THE CHAMPION WHO LOST HIS CROWN

The cyclist was truly famous, he won seven times and consecutively in the “Tour de France” between 1999 and 2005. Do you know his name? Lance Armstrong. He became a celebrity in the cycling world. However, something happened that shocked the entire world. After some investigations it was uncovered that Armstrong had been using illegal substances. How very sad! He lost all his titles because he chose to disregard one of the most important rules for his sport.

This story presents the reality that it is important to follow rules, laws, and regulations. Another story comes to mind of someone who not only lost their titles, but also their life because of their disobedience. His name is Achan (Joshua 7).

**A story of disobedience**

God had worked a miracle for his people. The walls of Jericho had been crumbled and the people of Israel won their first victory in their conquest for Canaan. God had given an order for all the gold, silver, and plunder to be dedicated to Him. Anyone who took these for themselves would be cursed (Joshua 6:18 - 19). The order resonated in the minds of all because God had given clear instructions. However, Achan did not obey the divine order and took something from the Anathema, which had been forbidden by God. He hid it in his tent and acted like nothing had happened. God sees all and He led everything so that it would come to light. The people of Israel were defeated and there were many deaths, which led Joshua to seek God 's counsel and find out what had happened. Once he was discovered, Achan was obligated to confess his sin, but it was too late. He had brought disgrace over all the Israelites. On that day, Achan was stoned to death with all his belongings and surroundings. A large pile of rocks laid over him for a long time (Joshua 7:25 y 26).

God 's commandments are very important. God has put laws that govern the universe and nature. Without these laws in the universe everything would be disorganized. Equally, God has given His commandments to serve as a blessing and protection for humanity. A wise man left the following words of advice for his children, “ My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:1-5).

**The 10 commandments**

What are God 's commandments? In the Book of Exodus in chapter 20 we can find the ten commandments. “And God spoke all these words:“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.“You shall have no other gods before me.“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work,but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns.For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.“You shall not murder.“You shall not commit adultery.“You shall not steal. “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” (Exodus 20:1-17).

The ten commandments as written in the Bible can be divided into two groups: a) the first four commandments emphasize our relationship with God and are summarized in Loving God with all you heart, mind, and strength (Matthew 22:37); b) The last six commandments emphasize our relationship with others, and can be summarized with: love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39)

**Blessing in obedience**

One of the promises of blessings found in the Bible is in Psalm 1, which tells us, “Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.Not so for the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”(Psalm 1). “Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”(Matthew 5:19).

**Jesus Invites you**

Jesus invites you to be obedient to his commandments. He says, “He who loves me keeps my commands.”(John 14:15). “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”(John 14:21). He who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love them and we will come to Him and dwell among him.