

PREPARING THE HORSE

Grow Up, Part 6

December 5th, 2010

When dealing with success it is easy to think I was the one who created it

We often take too much blame for failures and too much credit for victories

We have seen that Results can't be trusted as an accurate measure of God's approval or disapproval (see Oct 31st message – "How Reliable Are Results")

Proverbs 21:30-31 (NIV) "There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord. The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord."

Final outcomes are in the hands of the Lord

"A Brief Detour"

Psalm 73:3,13 (NLT) "For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness... Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason?"

In the dark shadows of a difficult time, we all have a natural tendency to judge God and our spiritual journey based on the latest returns

Psalm 73:17 (NIV) "When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny."

Reminder: There is a final chapter, the last page that is yet to come – don't get caught up in the mid-story scene as we live through it

"And Now Back To Our Message"

There is one thing I can control and one thing I will be held responsible for: How well am I preparing my horse for battle?

Wrong question: "How are things going?"

Right question: "Am I doing the Right things? Am I preparing my horse for victory?"

How Our Role & God's Role Intersect

We often fail to understand the impact and power of the unseen realm upon our endeavors – especially when judging our victories and defeats

Joshua 6:18,19 (NCV) "Don't take any of the things that are to be destroyed as an offering to the Lord. If you take them and bring them into our camp, you yourselves will be destroyed, and you will bring trouble to all of Israel. All the silver and gold and things made from bronze and iron belong to the Lord and must be saved for him."

Joshua 7:3-5 (NIV) "When they returned to Joshua, they said, 'Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there.' So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 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 and became like water."

Nothing was wrong with their battle plan or their army – something was wrong in the unseen realm they had no way of knowing about, no way to overcome Joshua 7:1 (NLT) "But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the LORD. A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated things, so the LORD was very angry with the Israelites."

Those slain men & their grieving families weren't responsible for Achan's actions; they were simply caught in the backwash of his sin. It was a battle lost in the unseen realm

Taking the insights of Proverbs and the lessons of the defeat at Ai, we should learn to pay a lot less attention to outcomes

There is a certain steadiness & emotional equilibrium that comes with understanding the difference between my role and God's

There is tranquility in accepting the fact that there are things in the unseen realm I'll never know or understand

There are things that happen that we must realize and accept there aren't answers for

Good things and bad things sometimes happen through no fault of our own

God wants us to focus our energy and efforts on the one & only thing we can control, and the one & only thing God will hold us accountable for – How well have we prepared the horse for battle

After that, it's God's call, not ours

My Next Step Today Is...

- I will do all that I can to "prepare my horse" for battle & leave the results to God
- For those things in the unseen realm that I will never know or understand, I will trust in God
- I will memorize Proverbs 21:30-31
- I/we plan to help with cleaning the church on Sun, Dec 19th