

Jos212 – Victory After Sin – Joshua 8:1-35

*Pastor Dave Shepardson Calvary Chapel Nuevo / [www.wordbymail.com](http://www.wordbymail.com)*

Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Victory After Sin.” We’re going to study the entire chapter of Joshua 8, all 35 verses. We will survey a portion of it, however.

In our last message, we saw Israel soundly defeated at Ai in their second battle in the Promised Land. Not because God had failed them, but because sin had brought them to defeat.

Today we see that defeat turned into victory God’s way and in Israel’s victory at Ai today, there is both great hope for victory in our own lives and a life changing lesson that can help protect us from falling into sin that brings defeat into our lives. There is great hope for victory in our lives not because we will never sin, but because God is looking at something far more important than our failures.

Listen carefully please.

**2 Chronicles 16:9 (NLT)**

***9 The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him . . .***

**NOT** Those who have **never made a mistake**

**NOT** Those who have **never sinned**

**BUT** Those whose ***hearts are fully committed*** to him.

That is the beginning of “Victory After Sin” – a heart that is fully committed to him.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, please bring this to life in us. By your Spirit light your living Word to life. Paint it as a vibrant picture in our minds, Lord. Allow us to see the incredible illustration that you’ve put in Joshua Chapter 8. Give us hope – the guaranteed hope that there is victory after sin in our lives. And Lord give us that great life lesson to save us from having to fight back to victory after sin. We pray you would do something great in our lives this morning, for your sake and in your name, amen.*

When we put our full faith in Jesus Christ the Bible says we are forgiven of our sin (past and future) and we are given the righteousness of Christ which is what allows us to stand in God’s presence. We are forgiven of our sin through faith in Jesus Christ *alone* and we are given victory over sin *positionally*.

But God wants us to walk in that victory over sin in a *practical* way, meaning today, in this life. That walking in victory over sin is what we call the Victorious Christian Life.

**Alexander Whyte** said – in a famous quote “*The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.*”

This is because although our victory over sin is complete *positionally* through our faith in Christ – our *walking* in that victory is always *a series of new beginnings*.

**Proverbs 24:16 (NLT)**

*16 The godly may trip (stumble) seven times, but they will get up again . . .*

In Joshua Chapter 7, Israel had sinned and broken their covenant with God and they had experienced serious defeat in their lives because of their sin. But they had dealt with their sin – they had radically judged it – and today Israel has a new beginning with God.

Joshua Chapter 8 actually has two separate events in it and probably should be taught over two messages. But I really want you to see these two events together. So we are going to do the entire chapter, but we’ll survey some of the first event for time’s sake.

Chapter 8 is directly connected to Chapter 7 by the first word – “***Then***” or “***Now***.” This Hebrew word closely connects these two events.

And so we left Joshua standing in front of a pile of stones that was God’s judgment on sin in the camp of Israel and God had told Joshua (verse 12) that this sin was the reason for the defeat in their lives. And even though Joshua had radically removed the sin, Chapter 8 still opens with Joshua ‘***Fearful***’ and ‘***Discouraged***’.

**Joshua 8:1(A) (NLT)**

*1 **Then** the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid or discouraged . . .*

Defeat in the Christian life – especially in sin – often brings fear and discouragement. But when we truly turn from our sin and turn back to the Lord, God brings great encouragement to replace our fear and discouragement.

And so, first the Lord encourages Joshua, and then the rest of Joshua 8:1 (b).

**Joshua 8:1(B) (NLT)**

*1 . . . Take **all your fighting men** and attack Ai, for **I have given you** the king of Ai, his people, his town, and his land.*

If your heart is fully committed to the Lord, and if you have truly turned from your sin, and if you are now ready to do things God's way – then do not be afraid or discouraged. Get up and with everything you've got, re-attack the enemy because God has already given you the victory in Christ. That should be greatly encouraging to all of us as we live through our new beginnings with the Lord.

Today the Lord is going to give Israel full victory over Ai, where there was previously defeat because of sin. However, there is a truth illustrated here that I really want you to hear for two reasons. This truth is proven over and over again both in scripture and in the lives of Christians. (Here it is.)

*The road back to victory from the failure of sin can be a long and difficult road.*

That truth is perfectly illustrated here in Joshua Chapter 8.

God **WANTS** you to **NOT** be afraid or discouraged  
God **WANTS** you to re-attack the enemy - and **WIN**  
and God **HAS** given you the victory (In Christ).

But, for you to walk in that victory *after* the failure of sin is much, much harder than if you would've *obeyed God* from the beginning.

But before we see this truth so perfectly illustrated, look at the end of God's promise of victory in Joshua 8:2.

