

JOSHUA 7:20-26
DEAD TO SIN!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 7 as we continue our study through the book of Joshua, and we are focusing on victorious Christian living or walking that Spirit-filled life!

Now you may be thinking, “Hey, what do you mean by victorious Christian living? Joshua chapter 7 deals with **DEFEAT!** The children of Israel lost their battle against Ai! So how is that going to help me have those victories in my life?”

It is true, Joshua chapter 7 does deal with their defeat at Ai, but never forget, even in our failures, even in their failures, we can learn lessons! Don’t negate what God has for you here in this chapter!

Let me give you a quick review of what we have seen in this chapter here in Joshua chapter 7.

First of all, back in Joshua chapter 6, we see Israel, in their battle against Jericho, have this tremendous victory, not one of their soldiers were killed in this battle! They saw the hand of God give them this victory. And what an encouragement that must have been to them.

Let’s face it, when we are victorious in something, have accomplished some great thing, we are pumped up and I think the children of Israel were pumped up.

Now, in this battle against Jericho, God gave them these instructions about the spoils of victory. We are told in Joshua 6:18-19, “**And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.**”

For this specific battle, this is what God had instructed them to do. Stay away from the accursed things. And, the spoils of victory belong to the Lord!

And, like I have said, and we have seen, God gave them a miraculous victory over Jericho.

The next battle that they were to face was Ai in Joshua chapter 7. It was a small city and as the spies reported back to Joshua, they did not need to send all the troops in, just some three-thousand soldiers!

And the result of that battle, “**. . . but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.**” Joshua 7:4b-5.

In this little battle, about thirty-six men lost their lives! What happened? That is what Joshua wanted to know as well. In fact, I see Joshua angry at God. He basically tells God, “***Look, how are you going to look God when the enemies wipe out the children of Israel? It is going to make you look bad! What are you doing?***”

What is interesting to me, and so out of place in our day when we have to be coddled by everyone, is that God does not coddle Joshua! Not at all!

He tells Joshua, “**. . . ‘Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.’**” Joshua 7:10b-11.

In other words, God did not do this to them, they did not lose this battle because God failed, but they brought sin into the camp of Israel and this sin is what brought defeat and not victory!

And last time we saw how God exposed the sin of Achan.

We saw how the sin of Achan, what he had done, the pleasure of that sin, and for that matter, any sin, is short-lived!

Think about that for a minute, the pleasures of sin. Someone remarked, “*Every time I do those things that I should not do, they make me feel good.*”

Again, at that time it does make us feel good! If sin never brought us pleasure, no one would have a problem with sin, no one would ever do it!

But the Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:25, “**. . . the passing pleasures of sin.**” And, The Amplified Bible puts it like this regarding sin, “**. . . fleeting enjoyment of a sinful life.**” How true that is. The pleasures of sin pass by and sometimes very quickly. It is a fleeting enjoyment and it is over!

And again, if sin did not feel good, then nobody would do it, this would not even be an issue for us today!

But we are like children who find the taste of poison very sweet and pleasing, while the very thing we are getting enjoyment from, is killing us!

That is what we need to be taught first, that the bottle with the skull on it is deadly. The big ***"SIN"*** on the bottle means it will kill you. Don't drink that. Avoid it. More deeply, we need to go deeper than to have a sign out in front that keeps us from doing what we really, really, really love to do.

We need to listen to what God is telling us and then we must obey and stay away from those things that will destroy our lives!

The focus of our study this morning, as we look at what happened to Achan because of his sin, is this – ***DEAD TO SIN!***

I am not sure why, maybe because of arrogance, pride, we think we can handle sin. We think that sin does not control our lives. And what a mistake that is!

Let me illustrate it like this.

Imagine a fish in a lake and he sees this beautiful worm dangling before him!

And, before long, he takes a bite and is hooked! He never saw the hook that was behind the worm!

Now he may still think that he is in control. So he fights and now he begins to swim away and all of a sudden, a tug back!

He thought he was free, but he is not free. And slowly he is being brought in.

What can he do? Not play with it but he must let it go!

I remember several years ago, when Julie and I were in Texas, I hooked a large mouth bass and it was awesome.

