

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
NOVEMBER 29, 2010

In the Book of Joshua there is a story that has as its title "The Sin of Achan and Its Punishment." The story goes like this.

Joshua and the people of Israel had just come away from a stunning victory at Jericho. They had marched around the city of Jericho one time on each of six successive days, and on the seventh day they marched around Jericho seven times, blew the horns, shouted, and the walls of Jericho fell, leaving the city wide open to be conquered. And the Israelites had conquered Jericho totally.

Now the next city before them was the city of Ai. Fresh off their victory over Jericho, Joshua sent spies to Ai to check it out. The spies came back and said, "We can take the city. It is nowhere near as large as Jericho. All the people won't have to go to take Ai." So Joshua sent just a portion of the people of Israel to take Ai, but they were surprised. The people of Ai came out fighting, killed some of the Israelites, and set the rest to running. Israel had been defeated. After such an impressive victory over Jericho, how could this happen?

Joshua went before God and fell on his face praying to God. "God, what have you done bringing us into this land where we are going to be defeated? We'll become the laughing stock of all the peoples in this land." And God said to Joshua, "Get up! Stand up like a man! This is not my fault! Someone in Israel has sinned. I told you not to take any of the plunder when you defeated Jericho, but someone in the camp has done just that. That's the reason you were defeated at Ai. Israel hasn't been obedient to me, and I let you be defeated."

So Joshua set out to find who it was among the Israelites who had taken some of the plunder from Jericho that was to be destroyed, and it turned out to be a man named Achan. Achan had taken some of the silver in Jericho and a bar of gold, and he hid it in his tent. Achan confessed that he was the one who had done wrong and told Joshua where the articles taken from Jericho could be found. Joshua sent some men to search, and sure enough they came back with those articles Achan had taken from Jericho, silver and gold.

There are two or three faith lessons that can arise from this story of Achan's sin. One is that when we get to feeling too good about ourselves and what we can do, we may find failure on the horizon. Israel certainly did.

A second faith lesson has to do with taking some of that which God had said was to be completely destroyed. We might ask, "What was wrong with Achan having a little bit of the plunder from Jericho?" "What would it hurt for Achan to hold onto some of the silver and gold he found?" The answer is that Israel's success would come to them in depending completely on God to provide. Their success to that point had come that way - completely depending on God. The sin of Achan was that he was not willing to put himself totally in the hands of God. He wanted some of this world's goods. Achan's actions represented mistrust.

Now there is a faith lesson here for the church. We are not to be rich in this world's goods. We are to be rich in faith in God.

But the primary faith lesson I would have us hear from this story is that one person's sin does make a difference in the community. We human beings are not just solitary beings whose actions have no effect upon the rest of the world. Our culture needs to learn this lesson.

Just last night I heard a news story about vandalism in two parks up in the Lebanon area. The result of those actions by a few will bring cost to the whole community in terms of cleanup and repair. Our sins do affect the entire community.

And we could go on naming examples of the way actions of one person affect the whole. Much of the expense we incur in government - federal, state, and local - results from the indiscriminate actions of a few for which the community foots the bill. One obvious example is jails and prisons, and we could go on and on.

The primary faith lesson in the story of Achan's sin is that our sin is not a solitary matter affecting us and no one else. Our sin always affects others, and it always extracts a cost from others. And our sin usually extracts some kind of cost from the community. And so the way we solve some of the problems we face today in this

culture as a culture is through individual persons practicing self-discipline and refusing to be a part of that which will cost community as a whole. The sooner we relearn this lesson in our American culture, the better off we will all be. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

“NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM”

A Night in Bethlehem is just around the Corner. Next weekend Friday December 10th from 6-9pm, Saturday December 11th from 5-8pm and Sunday December 12th from 3-6pm in the CLC. If you are interested in participating in this wonderful outreach to our community please call the church office. If you don't have time to volunteer and would like to make a donation, mark your check in the memo section, A Night in Bethlehem. Please spread the word to all your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers about Night in Bethlehem, it is FREE, all we are asking for is a can of food for Loaves and Fishes. Oh and in case you were wondering, A Night in Bethlehem is a hands on town of Bethlehem experience. Hear festive music, wander through the bakery and create fun projects in the marketplace shops. Encounter a frantic census taker, and meet shepherds who can't wait to share a remarkable story. Talk with Mary & Joseph and hear God's amazing story of Love and a promise fulfilled.

