from the inside out.

“Be sure your sin will find you out.”

Numbers 32:23 (KJV)