

# Ai - Spiritual Warfare

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of dealing with sin and temptation in the body of Christ, and the need for humility, repentance, and restoration in order to avoid further consequences and to restore the body to its original state.*

**Duration:** 1:02:07

**Scripture:** Exodus 24:12, Joshua 6:20, 1 Samuel 4:3, Isaiah 65:10, Hosea 2:15, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:37

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Overcoming Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Joshua and the battle of Ai. After the victory at Jericho, Joshua sends spies to scout out Ai, a smaller city, and they report that it would be an easy victory. However, when the Israelites attack, they are defeated and Joshua is devastated. The preacher highlights that the defeat was a result of sin in Israel and emphasizes the importance of avoiding the temptation of worldly desires. The sermon concludes with God assuring Joshua that he will give them victory over Ai.

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## Transcript

And the children of Israel committed unfaithfulness in that which had been brought under the curse. Achan, the son of Kami, the son of Zebedee, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-Avon, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, Go up and smite out the country.

And the men went up and smite out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, Let not all the people go up. Let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai.

Make not all the people to toil thither, for they are few. And there went up thither of the people about three thousand men. But they fled before the men of Ai.

And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty-six men. And they pursued them from before the gate to Shevarim, and smote them on the descent. Then the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his faith before the ark of Jehovah until the evening. He and the elders of Israel, and threw dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, Lord Jehovah, wherefore hast thou at all brought these people over the Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the

Amorites, to destroy us? O that we had been content, and had remained beyond the Jordan! Our Lord, what shall I say after Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies? When the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, they will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth.

And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And Jehovah said to Joshua, Rise up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned. And they had also transgressed my covenant, which I commanded, and they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen and dissembled them, and they have put it among their stuff. And the children of Israel shall not be able to stand before their enemies, they shall turn their backs before their enemies, for they have made themselves accursed.

I will no more be with you, except ye destroy the accursed thing from your midst. Then we will start from verse 19. And Joshua said to Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to Jehovah the God of Israel, and make confession to him.

Tell me now what thou hast done. Keep it not back from me. And Achan answered Joshua and said, Indeed, I have sinned against Jehovah the God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.

I saw among the spoils a beautiful mantle of Sina, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a gold bar of fifty shekels weight, and I coveted them and took them. And behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. And Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before Jehovah. Now Joshua, then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the mantle, and the bar of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had. And they brought them up into the valley of Achor.

And Joshua said, How hast thou troubled us? Jehovah would trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones, which is there to this day.

And Jehovah turned from the fierceness of his anger. Therefore the name of that place was called the Valley of Achor to this day. Chapter 8, verse 1. And Jehovah said to Joshua, Fear not, neither be dismayed.

Take with thee all the people of war, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land, and thou shalt do to Ai, and to his king as thou didst to Jericho, and to his king. Only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shalt ye take as prey for yourselves.

Set an ambush against the city behind it. Well, we will maybe read one more place. Verse 26.

And Joshua did not draw back his hand, which he had stretched out with a javelin, until they had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of the city Israel took as prey to themselves, according to the word of Jehovah, which he had commanded Joshua. After the children of Israel crossed the river Jordan, they were in the Promised Land.

They were to possess their possession. But they discovered that the land was inhabited by seven tribes of Canaan. And these seven tribes of Canaan were not only wicked, very wicked, but they were strong.

And they had cities. Walled cities. So immediately after the children of Israel entered into the Promised Land, before they could possess their possession, they were confronted with battles.

There was battle to be fought. Enemies to be dispossessed. Before they could possess their possession.

But the battle was the Lord's. It was not their battle. The Lord himself presented to them as the captain of the army of the Lord.

The Lord himself laid the plan, the strategy of the battles. And we find even though Jericho was a great city, walled, doors, gates shut, the king and his garrisoned men guarded the walls, but the ark surrounded that wall. And the wall fell flat.