Something I didn't expect was that this large mouth bass, trying to free itself from the hook, jumped out of the water into the air and moved its head back and forth! I did lose one large mouth bass that way. He did not play with the hook, but he shook it from his mouth or life!

We too need to remember that, you don't play with sin because, in the end you will lose. And we will be dealing with that this morning, as I have said, ***DEAD TO SIN!***

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Joshua chapter 7, beginning in verse 20 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at this deadly topic!

JOSHUA 7

VERSES 20-23

We talked a little bit about this already, but what I see in these verses is ***THE HOOK!***

And, what I want you to see with this story is that for Achan, God was testing his faith. But, on the other end of the spectrum we have Satan, who was trying to tempt Achan to sin! And Satan is very good at what he does, deceiving and destroying people's lives!

God wants to bless; He wants to see our faith grow but we must follow Him and not be taken in by the bait that is dangled before us!

And for the most part, many Christians don't even seem to care about this battle that is going on in our lives. And then, when we fall, when we sin, when we are seeing our lives fall apart, and we wonder why?

Because we take a bite of the bait that Satan is dangling before us! We don't see it as a big deal, but it is!

Satan does not just show us a hook because we would never take a bite of a hook! Just like a fish, if you just used a hook or a hook with a rock attached to it, there is no fish in the world that would come near it!

Thus, their needs to be a bait that will draw the fish in and that is what Satan does. He uses the right bait for the person he is trying to catch so that they will be drawn in and then take a bite!

In other words, sin is appealing, or we would not have a problem with it. And what Satan loves to do is cloak sin in some kind of appealing language so that we don't see it as sin!

Look at what we have done, or I should say what the so-called "experts" have done, and we love it. We have redefined the acts of sin!

Adultery is having an "affair."

Homosexuality is not evil it's just an alternative lifestyle.

Drunkenness is alcoholism, a social disease.

Pride is having a healthy self-image.

And *lying*, someone has suggested, is simply the result of an extravert with an active imagination.

Again, these "experts" have removed sin and in doing so they have removed man's responsibility for what they have done! Be careful not to fall prey to what they are putting forth, listen to what God is saying.

So the hook is all dressed up with the proper bait, we don't see sin as sin and we are being prepared to get hooked!

And I think we all know this, but if the bait that was attached to the hook was not attractive, bright, shiny or whatever it is that attracts us, then we would never go for it!

In fact, we are so enamored by the bait we don't even see the hook that is right there! The bait distracts us!

And think about it. Many exalt sinful acts by disguising them in the language of tolerance and acceptance.

Still others display a false compassion in declaring it lawful to actively kill the suffering or to terminate the lives of children in the womb who have been given a poor prenatal diagnosis.

And here in the twenty-first century, look at where we are at. The sins that were once seen as ugly, awful, evil is now presented, not only as good but even beautiful!

And as the bait comes before us, and we see it, we are drawn to it, do you know what comes next?

You bet; we get hooked!

Make no mistake about it, there is always a hook with Satan! I don't care how beautiful, how desirable, how awesome the bait may seem, at the end of that bait is a hook that will bring you down! That pleasure will be short-lived!

For instance, let's just look at one area. God tells us that sex between a husband and wife is honorable, that it is good. God has given this intimate relationship between a husband and a wife and now comes Satan and he perverts it, twists it and there is always the hook that will bring you down, as I have said!

And we can see the results of sex outside of the marriage relationship. We have sexually transmitted diseases! Listen to the trending of STD's in America, "On Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that reported cases of three sexually transmitted diseases in the United States had reached an all-time high in 2017. Rates of gonorrhea rose by 67 percent, syphilis by 76 percent, and chlamydia by 21 percent, to a total of almost 2.3 million cases nationwide. According to the CDC, 2017 surpassed 2016 as the year with the most reported STD cases on record - and marked the fourth year in a row that STDs increased steeply in the U.S." (<http://bit.ly/2D53hZ7>)

Not something to be proud of and yet, many feel that it is a lack of funding that has caused this increase in STD's! Are you kidding me! It is the consequences of taking the bait that Satan has placed before us!

