

## **Zoom Sunday School: 6 September (Joshua 6 and 7)**

You probably all know the incredible story about Jericho and how God took over the city for the Hebrew people – without anyone battle taking place.

Can you remember the details? For 6 days the Hebrews, led by the priests blowing their trumpets, marched in dead silence round the city. I am sure the people in the city made jokes about them getting some exercise. On day 7, however, after they had marched round in silence once again, they didn't stop! They went round for a total of 7 times. How scary that must have been for the people inside – I am sure the jokes stopped! Then when God told Joshua to give the signal, the priests blew their trumpets and the people shouted out in praise to God. Immediately the walls crumbled and the city was captured without any fighting! The only ones saved were Rahab and her family.

What you may not know is that God had strictly warned the people not to take anything out of the city for themselves. God told them that, if anyone did, the whole group would suffer.

But one man, Achan, saw a beautiful shawl or cloak and took that, along with a bar of gold and 200 silver coins. When he got back to his tent, he dug a hole under the tent and put the stolen goods in there. He and his family thought he had got away with it, but God had seen him. God knew he had disobeyed. And his sin would indeed affect everybody.

A few days later Joshua sent spies to a little town called Ai. They came back saying that taking that town would be 'easy peasy'. Only a small group of people need go up and attack the town. Imagine the shock when the Hebrew forces were defeated and forced to run away. 'Why hadn't God helped them' everyone wondered. Joshua prayed a lot about this and God told him that someone had stolen things.

The news went out round the Hebrew camp. But no one confessed. Eventually, with God's help, the leaders discovered who the culprit was and they discovered the goods. Achan and his family were stoned on God's orders.

This makes God sound very horrible, doesn't it? But you see, God could not allow sin to block the way to him. And he wanted everyone watching to realise that sin stops them and others from getting close to God.

If Achan had come forward and confessed, I think he would have been forgiven. But Achan waited until he was caught out. He wasn't sorry! He hoped to get away with it!

This story is a picture of how we react sometimes: we also do wrong things but we don't admit that and then we can't be forgiven. Jesus came to earth to die for us, but if we don't confess that we need his help to do the right thing, his death was a waste of time for he can't help us. Then we are acting like Achan, hoping we shall get away with it.

But, if we confess our sins, God is full of mercy and will forgive us.

## Readings

**Monday:** Joshua 6: 15-18 God's way of doing battle

**Tuesday:** Joshua 6: 22-25 Rahab was saved

**Wednesday:** Joshua 7: 1-5 The battle for Ai

**Thursday:** Joshua 7: 10-12 The solution

**Friday:** Joshua 7: 22-26 Punishment