


The Problem of Unanswered Prayer




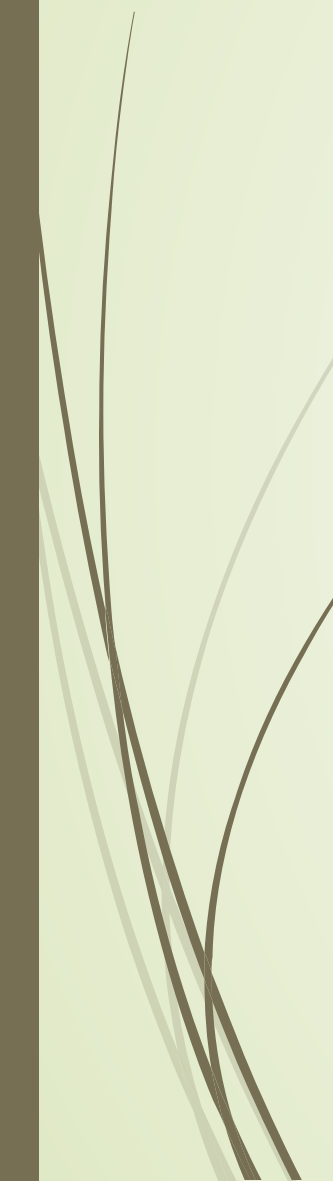
Joshua 7:1- 8:1 NIV


- **7** But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things^[a]; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri,^[b] the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel.
- **2** Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

➤³ When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there.”⁴ So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai,⁵ 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 on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water.




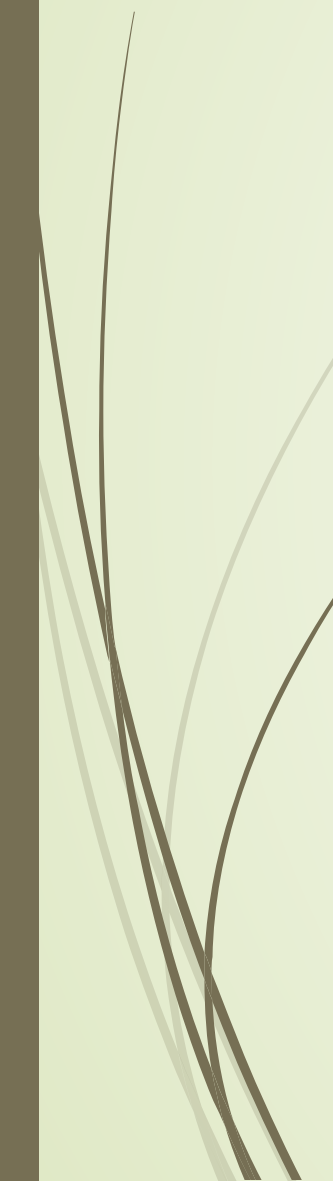
➔ **⁶ Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. ⁷ And Joshua said, “Alas, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver 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! ⁸ Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? ⁹ 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?”**



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- **10 The LORD said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? 11 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. 12 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.**
 - **13 “Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.**






➔ **4** ““In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the LORD chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the LORD chooses shall come forward man by man. ¹⁵ Whoever is caught with the 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 an outrageous thing in Israel!””

➔ **16** Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen.

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- ➔ **17** The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen. **18** Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen.
 - ➔ **19** Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.”

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- **20** Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: **21** When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, **[c]** two hundred shekels **[d]** of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, **[e]** I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”
 - **22** So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. **23** They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the LORD.

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- **4 Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today.”**
 - **Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. ²⁶ 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 Achor^[f] ever since.**

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- ➔ **8 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land.**




The Problem of Unanswered Prayer

- ➔ **James 5:14-15** *“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.”*



The Problem of Unanswered Prayer

- **Prayer requires much more than a “shopping list” of things we want God to do for us.**
 - **Prayer is not a right, but a privilege, given to us when we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, together with the indwelling Holy Spirit.**
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- John 14:13, “*And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*”
- John 15:16, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.*”

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- **John 16:23, “In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”**
- **Romans 8:26 .“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”**

The Problem of Unanswered Prayer

- 1. Joshua misread the situation
- Joshua did not enquire of God
- Sin affects everyone.
- If we allow sin to remain in the church and take no action, then we are all guilty.
- We must spend time in prayer
- 1Chron 29:14, David's prayer begins, "*Who am I, and who are my people that we should be able ...?*"



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- 2. When God Doesn't Seem to Answer it Does **Not** Mean He has rejected us
- Jesus has invested everything into His people
- We must never forget our relationship to Christ
- He **HAS** heard our prayer

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- 3. Even if there appears to be no answer to prayer, accept by faith that it has been heard
- God told Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”
- Commit the matter to God.
- The matter is as good as done – “For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai.”



The Problem of Unanswered Prayer

- ***“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,”*** Philippians 3:10