**Joshua 8:2 (NLT)**

(in verse 1 God says "I have given you Ai) ***2 You will destroy them as you destroyed Jericho and its king. But this time you may keep the plunder and the livestock for yourselves . . .***

Remember last week Achan stole plunder from God, bringing defeat into the camp of Israel. And now we see if Achan would have just waited *one chapter* God would've given him much more than he could ever try to steal from God.

**SIN SAYS – *Get what you can – NOW***

**GOD SAYS – *I will give you ALL you need – in TIME***

So now let's take a realistic look at the hard road back to victory after the defeat of sin. At Jericho, Israel had *faith in God's methods* and they had *followed God's ways* and the result was a supernatural victory from God.

But now – after the defeat that sin brought into the camp – *now* the road to victory is going to be longer and harder. God will still bring the victory and it will still be supernatural. But for *victory after sin* we need to prepare ourselves for a longer and harder battle.

So let's survey this battle in Chapter 8 and compare it in your mind to the relative ease of the victory at Jericho. (Follow me in your own Bible, if you have one.)

In **Joshua 8:3** Joshua and all the fighting men went out and instead of 3,000 like the first attempt at Ai, Joshua now calls up 30,000 of his best warriors.

Then, in **Joshua 8:4-6** Joshua has to devise an elaborate plan in order to draw the enemy out of their stronghold and Joshua says they're going to pretend to run away to get the enemy to chase after them.

Then in **Joshua 8:7 (NLT)** Joshua says to the first group  
***7 you will jump up from your ambush and take possession of the town, for the Lord your God will give it to you.***

Yes, the Lord your God will give you the victory but it's going to be more "complicated" than if you would have done it God's way to start.

And then in **Joshua 8:12** Joshua sends another 5,000 men to guard against a second enemy at Bethel to make sure he doesn't have another battle front. And as the chapter continues this elaborate and difficult plan for victory works, and all of the army of Ai was drawn out by Joshua's tactics.

And we read in **Joshua 8:18-19 (NLT)**  
***18 Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Point the spear in your hand toward Ai, for I will hand the town over to you." Joshua did as he was commanded.***  
***19 As soon as Joshua gave this signal, all the men in ambush jumped up from their position and poured into the town. They quickly captured it and set it on fire.***

Then in **verse 22** the entire army of Ai was caught in the crossfire and not a person of Ai survived. All of that city was completely destroyed.

**EXCEPT, as Joshua 8:27 says (NLT)**  
***27 Only the livestock and the treasures of the town were not destroyed, for the Israelites kept these as plunder for themselves, as the Lord had commanded Joshua.***

Again, if Achan would've only waited on the Lord he would have had his part in this – instead of being dead.

And then in **verse 29** Joshua impales the enemy king on a pole and then buries him under a great pile of stones which serves as yet another reminder of victory God's way on behalf of his people.

But guys, this was a long and hard fought battle for Israel to return to victory after their defeat in sin; and very often *our* return to victory after *our* defeat in sin turns out to be a long and hard fought battle.

And again, Jesus has won that victory over sin on your behalf and the Spirit of God living inside you gives you the supernatural power to re-gain victory after you have lost it to sin.

But there is a **double** lesson in this first half of Joshua Chapter 8.

**Lesson #1)** To return to walking in victory with God after a defeat in sin, you must be prepared for a longer and harder battle than you would've had if you would've done it God's way to begin with.

**Lesson #2)** Consider the long and hard road back from sin *before you decide to choose sin* and allow this knowledge to motivate you to refuse sin and do it God's way to begin with.

And that Lesson #2 is what transitions us into the second half of the chapter which is why (to me) it was important to address these two events together. We'll see it in the next verses.

Joshua doesn't rush off to finish conquering the Promised Land like he did when God gave him the Jericho victory. Instead Joshua turns back to the Lord in order to learn what God is trying to teach the people.

*Never failing* is not what makes a wise leader  
*Learning from failure* is what makes a wise leader.

So instead of immediately preparing for the next battle, Joshua takes the people of Israel twenty-five miles north to Shechem. This is where God appeared to Abraham in Genesis 12 and where Jacob eventually settled with the twelve sons of Israel. And at Shechem is a valley between two mountains that form a beautiful and perfect amphitheater. We (Christians) can't really go there safely – so I've never seen it.

But F.B. Meyer describes it like this: ***“It is a place where the mountains are hollowed out and the limestone stratum is broken into a succession of ledges . . . It is a natural amphitheater . . . capable of containing a vast audience of people.”***

The acoustics here are described as “miraculous” and the contrast between the two mountains is “striking.” One is green and lush – the other is rocky and barren. And Joshua took the people there for a ceremony they would prayerfully never forget.

Moses had actually commanded Joshua to do exactly what he is about to do (see that in Deuteronomy 27).

And we continue with the very next verse after Israel’s hard won victory after sin. It’s Joshua 8:30-31.

