

The Choice of a New Generation (Josh 24)

Have you ever been to a ceremony where a couple decided to repeat their vows and renew the pledge they made in marriage many years ago? A similar event took place in Josh 24:15.

Joshua says, "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

In this chapter, the life of Joshua is coming to an end and like Moses, Joshua has one final message for the people. He wants them to renew their commitment and the covenant they made with God. I want to look at this chapter in Joshua and notice six things that are involved in making a spiritual re-commitment.

I. Remember what God has done for you: Verse 2-13

Starting in verse 2, Joshua reminds the people about all the wonderful things God has done for them. He talks about how God blessed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He talks about Moses and how God brought the plagues on the Egyptians to bring them out of Egyptian bondage. He talks about how the Lord led the Israelites through the Red Sea and how the Sea closed down on Pharaoh's army. Then he reminds them about how God gave them the promised land. Verse 13 says, "You're eating from vineyards and crops you did not plant. Your living in fortified cities you did not build."

If we want to maintain a spiritual commitment somewhere in the heart, there's got to be a spirit of thankfulness. There must come a moment when you say, "God you've done so much for me and out of my appreciation I want to serve you."

II. Say Yes to the Challenge (Vs 14)

In verse 14, Joshua comes to these people with a great challenge. He says, "You need to throw away these gods that you've accumulated and serve the Lord only."

Give someone a great challenge and people will respond. One of the reasons why Jesus was effective with people is because he challenged them to their core. In Matt 16:24, Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

Are we up for that challenge? Are we absolutely committed to following Jesus and putting Him first?

III. Realize we can Choose

The next thing we see is that Josh gave the Israelites a choice. In vs. 15 Josh says, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve." God always gives us a choice.

Every now and then we need to say to ourselves, this is my choice. Do I want to serve the Lord? If so, then do it. Number 4, how can we renew our commitment?

4. By serving God together: Verse 15.

At the end of verse 15, Joshua says "You can serve these other gods, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Did you notice how Joshua says, "We will serve the Lord." This is what it means to be a spiritual leader in the family. Together my wife and I are going to serve the Lord and my children, and I am going to serve the Lord. Together, we're going to worship the Lord. Together, we're going to learn the law of the Lord. This isn't going to be an individual effort. We cannot expect our families to be the servants God wants them to be if we are not leading.

5. Picture the Consequences

At the end of verse 18, the Israelites scream out, "We also will serve the Lord, for he is our God." In verse 19, Joshua says, "You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God and a jealous God."

We cannot be flippant about our decision. God is holy and He expects His people to be holy. God is jealous: You cannot serve other gods and the Lord at the same time. God will not share a heart that has other gods in it.

Look at verse 20. "If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after he has done you good." Joshua says, think about the consequence of your decisions. Evaluate the consequences of serving and not serving the Lord.

6. Remember your Covenant to God: (vs. 25-27)

Joshua says, "You said you want to serve the Lord, let's get practical about this matter. Let's put it on down on paper. Let's mark this place with stones so you'll remember what you did. That way every time you see this rock, it will be a reminder of the covenant you made with God."

What are some of the monuments we can look at? The Lord's supper and our baptism.

Close: Maybe today, you need to renew the pledge made many years ago.

Josh 24 offers some ways to do that. Remember what God has done for you. Say yes to the challenge. Realize we can choose. 4. Be an example to your family. Picture the consequences of your actions. 6. Remember the covenant you made to God.