

## Choose whom you will Serve

Joshua 24: 13-15

Our text today is likely a familiar passage for most of us. Joshua had served the Lord faithfully as he walked beside Moses, being used in various ways to assist their journey from Egypt toward the Promised Land. God had given Joshua favor in the eyes of the people and he was chosen to lead the people as the successor of Moses.

We have actually stepped into the middle of a conversation Joshua is having with the leaders of Israel. He had faithfully led the people across the Jordan River into the land of Canaan. Under his leadership, the people had inhabited the land, and were getting settled in to their new life of promise. Knowing his death was near, Joshua felt compelled to address the people. He was aware of the challenges they would encounter and the temptations they would face. Joshua challenged them to remain committed to the Lord and serve Him only.

Although this passage was recorded thousands of years ago, the truth it reveals remains relevant for our day. Like Israel of old, we face many challenges and temptations. We too must choose whom we will serve, and make a committed effort to remain faithful to the Lord. Let's consider the [declarations](#) of Joshua as we discuss: [Choose whom you will Serve](#).

**I. Joshua Spoke of Discernment** (13) – [And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.](#) Joshua knew his time on earth was about over, and he delivered a solemn charge to the people, prior to his death. He has reminded them of the grace and abundance of God in their lives. God's goodness to them is summed up in this verse. Consider:

**A. The Bounty of Grace** (13) – After challenging the people to remember God's dealings with Abraham, His deliverance from Egypt, and the abundance of the land, Joshua reminded them of the grace of God apparent in their lives. They had inherited a land that was filled with cities in which to dwell and an abundance of fruit and crops for them to eat. The witness of Joshua and Caleb of a land flowing with milk and honey were certainly true!

- God has been overlooked and cast aside by many today. His blessing and abundance aren't even acknowledged, but there can be no doubt that God has abundantly blessed us as well. He has more than met our needs materially; and most importantly, He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sin. God's good grace has been poured out on us abundantly.

**B. The Benefit of Grace** (13) – Joshua also reminded them that the cities in which they now dwelt, they hadn't labored to build. The grapes and olives they were eating came from vines and trees they hadn't planted. God had brought them into a land that was already prepared with great abundance. All they had to do was move in and enjoy His goodness.

- I know that building a home and maintaining a family requires effort on our part. I am not insinuating you are lazy and haven't worked for what you have, but we cannot deny the benefit of God's grace in our lives! We have inherited much from those who have labored before us. They have laid a good foundation upon which to build. The Lord Jesus gave Himself as the atoning sacrifice for our sin, and offers salvation freely to all who will come to Him by faith.
- Having received so much, we are obligated to be good stewards of that which we have received. I want to continue to build upon this solid foundation in order to leave our children an inheritance similar to what we received. We have been blessed beyond measure! Will future generations be able to say the same? If things don't change, I am afraid the answer will be, No!

**II. Joshua Spoke of Duty** (14) – [Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.](#) In light of God's abundant blessing, Joshua reminded them of their duty to the Lord. As His children, we too share this obligation. He spoke of:

**A. Our Duty to Submit** (14) – [Now therefore fear the LORD](#) Joshua admonished the people to fear the LORD. This means *"to be afraid; to stand in awe; to revere or reverence; to be stricken with a deep sense of honor, reverence, awe, and worship."* It has the idea of *recognizing the exalted position of the Lord and standing in awe of Him*. Now, I agree that God doesn't desire us to live in crippling fear of Him, cowering in His presence, but He does demand that we reverence, honor, and worship Him. Joshua knew if the people ever lost their fear of the Lord, their spiritual demise would soon follow.

- We live in an age where most have no fear of the Lord. They are more than willing to champion the divine characteristic of love, but don't want to acknowledge His holiness. The average person in America has no fear of the Lord. They live as they please and never consider any accountability to God. In fact, the average church member has no fear for the Lord. Fear for the Lord is absent in the average home in America. This is evident by the lives people live. One cannot claim to have a genuine fear for the Lord and live as they please. It does no good for church members to claim they fear the Lord if they are not committed to serving Him and being faithful to worship services. We will never honor or serve Him apart from reverent fear!