Now, brothers and sisters, we mentioned last time that applying it to us today, after we come to know our identification with Christ in his death and burial and resurrection, we have crossed the Jordan. After we have known our co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection with Christ, we come into the possessing our possession part. That is to say, we begin to know the riches that are in Christ.

But at the same time we are faced immediately with spiritual conflict. Our welfare is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and authorities, powers of darkness and evil spirit of the air. And unless we can dispossess our enemies, we will not experientially enter into the riches that are in Christ.

But there is nothing to be afraid of, because the battle is the Lord's. The Lord does not leave us alone to battle it out. He comes to us as the captain of the army of the Lord.

Not only He is to lead us into the fight, but He has already overcome the enemy. On Calvary's cross He has given His enemy a decisive defeat. He has routed the enemy.

He has made a public show of His enemy. His victory was decisive. What is left for us to do is to round up the defeated foes.

In other words, He is leading us in His triumph. As the Bible says, in all these things we more than conquer in Christ Jesus. It is the ark that makes the wall to fall.

It is the Lord Himself to destroy all the strongholds of the enemy. All we need to do is to follow the ark. All we need to do is to take in all that the ark means to us, all that Christ means to us.

And as faith is built up within us, then the shout of faith. And the wall shall fall. All the strongholds, the reasonings, the high things that lift themselves up against the knowledge of God shall go.

And every force shall be led into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. Now this was the first battle. Jericho was completely destroyed.

All the things, not only the people, but the things in Jericho were devoted to destruction, to be destroyed by fire. And those that could go through fire, gold, silver, iron and brass, they will go into the treasury of the Lord. And that was how it was.

It was a great victory. But you know, oftentimes after a great victory it becomes a very dangerous time. A victory is a time of celebration.

But it is also a time for watchfulness. Because after a great victory we tend to be careless. We tend to think that we have done it.

We tend to forget it is the Lord. And unknowingly we fall into temptation. And that is what happened in the second battle in the Promised Land.

You know, as a matter of fact, the battle over Jericho and the battle over Ai, these were the first two battles in the Promised Land. And these two battles form a face of the war. Because after these two battles were fought, then Israel rested for a while.

And later on you will find it came to the end of one face of the war. And in these two battles you can find all the principles in spiritual warfare which will be followed afterwards. So these two battles are very important battles.

And we should learn much from these two battles. The Bible said the children of Israel committed unfaithfulness in that which had been brought under the curse. In the very victory the seed of defeat was sown.

By all outward appearance it was a complete victory. The enemy was completely destroyed. But how subtle was the enemy? He was able to sow a seed of defeat at the time of great victory.

Why? Because when the children of Israel entered into the city of 600,000 soldiers there was one among them by the name of Achan. Achan. When he entered into Jericho to destroy the city he saw a beautiful mantle of Sina.

200 shekels of silver and a gold bar of 50 shekels weight. And he coveted them. He knew that these were devoted to destruction.

To be burned. He knew that the gold and silver after they were refined by fire should go to the treasury of the Lord. But he coveted these things for himself.

He stole them. He hid them under his tent. And his family was his appliance.

They agreed. If the city of Jericho represents the stronghold which the enemy builds in us builds in our soul, in our mind then the city of Ai speaks to us of temptation. Sometimes the enemy will hide himself behind strongholds.

He will not come out to fight. He will hide himself behind strongholds. To block our way to possessing Christ.

But at other times he will come out to tempt us. And this is what the city of Ai represents. It is strange you know.

Jericho was a big city. And yet they hid themselves behind the walls. Ai was a small city and yet they came out to fight.

You never can tell what the enemy is going to do. You have to be watchful at all times. But anyway you find Ai.

A.K.A. He stole this beautiful mantle of Shina. Now Shina is the name of the place, the land. And the name of the country is Babylon.

So it was a beautiful garment made in Babylon. And he committed it. Now why did he want this beautiful mantle of Shina? He wanted to beautify himself.