And there are so many different things that are out there if we take the bait and get hooked! We have AIDS, teen pregnancy, single motherhood, abortion, ruined marriage, broken families, and the list can go on!

Don't be drawn in by the bait because you will get hooked.

Haven't you seen that with fish. They play with the bait, and they play with the bait, and they play with the bait. And then, when they can't stand it any longer, they take a bite and wham, they are hooked! How true in our own lives. Be careful, be warned!

And here's the thing. No matter how much you have, it will never be enough. There will always be another bait, another bright shiny thing to draw your attention and get you hooked!

We want more and more and more, and it drives us farther and farther away from God and into sin!

And please remember, there is always the hook. Never forget that no matter how pleasing the bait may seem, there is always the hook that follows the bait!

Let's look at Achan. Think of how Achan could have rationalized his sin:

“No one will know.”

“These things won't be missed.”

“Think of how I'll be admired in this beautiful Babylonian garment.”

“I'm not hurting anyone.”

“I deserve this.”

And we do the same when it comes to sin. We make all kinds of excuses, but they all fall short and God will not accept them!

Look at what went on here with Achan.

In verse 21 we see the natural progression of sin. *“I SAW, I COVETED, I TOOK.”*

It is as John tells us, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh [I saw], the lust of the eyes [I coveted], and the pride of life [I took], is not from the Father but is of the world.”** I John 2:15-16.

That is the same way that Satan works today in our lives and yet, we seem unaware of his schemes, his devices and we get hooked!

Let me show you how the world is working to get you to purchase what they are selling. We are told,

So you're about to buy a new winter coat, and for some reason, you also pick up a pink hat. A fake fur pink hat. In a certain candy floss pink.

You're not sure why – you're not really a 'pink' kinda girl, and you don't even wear hats that often – but then, there are many ways advertisers make you buy stuff you don't need.

Neil Sanders can tell you all about those tricks. They're a plague on our society that play with the human mind and lead to overconsumption, overspending, and overuse of the world's resources.

The marketing expert holds an MA in Film Studies, has studied Psychology and Media Production and is a qualified hypnotherapist, too. Neil has been studying the history of the 'dark art' of advertising for years, as well as its applications by military and government intelligence agencies across the globe. . . .

. . . Bernays (considered the 'father of PR ') famously wrote:

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are moulded, our tastes formed, and our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of . . . It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind.”

He developed a theory called “The engineering of consent” which basically means defining norms for people to follow, such as how we think ‘retail therapy’ or hanging out at a mall is normal today. This drew heavily on the work of his uncle, who just happened to be Sigmund Freud, and focused on appealing to the emotions and the subconscious minds of potential buyers, as opposed to rational or practical reasons for them to purchase a product. . . .

He promoted Ivory soap as being the ‘purest’ due to its ability to float in the bath, and tied other arbitrary properties to products suggesting that this is the reason this product is superior. All of this appeals to the subconscious and is part of the drive to buy things for pleasure and or status rather than necessity. The best type of marketing campaign is where you go, I want that product but can’t quite pinpoint why.

- <http://bit.ly/2P2u2IN>

In other words, the hooks are always out there, and they will use all kinds of bait to get you to purchase what they are selling, and I can tell you from personal experience, they are selling you worldly goods!

Let me ask you this. Have you noticed with just commercials, not television shows, the number of homosexual and lesbian spots there are out there today? They have increased so much and it is becoming the norm. No matter what you are selling, from jewelry to hotel rooms to whatever, they are promoting a lifestyle that God calls a sin!

We are having this lifestyle; homosexual, lesbian, transgender taught to our children in school! And let’s face it, kids are even more impressionable than adults and once they have our children, they will have a society!

And for Achan, he thought he could hide his sin, but he couldn’t. God sees all and He exposes our sin!

Again, don’t think you are above this, you are not. Notice the progression of sin, how it starts and where it leads as James tells us, **“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”** James 1:14-15.

The bait is out there, we are drawn to it by our own desires, we are enticed or tempted or lured and before you know it, we take a bite and we are hooked!

If you don't think it can happen; you are wrong.

