

Private sin isn't Private

Joshua 7

and 1 Cor 5

1. Introduction

- Many facets to participation in the Body of Christ – which membership must mirror. Exercise of gifts; Regular worship; Desiring the Word
- One of the facets is holy living, being pleasing to the Lord; not allowing sin to reign – membership mirrors too
- A difficult one – involves courage, and risks offence. Being a member of Christ's Church means subscribing to holiness

2.FCF

- sometimes, we're tempted to say, "it's between them and God" (or "me and God"!). But we aren't permitted by Jesus to do that.
- For the sake of the person, and for the sake of the congregation, and for the sake of God's Great Name, we have to deal with it.

Sin troubles the congregation

Private Sin isn't Private

Personal/Individual / "Private" Sin is a Corporate Concern

Structure of Joshua 7

- v1: Crisis (extended to 8:1)
- v2-9 defeat of the congregation
- v16-26 defeat of Achan
- v10-15 – God's interprets the Crisis: central teaching (Useful to create exegetical outlines.), "Private/ Individual Sin is a Corporate Concern"

Trouble is not always result of our sin. But our sin will always result in trouble. The passage ends with Achan burning and covered with stones in the Valley of Achor: Valley of Trouble.

Private Sin is a Corporate Concern

Even one, private, Sin troubles the congregation

1. 3 reasons why Private Sin is a Corporate Concern

Concerned about
Brings trouble

2.1. God holds the congregation accountable for resident sin

Undealt, hidden

- fact: At one and the same time, this sin is accounted to the congregation of Israel and Achan (v1, 11)
- fact: Only when the congregation had dealt with it, were they no longer guilty (15,26)
- Is this unfair?
 - o Unfair is subjective. But it is certainly not right for sinfulness within the congregation to go by unchecked. Worship inappropriate
 - o Nature of God's People: Holy. The 'covenant' – to be a Holy People to God
- God's judgement on the congregation? – not that each one of them had done what Achan had, but that there was sin... (12) "among you", (13) "in your midst...among you"

NT, not unclean by someone else

Passively
abdicating

- fact: when sin is tolerated, it is facilitated (second point will show how when left alone, it grows and infiltrates)
- In effect, the congregation are, according to YHWH's words in v1, "breaking faith". [Joshua concerned that their defeat is damaging God's Great Name(9); Actually it's Achan's sin which is "the outrageous thing" (15)]. cf Rom 2:24, "the Name of God is blasphemed among Gentiles because of you!"

- The Church is God's Congregation of Convenanted Holy People: 1 Cor 5:1-3 says Private Sin is a Corporate Concern (READ)

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- o Brothers and Sisters this is not a call to policing. We are accountable for what God

brings to our attention. Matthew 18 – each person to handle their own offence privately, and avoid public exposure.

o [Pause and Consider]

- o (That means, it's not a matter for you to enjoy with someone else. You have the God-given duty to approach your brother. And if you cannot pick up the courage, speak to your pastor, so that he can help you to!)

Even personal

- **Reason 1** = Private Sin is a ~~Corporate~~ Concern **Congregation** because the congregation is accountable to deal with resident sin. Ignorant/ Arrogant/ Untouched.. or Mourning, seeking restoration.

- [[Like Ezekiel was warned, (Eze 33:8) “*If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to turn from his way, that wicked person will die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.*” We ARE our brothers’ keepers.]]

2.2. Sin is infectious

- **1 Cor 5:6** (*Do you not know that a little yeast spreads through and affects the whole lump?*)
- **Notice: Already 1 sin had spawned 5 others (11), “moreover”.**
 - o *Israel have sinned, and moreover have overlooked the covenant which I commanded and moreover they have taken from the ban and moreover they have stolen and moreover they have deceived and moreover they have put among their vessels*
- **Reason 2 = because it is impossible to remain a private matter.** By nature, when left alone, it spawns more sin, like a cancer. Therefore (13) “Sanctify” – Cleanse! Everyone! Who knows to what degree it has spread! Corruption creates

Multifaceted, in attack on God, and people

corruption. Anger stirs anger. Lust stirs lust. And not only their own kind – but other kinds.

Hurt, bitterness

- Similarity to Gen 3:6,8 cannot be missed! “the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired” ... “the man and his wife hid themselves” – Gee, I’m glad they only did 1 sin, eating forbidden fruit...?? No, this was the entrance of evil, portal of Satan. Unexpected.

- **Reason 2: Sin is infectious.**

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- We don’t EXPECT trouble, infection, from sin... otherwise we wouldn’t do it! Don’t treat sin like they treated Ai: ‘Oh, it’s a weary to get all of us involved. Just send a little...!’

- The cost of eradicating sin is death – Rom 6:23 (God’s wages)

- Tribe by Tribe – let each tribe, clan, person sanctify and investigate themselves.

2.3. The Burning Anger of God on sin

- **(Read v1b)** = violently hot response – the right response to cancer of human race
 - o We must judge the evil of sin not by what we think of it, but by what God feels about it. A curse, to be devoted to destruction. 6:17-21 6x “cursed” 7:11-15 6x “cursed”
 - o (How do you feel about your bitterness and unthankfulness?) How you feel about others sinn?

- **2 results of this**

- **(12) “They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction”**

- (Jud 2:11-15 shows what this means when repentance doesn't follow. v14 – He gave them over to plunderers who plundered them...sold them into hands of enemies...whenever they marched out to fight, the LORD was against them)

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- **1 Cor 10:6** “these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did...they fell, ...they were destroyed...”. Now this is written to a NT congregation – where some were playing a game, and not really sheltering in Jesus.
 - Don't say, “I'm saved, so I'm not liable for destruction”. The one who is truly saved continually renounces sin” **Matt 9:** “if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.”
- Christ requires us to purge evil from our midst, **READ 1 Cor 5:12b-13**
- **So first result of God's anger on sin:** there is direct personal danger when sin is resident – if it is not repented of, God will deal with it appropriately. [I have personally pleaded with people, and warned, still fear for their souls]

Brothers and Sisters, the Promise of the Gospel is that there is no condemnation when we are sheltering in Christ.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins...

- **Secondly**, a congregation that lets sin reside will experience **withdrawal of God's favour**.
- **(12b) "I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you"**
 - o They would be just like the other nations, without the power and favour of God. God is able to raise whomever he wants, to accomplish His instrument purposes. Even stones!
 - o **General sickness** on the Body of Christ – a **cancer patient**...I think there is enough **evidence of this in the world around us**. Churches looking powerful on the outside, but **spiritually dead** on the inside.

- **So, Reason 3** why private sin is a **corporate concern**: **"the burning anger of God on sin"**... the congregation will suffer destruction, spreading disease, loss of power.

3 reasons.

1. **God holds the congregation accountable for resident sin**
2. **Sin is infectious**
3. **The Burning Anger of God on sin**

Therefore, the LORD, God of Israel, (10) says, **"Why are you on your face?... Get up!"**. (13), **"Get up... you cannot stand before your enemies..."**

i.e.

If they will rise before the face of their enemies, they must rise firstly before the face of God - and deal with Him. Worship & prayer is not appropriate when sin is lurking (get off your face and deal with the sin)

3.Application

What does God want from us? Difficult! The balance of Truth and Grace (someone may be new to the faith, ignorant... may be already convicted and wanting to change! As Jesus, didn't quench even a smouldering wick! Carefully! With Love! Tenderness! Gal 6:1. But in Complete Truth and urgency nonetheless)

God wants Sanctification! God is concerned even with 1 in 600,000!

> For the sake of the person, and for the sake of the congregation, and for the sake of God's Great Name, "Get Up, and deal with it!"