

Defeat Doesn't Mean Defeated

October 23-29, 2011

PRAYER:

Begin with a few moments of sharing thanks and praises in prayer.

Leaders, it's your call; you may choose to incorporate more information/scriptures as time allows for your small group lesson. **Reflecting:** Joshua knew how to bring victory from defeat, for he used the original battle plan to deceive the inhabitants of Ai. Now they were the ones who were presumptuous, and it cost them their lives. The strategy in verse 26 was learned from Moses (Exodus 17:8-13). New victories ought to result in new steps of dedication (vv 30-35). Joshua obeyed what Moses had commanded (Deuteronomy 27), for obedience to the Word is the secret of success (Joshua 1:8).

OPENER: When have you come up a winner the second time around: (Entrance exams? Remarriage? Finding a job?) What made the difference the second time?

What is one "come-from-behind victory" in your life you still remember fondly?

Read: Joshua 8:1-2

DISCUSS: In chapter 7, the first attack on Ai ended in defeat. What does the Lord say to Joshua now to encourage him in a second attack? How is this attack to differ from the first one?

After reading Joshua 8:3-8, briefly describe the plan of attack that Joshua draws up. How does this plan make use of the defeat suffered in the first attack?

If you had been an Israelite soldier, how would you have felt as Joshua explained his new master plan to you? (Wildly enthusiastic? O.k. but...? Forget it? Other thought?)

What does Joshua do to encourage any less-than-enthusiastic soldiers before the battle?

Read: Joshua 8:9-29

What do you think was the attitude of Ai's king and soldiers when the battle began? How did this attitude lead them to defeat?

What was the final outcome of Israel's attack on Ai?

How important was Joshua's leadership? In your opinion, how much of the outcome was due to the Lord's direction and how much was due to human planning and effort? (100% the Lord; mostly the Lord; 50-50; mostly human planning and effort.)

Read: Joshua 8:30-35

What was the first thing Joshua did after the great victory at Ai?

What does this tell you about the kind of man he was?

Why assemble all Israel at this place and in this fashion (Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:1-14)?

Why do you think the children and aliens were included in this covenant renewal ceremony?

PLAN for ACTION:

Never permit one failure to rob you of future victory. When God sees that we have obeyed His Word and sincerely dealt with sin, He comes with encouragement and guidance for the next step. It has well been said that the victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings. (Read Psalm 37:23-24) Had Achan only waited, he could have taken all the soils he desired, but he ran ahead of God and lost everything. (Read Matthew 6:33)

Is there some area of your life now in which you hear the Lord saying to you, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged?”

What great thing might you attempt now in your life if God assured you of success?

What might it mean for you to “build an altar” to the Lord?

How can this group pray for you this week?

*To view the complete teaching from the Sunday services
go to www.centralcommunity.org/media/index.html*