Why did he want these silver and gold? He wanted to enrich himself. He robbed God of God's rights. He robbed God of what was due to God in order to enrich himself.

And he disobeyed God in not destroying this beautiful garment in order to beautify himself. So this beautiful garment and the silver and the gold in this instance represents the temptation that came from the world. In 1 John 2 we are told love not the world nor the things of the world.

If you love the world the love of the Father is not in you. What are the things of the world? The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Now dear brothers and sisters, God has delivered us out of the world.

The children of Israel came out of Egypt. They came out of the world. And now they are in the promised land.

Certainly they had left the world behind them. But they discovered even in the promised land there was the world there. And there was still the possibility of loving the world.

Thank God He has delivered us out of this world. We are not of the world. So far as we are concerned the world is on the cross, crucified.

So far as the world is concerned we are crucified. Paul said, I boast of the cross of Jesus Christ. Why? Because it divides me from the world.

It separates me from the world. And there is no crossing over. That is our position.

But dear brothers and sisters, who can guarantee that you will never love the world again? You may have loved the world for 40 years already. But who can guarantee after 40 years when you see a beautiful mantle of Sina suddenly you covet it. What temptation it is.

No one is beyond temptation. We do not need to fall into temptation. Because the Lord said He will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear.

If we are tempted the Lord knows we are able to overcome it. Or to put it in another way, what He has already wrought in us is sufficient to overcome the temptation that it allows to come upon us. And certainly in the time of temptation He will make His living issue, a way out of it.

Because He is faithful. But dear brothers and sisters, no one is beyond temptation. That's the reason why the Lord said watch and pray lest ye fall into temptation.

So the sin of Achan is the love of the world. And this is a temptation that is always there. And we need to be careful of it.

Now the children of Israel after the great victory over Jericho. Oh, they were so elated. Joshua sent spies to spy out Ai.

And these spies came back and said wow, that is a small city. The people of you. Do not bother all the soldiers.

Just send two or three thousand and finish it. Easy job. So Joshua sent three thousand.

And the people of Ai came out and smoked them. And they were routed. And when this happened, Joshua fell flat before the ark of the Lord, reigned his dress, put dust upon his head and the elders, and they waited before the ark until evening.

And Joshua prayed and said, Oh Lord, why do you bring us over the river Jordan? Why should not we be contented on the other side? It would be much better if we remained on the other side. But now we are here and the enemy will hear about it and they will come and just wipe us out completely. And what will happen to your name? The Lord said, Rise up.

Why do you lie upon your face? Israel. As a matter of fact, only Achan has sinned. And Achan was only one among six hundred thousand soldiers.

More than six hundred thousand soldiers. Among over two million people. And yet God said, Israel has sinned.

Now what does it mean here? Does it mean to say that all of the six hundred thousand soldiers that entered into the city of Jericho, they all had that covetousness within them, only that they did not have the chance. Achan was the only one who had the chance to do it. Israel has sinned.

All of them had the same intention. No. Achan probably was the only one who coveted.

The rest might not coveted at all. They were not tempted. Or they overcame the temptation.

Achan was the only one who fell into temptation. And yet the Lord said, Israel has sinned. Because God considered Israel as one people.

And one member sinned. The whole body. Now if this is true with Israel, how much more true it is with us today.

Israel is but the earthly people of God. God binds the twelve tribes together to make them one nation. And the closeness of the nation is such that when one among two million had sinned, God said Israel had sinned.

How about us? The church today is the body of Christ. And this body of Christ is made up of many members. And the relationship of the members to each other in the body is so much closer than the twelve tribes in the nation of Israel.

And if it is true with Israel, how much truer it must be with us today. Probably we do not realize it. We do not really know how closely knit God's people are.

We do not really know what interrelationship we have with one another. Often times we think well we are just one. Hidden somewhere.

It doesn't matter at all. Nobody will notice. In spiritual reality, God notices, Satan notices.

Nothing can escape. So here you find there is a spiritual reality before us. In this spiritual conflict, nothing can be hidden.