**Joshua 8:30-31 (NLT)**

***30 Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal.***

***31 He followed the commands that Moses the Lord’s servant had written in the Book of Instruction (Deut 27): “Make me an altar from stones that are uncut and have not been shaped with iron tools.” Then on the altar they presented burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord.***

Sin had separated Israel from God and Joshua knew that this moment was critically necessary for Israel to fully return to God.

So Joshua builds an altar unshaped by human hands and first offers burnt offerings which is something completely consumed by God, and shows full and complete consecration to God.

Then peace offerings, which were also called “fellowship offerings” because they represented “communion” (fellowship) with God and with God’s people.

Then after the offerings the object lesson begins.

**Joshua 8:32-33 (NLT)**

***32 And as the Israelites watched, Joshua copied onto the stones of the altar the instructions Moses had given them.***

***33 Then all the Israelites—foreigners and native-born alike—along with the elders, officers, and judges, were divided into two groups. One group stood in front of Mount Gerizim, the other in front of Mount Ebal. (In this massive limestone amphitheater) Each group faced the other, and between them stood the Levitical priests carrying the***

***Ark of the Lord's Covenant. This was all done according to the commands that Moses, the servant of the Lord, had previously given for blessing the people of Israel.***

So, all of Israel was divided into two groups in this incredible natural amphitheater. Half of the Tribes stood in front of Mt. Gerizim which is lush and green and beautiful. Half the Tribes stood in front of Mt. Ebal which is rocky, barren and harsh.

And as Moses had instructed them, first the Levites shouted out the curses of disobedience and sin and all the Tribes on the rocky and barren Mt. Ebal *had* to shout amen. Then the Levites shouted out the blessings of obedience to God and all the Tribes on the lush and green Mt. Gerizim *got* to shout amen.

And if you would take the time to carefully read Deuteronomy Chapters 27-30 you would easily and clearly see that God promises blessings if we do things his way and obey his direction and God promises negative and damaging consequences (the opposite of blessings – called curses) for those who choose sin over God's way.

In our culture – we hate to hear this – but there absolutely is a *right* and a *wrong*.

God's way is *right*  
Sin's way is *wrong*.

And Israel had now experienced both  
*Victory* God's way  
and *defeat* sin's way.

God wanted his people to learn this simple life directing lesson.

And so after their defeat in sin and their return to victory, God splits the nation in half and had one half represent the *destruction of sin* and the other half represent the *blessings of obeying God*. And as every curse was read, half of Israel *had* to shout amen and as every blessing was read half of Israel *got* to shout amen.

And so we read in our final two verses,

**Joshua 8:34–35 (NLT)**

***34 Joshua then read to them all the blessings and curses Moses had written in the Book of Instruction.***

***35 Every word of every command that Moses had ever given was read to the entire assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the foreigners who lived among them.***

All the instructions of Moses, the blessings for following God and the curses for following sin and at the end of these instructions of Moses that Joshua read to the people that day there are two verses that WE absolutely MUST hear today.

**Deuteronomy 30:19–20 (NLT)**

***19 “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!***

***20 You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life . . .***

Oh, that we would choose LIFE over Death, that we would choose Blessings over curses by simply loving the Lord our God, by obeying him and by committing ourselves firmly to him.

Guys, heaven and earth will witness the choice we make.

*Let’s pray. Lord, it’s so simple. And the enemy has tried so hard to convolute it, to make it grey, to make it foggy, to make it unclear and our whole culture is determined to take away right from wrong to make there be no wrong and no sin. But Lord, we know that you are the eternal God, that you are the absolute authority and you clearly say there’s a right way that leads to life and blessings and a wrong way that leads to death and destruction. Lord make it clear in our mind that heaven and earth are witnessing the choices we make. Lord, may we make choices for you out of our love for you, out of our desire to obey you and out of a heart that is fully committed to you.*

If there happens to be something in your life today that you need to apply this to, do it. Apply this to your life. Right now, right where you are, it’s you and God and heaven and earth are witnessing the choice you’re going to make. What is it in your life that you’re convincing yourself is not going to lead to your destruction? God says if it’s sin it will bring destruction. What is it in your life that you need the power of God to reveal to you the darkness of that path and the light, and the life and the blessing of God’s path? Would you just make a choice on that matter right now and make a commitment to God? Make a commitment to God to turn from your sin, to radically deal with it, and to return to full consecration, to full communion, to full obedience, and to full commitment in your heart to follow the Lord’s ways and walk in the Lord’s victories.

*Father, God, we want to walk in your victories. We need your power – all the power of the Holy Spirit at work fully in us to do it. We pray you would baptize us in that power, reveal to us our sin, give us that bitter poison taste in our mouth about it, and turn us*

*back to you today. We thank you for the promise of victory after the defeat of sin. Be glorified in our lives through our choices, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen.*