**B. Our Duty to Serve (14)** – [and serve him in sincerity and in truth](#). The people were admonished to serve the Lord in sincerity and truth. Joshua had witnessed enough “lip service” unto the Lord with no genuine activity. He didn’t encourage them to talk a good talk, but put their faith in practice and actively engage in serving the Lord. He wanted them to be sincere in their service to God and seek to do so in a manner that was pleasing to Him. There was no room for empty pretenders!

- The average home in America will have some reference to Scripture hanging on the wall or placed on a plaque on the bookshelf. I suppose they assume a mere reference to the Lord within the house constitutes a relationship with Christ and bearing witness for Him. Our churches are filled with those who are content to sit on the pew, but never engage in worship or service unto the Lord. We need those willing to participate, not mere spectators.
- Our children are watching our lives. Do they experience genuine service in our lives or just references to Scripture hanging on the walls? We must be willing to actively engage in service for the Lord. We would not enjoy what we have today if previous generations were content with mere references to the Lord, but no sincere service!

**C. Our Duty to Sanctify (14b)** – [and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD](#). Although God had been faithful to Israel, there were false gods among them. Some of the people had been influenced by the nations around them and chose to worship their gods. All of the people were not seeking holy, sanctified lives. They wanted to receive the Lord’s blessing and abundance while holding on to the pleasures of the flesh. Joshua challenged them to put away their idols and serve God with a committed, pure heart.

- We cannot honor and please God until we are willing to put away the strange gods. You might argue that there are no idols in your life. I will agree there may not be an idol set up on the mantle, but it may be in the garage, closet, or basement. Idols come in many forms, and even well-meaning people get caught up in idol worship. Anything in our lives that has priority over serving the Lord and our submission to Him is an idol. We need to rid our lives of the idols we have established and pursue sanctified, upright lives. You will never lose anything by making Jesus the priority in your life and home!

**III. Joshua Spoke of Decision (15)** – Having challenged the people regarding their relationship with the Lord, he then called on them to make a conscious decision. We too must make a decision for our lives. Notice:

**A. The Choice** (15a) – *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.* Joshua revealed there were only two choices: the true and living God, or the false gods their fathers served. He knew there were many false gods, but anything other than the Lord was an idol. He wanted them to make a decision as to whom they would serve. They could not remain neutral about this; a decision had to be made. The time had come for them to decide.

- The choice remains for each of us today as well. In fact, this is a decision we must make daily. Even born again believers can find themselves serving the gods of this world, while neglecting to serve our Savior. I must caution you however – choose wisely. The choice you make will have consequences now and in the future. Our homes and society have suffered because many have not chosen wisely. The Lord has been neglected and abandoned, while the gods of this world are being promoted and celebrated. Our only hope is a renewed commitment to serve the Lord faithfully. Christ alone can provide redemption from sin and salvation.

**B. The Commitment** (15b) – *but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.* Joshua knew he could not make the decision for them. He knew what they needed to do, but ultimately it was up to them to choose. He did inform them that he and his house were planning to serve the LORD. Regardless of what the others decided, he was committed to serving the Lord. He refused to allow the sentiment of others or popular opinion persuade him or alter his decision.

- It is painfully evident that most have chosen the gods of this world instead of the Lord who created and redeemed us. Our society, homes, and families are suffering because most have denied the true and living God for the pleasures of the flesh. Most are unconcerned about eternity and refuse to accept any accountability to God. The power and influence of the church is greatly diminished. The average home in America is not built upon a biblical foundation, and those who seek to promote such a foundation are viewed as hatemongers and bigots. If there has ever been a time that we need commitment unto the Lord, it is today. We must ensure that our lives and homes are built upon a solid, biblical foundation!

**Conclusion:** The call has been sounded: choose you this day whom you will serve! How will you decide? Believer, is Jesus the priority in your life and home? Do your children or others see your commitment to Christ? Maybe you have yet to respond to the call of Christ for salvation. If that is the case, you too must choose. Will you repent of your unbelief and embrace Christ by faith, or will you continue to choose the ways that please the flesh? The reality is, we all will make a choice today. We will either choose to follow Christ faithfully or deny Him the preeminence He requires. Choose wisely!