In this spiritual realm, everything is dark naked. Everything is real. Hundred percent real.

And because of the reality of it, when one member sinned, God said Israel. And because Israel had sinned, unless the sin was dealt with, I couldn't go along. I couldn't.

You know it is very easy for God to tell Joshua Achan had sinned. That will solve Joshua lots of problems. But God didn't do that.

God said Israel had sinned. And how to find out? The whole nation was mobilized. The next morning, the whole nation will gather together and they will cast lot.

And of the twelve tribes, lot will be cast and one tribe will be taken, the tribe of Judah. And after one tribe was taken, all the families in that tribe will cast lot. And one family will be taken.

And after one family was taken, all the household of that family will cast lot and one household will be taken. And when the one household was taken, then all the members of that household will cast lot until one member was taken. Oh, such an elaborate, such a tiring process.

Why is it God just did not make it easier and said Achan has sinned? Get rid of him and that's it? Why is it that God wanted the children of Israel to be all involved in this painful process? You remember that instance in the New Testament? Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers, there was a man in the church at Corinth that had done such a thing that it was even not heard of in the hidden world. But the rest in the church, they didn't care. They not only did not care about it, they even boasted themselves that we didn't do that.

It was just their brother who did it. And how Paul wrote and said, you need to be exercised as a church. All of you should be exercised before the Lord to cast out the wicked one.

Do you not know that a little leaven will puff up the whole lump? Purge out the leaven. The whole church in Corinth had to repent. The whole church in Corinth had to be grieved.

The whole church in Corinth had to be exercised. Their conscience had to be exercised before the Lord. And after their conscience were awakened and exercised, and they began to deal with this thing, it brought in restoration.

So in 2 Corinthians, Paul said, receive that brother back. This is the principle of the church. Even though only Achan sinned, and yet God wanted the whole nation to be exercised before the Lord.

It's only after the whole nation had exercised themselves before the Lord then that sin was discovered and dealt with. So dear brothers and sisters, remember that in the body of Christ if one member suffers, the whole body suffers. If one member sins, the whole body will suffer for that sin.

The whole body is involved. How we need to be exercised together. Do not take a superior attitude and say now so and so has sinned.

We have no part in it. Oh how much holier we are. God said no.

You are responsible for that too. You need to be exercised. The whole church must be humbled before the Lord.

Exercise before the Lord until that sin is dealt with and the one who sinned is restored. So when Achan was taken, Joshua said son, give glory to God. Confess what you have done.

And Achan said I have sinned. But of course when he said I have sinned, it wasn't a sign of repentance. It was just a false confession.

Yes I have sinned. I saw this beautiful mantle of Sina. I saw 200 shekels of silver.

I saw a gold bar of 50 shekels weight. And I took them. I hid them in my tent.

So Joshua sent messengers to gather these things. And they took these things before and brought them to the Lord. And Joshua said son, you have troubled us and the Lord.

So they brought Achan and his whole family and all that he had to the valley and stoned them to death and burned them and piled the stone of it. And that place was called the Valley of Achan. The Valley of Trouble.

In spiritual conflict, everything is so real. Nothing can be hidden. And that's the reason why everything has to be dealt with.

And after it has been dealt with, then God is well able to deliver the city of Ai into the hands of the children. But you know, the Valley of Ai is a very low place. It is a valley.

When you enter into a valley and it is a valley of trouble, we may think that's the end of it. But thank God, the Valley of Achan is not the end. Why? Because if you read the prophets.

Say, if you read Hosea. In the prophet Hosea you'll find in chapter 2 verses 14 and 15. If we return to it, Hosea chapter 2 verses 14 and 15.

Hosea is one of the minor prophets that is most easily to be found because he is just behind a major prophet. Hosea chapter 2 verses 14 and 15. Therefore, behold, I will alert her and bring her into the wilderness and speak to her heart.