Also NEW this year is a display of Nativity Sets. If you would like to have your Nativity set displayed, please bring your set by Wednesday December 8th to the CLC. Please mark your set with your name on it, so it can be returned.

Next week we will be setting up Bethlehem in the CLC. Wednesday night after supper and Thursday evening, we will be needing lots of volunteers.

Alecia

ADVENT WREATH

We would invite persons to participate in Advent worship by reading and lighting the Advent Candles. Our plan is to use all the Lectionary Scripture readings in the Worship services during Advent and Christmas. We will need one or two persons to read the Scripture passages and one to light the candles. We need persons from both worship services for the following Sundays:

December 12

December 19

December 26

Readers will need to call the office in the week prior to get the scripture readings for the following Sunday.

MARY-MARTHA CIRCLE CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Mary-Martha Circle will have a Christmas party at Carol Beasley's home on December 14th. Everyone is asked to bring a Christmas plate to exchange as well as finger food.

PLEDGE CARDS

Letters with Pledge cards were sent out this week. If you did not receive one, but would like to participate by pledging, please contact the church office. We have extra pledge cards. Cards will also be put at the entrance to the chapel and the entrances to the sanctuary if you forget yours on Pledge Sunday (December 12).

CHRISTIANS CONNECT

Christians Connect will meet on Sunday, December 12, following the 8:15 a.m., service in the Friends & Fellowship class. This month's gathering will be hosted by the Aldersgate Class. Everyone is invited to join us for food and fellowship.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Peggy Morris - December 6

Landon Burns - December 12

Gracie Henson - December 14

Heath McKnight - December 16

Jill Brewer - December 18

Luke Richardson - December 24

T. J. Moore - December 27

Brenda Gardner - December 28

Addison Potts - December 31

Jerry Moore - December 31

CHILDREN'S HANDBELL SCHEDULE

December 08 - Practice 5:00 - 5:30 p.m.

December 12 - Performance in 10:30 worship service

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson

Freddie Mae Jackson
Bill Evans
Scottie McMackin
Jean Cone
Scott Dean
George Clark
Kelsey Gobble
Justin Mitchell
Selene Crews
Jane Marston
Buddy Gibbs
Kenneth Williams
Bea Thigpen
Byron Shelton
Peggy Cooke
Laura Kitchens
Bill Clark
Rob Raymond
Dr. Jennie Scoggins
Emily Hill
Margie Mann

NOTES OF THANKS

We would like to thank everyone for their generosity during a difficult time for our family. The food, cards, memorials, thoughts and prayers were greatly appreciated. The love and grace showered upon us during this time was a blessing like no other. We are very fortunate to be part of such a caring church family. Love and God Bless,

Larry & Janice Bailey and Family

To those who put together my gift box-Thank you! I really appreciate your thoughts and the snacks this time of year! I hope you all have a wonderful holiday!

Sincerely, **Corey Crowell**

Dear Church Family,

I just wanted to say thank you for the care package. It really means a lot to me to know that I have a church family behind me. This semester has been a tough one but I have put faith in God that he will get me through it. Thanks again,

Kameron Slater

I Will Be Loyal

**To The United Methodist Church And
Support It With: My Presence:**

Sunday, Nov. 28, 2010

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....40

Sunday school Attendance.....77

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....109

My Service: Sunday, Dec. 5, 2010

Acolytes: Hunter Hardy & Alexis Fann

Communion Helpers: Kamelia Wayne & Lucy Benson

Nursery Volunteer: Kathy Johnstone

Children's Church: Brenda & Beth Benson

Loaves and Fishes

Tues. Dec. 7: Linda Newton, Ray Price Martha Jo & Jerry Gibbs