Listen to the warning that Paul gave to Timothy. He wrote in I Timothy 6:10, "**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**"

Here the bait is money and some, in their greediness, moved away from the faith, moved away from what God had instructed them, and they did evil to gain more money and in the end, it brought many sorrows and it will affect not only the person, but family and friends as well!

Not an easy topic and you may be wondering what in the world can we do about this so we don't get hooked?

Remember the title of this message – *DEAD TO SIN!*

That is what needs to be done and we will see that as we read on.

VERSES 24-26

First let me deal with what happened to Achan and then we will make the application for our own lives.

Isn't that interesting. They stoned Achan to death because of his sin! They removed that which was destructive.

Now we can understand why Achan was put to death for his sin, but why was his family?

To help justify the killing of Achan's family some will tell you that the family of Achan was an accomplice to this crime, they knew about it and thus, they too were guilty.

That may be true, but I don't think that is what the text is saying here.

You see, I think that the text is showing us that it was just Achan that was stoned and burned.

How do I know that for sure?

The reason I believe that is because of the words we have read in these few verses.

Look at verses 25 and 26, it says, "**you . . . you . . . him . . . him.**"

That is speaking of Achan being stoned and a heap of stones placed over him. I think we are all in agreement over that.

Then, in verses 24 and 25 we see the words, "**them . . . them . . . them**" that are used, and this is probably speaking of his possessions, not his children.

You see, it was his animals that they stoned and burned and his possessions that were burned, and I don't believe it is speaking of his family.

Did his family witness this? You bet they did, but I don't think they were judged for Achan's sin.

Remember what the Lord said in Ezekiel 18:20, "**The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.**"

We are accountable for our own sins, and thus, I don't see that his family was put to death with Achan for his sin, the text does not seem to support that.

So what does this mean to us?

It means we must put to death sin in our lives. You don't play with it, you don't entertain it, you put sin to ***DEATH!***

One writer put it like this,

Lingering. Habitual. Out of control. How would you describe the persistence of sin in your life?

Many Christians, even though they are sincerely committed to following Christ, continue to live with besetting sins. They continue to feel as if they are powerless to overcome the impulse to act against God's commands and their own better judgment.

It's easy to believe this is just the way things are. Nobody's perfect, right?

Pretending like we are feels self-righteous or hypocritical. Popular culture accepts, and sometimes celebrates, the fact that we each have our deep and personal hang ups. Everyone has a skeleton in her closet. It's not a matter of *if* you have an addiction, a secret indulgence, a private vice. It's a matter of which one and when it will come to light.

If this is true, maybe we should just accept our weaknesses and embrace them as part of who we are.

But here the Scriptures stop us.

A persistent theme of the New Testament, especially in the letters by Paul, is that the sinful habits we find so hard to shake are not an integral part of us. We are not condemned to sin forever. Instead, Paul insists that Christians can be "dead to sin."

As John Wesley explained it, this means being "[f]reed both from the guilt and from the power of it."

That's a counter-cultural message in a society convinced we're all broken beyond repair.

- <http://bit.ly/2uR7gEe>

And that truly is the idea of the world, "*Don't fight against it, give into it!*"

Let me be clear on this. We are to fight against sin, we are to be dead to sin and alive to God! Don't let Satan catch you with the bait he is using.

Yes, we are all broken but not beyond repair and I praise God that we are not beyond repair! Aren't you?

God is amazing at putting our lives together. Yes, Humpty Dumpty was a mess and even all the king's horses and all the king's men could not put him back together again!

But my God, the Creator of heaven and earth can put our lives back together again if you would let Him!

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 6:11, **“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Here's the thing. Sin will always be out there; it is just the reality.

The main issue is what do we do with that sin and Paul tells us that we are to be ***DEAD TO SIN!***

In fact, when Paul uses the word **“reckon,”** it was an accounting term, and it simply means, “to put into one's account.”

Please understand that Paul is not speaking of wishful thinking here, if it is not in the account then it is not yours!

In other words, what a person has in his ledger has to accurately correspond to what exists in their account.

You see, what Paul is telling us is that we need to simply believe that what God has said in His Word is really true in your life, it is a settled fact, you can take it to the bank!

What do we need to put into our account by faith? We have to put this into our account by faith that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ!

Why is that?