And I will give her her vineyards and the Valley of Achan for a door of hope. And she shall sing there as in the days of her youth and as in the days when she came up out of the land of Egypt. Humanly speaking, the Valley of Achan is the end.

That's the end. But from the standpoint of God, He is able to change the Valley of Achan into for a door of hope. You know, spiritually speaking, if we have not entered into the Valley of Achan, we have no door to hope.

After we have entered into the Valley of Achan, that is, to have our sin dealt with. Anything that is troubling the Lord, anything that is troubling God's people, anything that is troubling us, anything that needs to be dealt with and is dealt with, it is under the blood of the Lord Jesus, and this is the door of hope. It leads to hope.

And that is the mercy of God. God said they were seen as they were in their youth when God brought them out of Egypt. God restored their youth.

Their joy. A door of hope. And then in Isaiah 65, verse 10.

Isaiah 65, verse 10. Here is another place. And the Sharon shall be a foal for flocks, and the Valley of Achan a couching place of the herds, for my people that have sought me.

When God's people really seek the face of the Lord, He is able to make the Valley of Achan a couching place for the herds. In other words, the cattle. They graze on the field until they are satisfied, and then they lie down and ruminate.

Now that's the picture. The Valley of Achan becomes such a place where you are fully satisfied and you just meditate upon the goodness of the Lord. Now thank God for that.

He is the only one who is able to do such a thing. And He always does. So after the Valley of Achan, then God told, assured Joshua and said, Fear not, neither be dismayed.

Take with thee all the people of war, and rise, and go up to Ai. See, I have given him to thy hand, the King of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land. Now why was Israel defeated? Several reasons.

Of course, the first reason we have already mentioned. Israel had sinned. That was the first reason.

There was sin in Israel, and God could not condone that sin. God could not be there. And that's the reason why Israel was defeated.

That was the first reason. The second reason was, after they had a great victory over Jericho, they failed to return to Gilgal. You know, if you read the book of Joshua, you find that the base of their operation was Gilgal.

After each campaign, after each battle, they went back to Gilgal. And then they came out from Gilgal again. So that was the base of their operation.

But because the victory was so wonderful, they thought they could just go on from victory to victory. They did not need to go back to their base. And what is Gilgal? Gilgal was the place where they were circumcised.

In other words, the cross. Brothers and sisters, the only way to assure victory is to go back. It is the cross that gives us victory.

That act of victory is given. Do not forget the cross. Go back.

Go back to the cross. Let the heart be circumcised. And it is only if we begin from the base of spiritual operation that is the cross, it will assure us of further victory.

That's the second reason. And the third reason was they despised their enemy. You know, in warfare, you should not overestimate the strength of your enemy.

If you do, you get discouraged. But neither should you underestimate your enemy. Because you will despise them and be careless.

We should not overestimate our enemies as if they are invisible. Our enemy is a defeated enemy. Thank God for that.

But neither can we despise our enemy. Oh, they say, well, the city of Ai is a small city. Altogether only 12,000 people.

And if a city of 12,000 people, they cannot have soldiers more than 3,000. So they had a good estimate of it. Just send 2,000 or 3,000 and finish it.

They despised their enemy. And that's the reason why they were defeated. Brothers and sisters, often in our spiritual life, in big trials, we seem to be able to get through.

But we always fall in small testings. If you drive a car, it's always at the safest place that has accident. If it is a very difficult place, you are so careful in your driving, you won't have an accident.

In spiritual conflict, it is the same thing. Oftentimes, you know, in big things, oh, how we go to the Lord, how we tell the Lord that we depend on Him. We cannot do it by ourselves.

And because we trust Him, we find that He is trustworthy. And we overcome. Thank God for that.

But in small things, oh, we can do it. We despise our enemies. And in small things, we often fail.

So the Lord said, if you are faithful in small things, then I will commit to you big things. They despise their enemies. Now, what was the last strategy over the city of Ai? You know, if the Lord will give you a victory at one time, what is our temptation? Our temptation is, we will use the same method the second time.

But you find the Lord is living in the city of Jericho. It is the ark that brought the city down. But in the city of Ai, God's strategy was very different.

Number one, God said, take with thee all the people of war and rise, go up to Ai. Because they despised their enemy. They thought that if only they would just send two or three thousand, that should be enough.

Let the rest of the people rest. God said, no. In spiritual warfare, it is a body warfare.

The warrior in Ephesians chapter 6 is not an individual believer. The warrior in chapter 6 of Ephesians is the church. The church is that warrior that takes up the whole armor of God.

The church is that warrior that stands and will stand and stand. The church is that warrior that brings the purpose of God into fulfillment. Not an individual.

It is the church. So in spiritual warfare, everybody is involved. Do not think that, well, let my brothers and sisters fight.

I will rest a while. No. All the people must go.

We must go together. Even though it may be a small city, but over 600,000 soldiers all went out to fight. We have to go together.

That's number one. Number two. God said, set an ambush.

Set an ambush. So Joshua sent 30,000 men to be an ambush on the west side of the city Ai. But he was not satisfied with that.

He sent 5,000 again to reinforce that ambush. And after the ambush was set, then he led the people to the north side of the city Ai. And he said, we will pretend to run.

And when we draw the people away from the city, then you in ambush will rise up, enter into the city and start burning it. And that was how the city was taken. So Joshua went forth and drew the people out of Ai.

The gates were opened. They thought they were going to do it the second time. And after they drew them further, then the ambush went into the city.

Burned the city. And when the smoke came out, you know what Joshua did? He turned back with all his army. He stretched out his javelin over that city.

And he did not withdraw his arms until that city was completely destroyed. Now that was the strategy. But what's an ambush? You know ambush, an ambush is a surprise.

The enemy is not conscious of it. So the enemy is taken by surprise. Now what is it that can surprise our enemy? You know dear brothers and sisters, our enemy, Satan can imitate anything.

Almost everything. He can transform himself into an angel of light. If you have light, he can pretend, transform himself into an angel of light.

But there is one thing the enemy cannot counterfeit. That is life. That is something he cannot counterfeit.

And an ambush means that hidden life which God has wrought in your life. When we are faced with temptation, what will overcome our temptation? It is the accumulated, reserved grace of God. When there is no temptation, you may see two Christians and they all seem to be the same.

But when temptation comes, there is a difference. Those who have reserved, as it were, in their life, they have an ambush to surprise the enemy. And those who do not have reserve are not able to withstand the temptation.

So the ambush here speaks of that reserved grace. That hidden life with the Lord. And that is something the enemy cannot understand.

He computes everything, but this is something beyond him. Beyond him. This is something that will surprise him.

Surprise him. So how important it is that we have that reserved grace with us. We have that accumulated, we have that hidden life with the Lord.

It may not be manifested in ordinary days. All the time you spend with the Lord, the meetings you have with the Lord, nobody knows about it. It does not appear in ordinary days.

But those who have such life will be of great effectiveness when they come the time of temptation. That's the ambush. And what brings out the ambush? What brings in the victory? The javelin in the hands of Joshua.

You know, with the city of Jericho it is dark. But over the city of Ai it is the javelin. The ark represents the finished work of Christ.

That is always the basis of victory over the enemy. But the javelin in Joshua's hands represents the energy of the Holy Spirit. It is the energy of the Holy Spirit that activates the life that is hidden.

That brings all the finished work of Christ into operation. So in the case of Ai you'll find it is the javelin of Joshua. The energy of the Holy Spirit.

So these two things are the basis for spiritual conflict. The finished work of Christ and the energy of the Holy Spirit in bringing out the reserved strength of life. But you will notice there is a great difference here.

After the city was destroyed in the case of Jericho you'll find the children of Israel were to get nothing. When they tried to get something they sinned. They battled for nothing.