Because we still have these bodies of flesh and the flesh nature, that old man or woman does try to resurrect itself and control our lives from time-to-time.

Thus, by faith I believe the old life was put to death and we wait for the redemption of our bodies when this flesh nature will be done away with, when this corruptible body has put on incorruption and this mortal body has put on immortality.

Paul put it this way in Romans 8:18-23, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”**

We wait for that day!

This does not mean that we are immune to sin or temptation.

It does not mean that we will not sin.

It means that we are dead to the old life and can't go back to it.

Keep in mind that Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1, **“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”**

Do you see that?

When we were born into this world we were born **“dead *IN* sin.”**

That is why it is crazy to try to have someone who is not saved live a godly life, to not get involved in sin. You can warn people, but they are spiritually dead and thus, they are not living for God apart from Christ. In fact, the Bible tells us that they are at war with God!

And we can see that as we look at our society today, a society that calls good evil and evil good!

But, when we come to Christ, when we repent of our sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives, we are born again and that spirit that was once dead is now alive, made alive by God in our lives.

Now we are sensitive to the things of God. We are no longer at war with God, but we live to serve Him, we live to please Him!

And now we are dead to sin, or sin no longer has jurisdiction over our lives!

I hope you see the amazing difference that God has done in our lives!

NATURAL MAN – DEAD IN SIN!

SAVED MAN – DEAD TO SIN!

The problem comes when we allow sin into our lives and that which we are to be dead to we are stimulating and playing with it!

Don't go down that path. Think of sin as a rabid dog. Would you cuddle, play with, sleep with a rabid dog? I mean, come on, there is just a little froth coming from his mouth. And his name, Cujo, not too scary, right?

If you think you can play with a rabid dog without being contaminated by its poison, you are a fool! And that is how we are to think of sin, like a rabid dog that will only bring death and destruction to all who come in contact with it!

Notice what Paul goes on to say in Romans chapter 6, beginning in verse 12, “**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**” Romans 6:12-14.

Think about this. If we allow sin to continue in our lives it would be inconsistent with the new life we have in Christ and the fact that we are to be dead to sin!

If you allow sin to come into your life, if you open the door to sin in your life, it will be hard to close that door!

We want Jesus to reign in our lives and not sin. But whoever you surrender to will be manifested in your life. Either Christ, and then, as we surrender to Him what will be seen in our lives are godly things, our bodies will be instruments of righteousness. In other words, we will be playing beautiful music for all to hear!

Or to sin, and then, as we surrender to sin what will be seen in our lives are ungodly things as the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life will be seen. In other words, what will be manifested in our lives are worldly things, our bodies will be seen as instruments of unrighteousness to sin and the music people will hear will be destructive!

And please listen to what Paul is saying to us, it is so important. He wrote that, “**. . . sin shall not have dominion over you . . .**”

I think too often Christians feel that once you come to Christ the battles are over! They are not! In fact, they have just begun. But sin is not to have dominion over our lives!

The life of faith will always involve temptations but along with those temptations, the Lord is testing our faith, showing us what is in us so that we can grow, we can mature. Who are you going to listen to?

Remember Paul's struggles in Romans chapter 7. The things he wanted to do he didn't do and the things that he didn't want to do he did!

Paul put it like this in Romans 7:15-20, **“For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.”**

If you don't approach this as a battle. If you don't see that there will be temptations out there. If you are not paying attention. You are opening yourself up for trouble.

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 4:22-24, **“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”**

How important this is. Paul tells us that we are to **“put off”** the old man and his wicked ways, because, if you don't, you will continue to become more and more corrupt.

The old man, that sin nature is like an ugly monster, the more you feed it the more it grows and the more it grows the more it wants to be fed!

Put it off, put it away, discard it from your life or it will control your life!

Put on Christ instead!

We know now that what we put into our physical bodies will not only affect the way we look but it will also affect our health. Unhealthy eating and lifestyle will affect our physical health.

The same is true with our spiritual lives.

We are told in Proverbs 23:7, “**For as he thinks in his heart, so is he . . .**”

And Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, “**. . . For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**”

Yes, physically you are what you eat, but spiritually you are what you think!