They got nothing out of the battle. Either they were burned, destroyed or they went into the treasury of the Lord. In other words, in the battle over Jericho God got something but the children of Israel got nothing.

Now, are we willing to go into such spiritual conflict and get nothing out of it? Well, there is a lesson for us to learn and that is in spiritual conflict the spoil primarily belongs to God. It does not belong to us. Do nothing because I have fought so fiercely and so bravely and I have sweat and I have done everything so I should get something out of it.

No. God said all glory belongs to Him. You are to get nothing.

Nothing at all. That's strange. In the case of the city of Ai God said you can have the spoil.

The spoil thereof and the kettle thereof shall ye take as prey for yourselves. Now, you have to put these two together because these two battles form the basis of spiritual conflict. In spiritual conflict what comes out of it the spoil first belongs to God and only after God has His due then there will be spoil for us.

It doesn't mean that you will get nothing. You will because you will be enriched through the battle. But unless you have the priority right if you have the priority wrong that you see but if you have the priority right then you are enriched.

So that's the difference. And when you combine these together you see the whole picture. Now after the battle over Ai was over what did the children of Israel do? You find that Joshua built and altered the Jehovah the God of Israel in Mount Ebal.

As Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded the children of Israel as it is written in the book of the law of Moses. So here we find this is the first phase of the war. First phase.

After these two battles the first phase of war was over. So Joshua built an altar at Mount Ebal according to what Moses had commanded that is no iron should come upon the stones. So they just built a stone altar and they offer, burn offering and peace offering upon it.

And then they wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses. And after they did that then they did according to what Moses commanded them in Deuteronomy. The people divided into two parts and they bring the curses and the blessings from Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim.

And there they read the book of the Lord to the whole congregation of Israel and the women and the children and even the strangers that live among them. So you find that after spiritual battle what will be the natural consequence of it? The consequence is after spiritual conflict that people become a worshipping people. They come to worship the Lord.

You know, often times in our worship we find there is the lack of substance. You know, sometimes when we come together to worship the Lord we do not know what to bring. We do not have anything to bring.

We do not know what to say. And even we know what to say there are words. Words.

Often times after a time of worship you feel that there is no substance. There is a lack of substance. There is a lack of depth in worship.

You know why? Because there has been no victory. There is no spoil. No spoil.

Now if in our life there are victories there will be spoils for the Lord. And not only spoils for the Lord but David even set apart his own spoil for the Lord. And there will be substance in our worship.

Worship must not be in words but there should be substance. And when there is substance you know that it satisfies God's heart. It satisfies.

Otherwise it's floating. You always feel it's just floating. Beautiful words but God is not satisfied.

So spiritual conflict has much to do with worship. Much to do with worship. If we are not willing to go through spiritual conflict our worship will be very superficial.

Sentimental. But no depth. No substance.

But people who have gone through conflict and see the victory of the Lord and got spoils for the Lord you find their worship is full of substance and it's heavy. It's not heavy in the sense of heaviness but heavy in the sense of weight. There is weight there.

There is worth there. And it does satisfy. That is one thing.

The second thing is the children of Israel wrote the Ten Commandments on the stone as a testimony. Public testimony. Not only for them to read but for the people of the land to know that they belong to God.

So dear brothers and sisters what comes out of spiritual conflict on the one hand is worship on the other hand is testimony. The whole world will see that is the result of spiritual conflict. So when you come to the end of the eighth chapter you come to one face of spiritual conflict.

But again let us remind ourselves that spiritual conflict is a process. It's a means. It is not the end.

The end is possessing Christ. So we should be more occupied with possessing Christ than to be occupied with conflict. And that will be a healthy mentality.

Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father how we praise and thank Thee because Thou has shown us through Thy Word the spiritual principles involved in our daily lives in our conflicts in possessing Christ. We do pray that by Thy Holy Spirit these principles may become very real and living and effective. That truly Thy people may fully possess Christ as they are possessed by Christ.

And to Thee be all the praise and glory in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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