So Paul told us to put off the old man and put on the new man, put on Christ and he is going to begin with the transformation of our mind. Instead of focusing on the things of this world, we are to be focused on the things of God.

When we give our lives to Jesus Christ, we received a new mind. We received a completely new spiritual and moral capability.

But this is a process also, that we continually renew our minds daily that we may gain the mind of Christ, (Philippians 2:5), and be more like Him.

Paul’s statement in I Corinthians chapter 2 explains this for us for in those passages Paul is simply saying that the reason we have godly wisdom and understanding is because the Holy Spirit has revealed them to us.

The natural man is controlled by the flesh and thus, whatever his flesh wants to do, that is what he does! And you can see how that plays out in the world today; it is empty for the most part!

And in verse 24 Paul is telling us to put on an entirely new man. Not the old man cleaned up but a new man on the inside, which will overflow to the outside.

Now Paul says that this “**... new man which was created according to God ...**” is better translated from the Greek, “**according to what God is.**”

When we are born again into the family of God, we are not transformed into the image of man but into what God is.

Our actions and attitudes should reflect those of God.

We should hate sin and love that which is good.

But we do have choices to make. We can obey God and walk accordingly. Or, we can disobey God and walk in rebellion to Him. But understand that there are consequences to our actions.

Let me explain it like this. We are told,

During my college years - in my infinite wisdom - it occurred to me that it made no sense to stop at red traffic lights when there was clearly no traffic around.

So I began to stop only briefly - just long enough to check for cars - and then proceed.

My stops became shorter and shorter, and eventually I no longer stopped at all. I simply checked out the landscape well in advance and - if no cars were coming - proceeded full speed through the red light.

One day something changed all of that, and I've never run a red light since.

I was approaching an isolated light in an area where there was rarely traffic in the busiest of times. I had already checked out the landscape and was near the empty intersection when a car topped the hill to my left. It was too far away to pose any threat, but it did pose a problem: it was a police car. But that is not what changed my ways, because I got the car stopped and received no more punishment than a dirty glance.

What scared me enough to put an end to that practice was what occurred in the split seconds between spotting the patrol car and getting the car stopped.

In that instant, my foot moved from the gas pedal to the brake pedal, and then back to the gas pedal! I did not will it to do that; my foot just did it. My foot did that because that is how I had trained my mind to respond. I had continually ignored what had once been a clear signal to stop - a red light - and as a result that signal was no longer clear.

The same occurs with sin. Our God-given conscience gives us warning signals, and we can heed those signals or ignore them. If we ignore them often enough, we may eventually fail to recognize them as signals at all.

- Perfect Illustrations for Every Topic and Occasion

Be very careful here. Again, we are not to play with sin, entertain sin, be amused with sin, but we are to put sin to death in our lives!

As Paul said, “**Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Romans 6:11.

Or as The Amplified Bible puts it, “**Even so consider yourselves also dead to sin and your relation to it broken, but alive to God [living in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus.**” May we not forget that!

As I begin to close this morning, let me leave you with this.

The name “Achan” means, “trouble” and I guess that he was.

And the Valley of Achor means, the “Valley of trouble.”

But, interestingly enough, in Hosea 2:15 we are told, **“I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”**

What does that mean?

What does it mean that there is a door in the Valley of trouble?

I believe it is a picture of Jesus, that we are in trouble you might say in our sins, dead in sins and yet, there is a door that we can enter through. And Jesus is that door where we will find forgiveness of sin. It truly is a door of hope that Hosea talked about!

And once we have been set free in Christ, once the truth of God found in the Word of God sets us free, then we need to walk in that new life we have in Christ. Death to sin and alive in Christ!

Paul, in Galatians 5:24-25 reminds us, **“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”**

You see, the victory is given to us in Christ but we must crucify the flesh, put it to death on a daily basis if we are going to walk in the victory and that is done as we walk in the Spirit for the Spirit wars against the flesh and if we walk, if we surrender to the Spirit’s leading, we will have that victory!

Yes, there is coming a day when the Lord will remove the curse of sin all together, as we are told in Revelation 22:3.

But until that time, remember: ***DEAD TO SIN! ALIVE IN CHRIST!***