“As For Me And My House…”

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday November 24th, 2019

Text: Joshua 24:15

### Intro

1. Remember What God Has Done For You (Joshua 24:1-13)
   1. Just before Moses died, he gathered the nation of Israel to give his final address (Deuteronomy).
   2. Moses reminded the people of the covenant they had with the Lord and they were to keep. When he died, Joshua became the leader of Israel in his stead.
   3. Joshua was a man of great faithfulness and obedience, and led the Israelites into Canaan, the Promised Land to fulfill God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 15).
   4. In Joshua 24 we come to the end of Joshua’s life. Before Joshua dies, he also gathers the nation of Israel to give his final message to the people.
2. In the first 13 verses Joshua reminds the people of what God had done for them to this point in their history.
   1. Joshua tells the people about how God brought Abraham to the land of Canaan and how his descendants moved to Egypt.
   2. Then God brought Israel out of Egypt through the great plagues. The Egyptians chased Israel but were destroyed in the Red Sea.
   3. God blessed the people and brought them into Canaan, conquering the people as they went.
   4. In verse 13 the people are reminded that they were given the land of Canaan intact.
   5. They are eating from vineyards and crops that which they did not plant. They are living in the fortified cities they did not build.
   6. God had given all of these blessings and had fulfilled His promises to the people!
3. Joshua’s challenge (Joshua 24:14-15)
   1. “Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”
4. A challenge issued to God’s people, and a choice we must constantly make amidst a dark world filled with sin and opposition to God!

#### Joshua’s Challenge

* 1. Joshua 24:14-15: “…as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
     1. Because God had delivered the people from Egyptian slavery, destroyed Egypt in the Red Sea, and had conquered the nations that opposed them, the challenge is clear.
     2. Fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness.
     3. This is the obvious choice to make because of the blessings the people had received.
  2. Serving God in sincerity and faithfulness is not that easy.
     1. The people had to put away the gods that their parents served while in the wilderness and while in Egypt.
     2. To serve the Lord means to put away the other gods that they had placed their trust in.
     3. Notice the choice that Joshua lays before them: They could not serve both YHWH God Almighty and their gods.
     4. Jesus later says the same – Matthew 6:24: Mankind must choose who they will serve!
  3. If they did not want to serve the true and living God, then which god would they serve?
     1. They could serve gods that their fathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites.
     2. Joshua implicitly tells them that such a decision would be completely foolish.
     3. Notice: Joshua points out, “the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.”
        1. Why would you serve the gods whom we have just conquered?
        2. How powerful are those gods when we destroyed the Egyptian gods through the plagues?
        3. How powerful are the Amorite gods that we destroyed the cities on the eastern side of the Jordan River?
        4. Joshua concludes: “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
  4. Notice: Joshua doesn’t simply speak for himself.
     1. Joshua does not say “But as for me, I will serve the Lord.”
     2. Joshua knows the proper decision. He must serve the Lord.
     3. But he is exerting spiritual leadership in his family such that he says his family will also serve the Lord.
        1. Men, we need to think of our family in the same terms.
        2. Together, we are going to serve the Lord.
        3. We are going to know the law of the Lord together.
        4. We are going to worship together.
        5. We are going to serve together.
        6. Men, as spiritual leaders, you and I must set that tone in the home.
        7. We need to show the importance of serving the Lord. We cannot expect our families to be the servants that God wants them to be if we are not leading the way through teaching and example!
  5. Applications:
     1. God requires separation from the world – II Cor. 6:14-18
        1. I Peter 1:14-16: We are to be holy because God is holy!
        2. We cannot serve God without a life change. We have to be different people, changing our lives to fit in the image of God.
     2. God requires full dedication – Mark 12:30
        1. The people were not allowed to serve other gods and serve Jehovah God.
        2. Jesus said such Himself – Matthew 6:24
        3. God is a jealous God and we have to make a decision who we are going to serve. We cannot serve both, though we certainly try to serve both.
        4. We need to realize that while we are following the gods of comfort and wealth, we are not serving God, though we attend services or say that the Lord is our God.
  6. God requires full dedication of service and heart toward Him!

#### The Response of the People (Joshua 24:16-18)

* 1. Joshua has just called upon Israel to make a decision in his final speech: Who are you going to serve?
  2. The people answer with an excellent confession: “We will serve the Lord!”
     1. They say that they will not forsake the Lord to serve other gods because it is the Lord who delivered their fathers from slavery, and preserved them through all of the nations that they had passed.
     2. Notice the conclusion the people of Israel draw: “And the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.”
     3. This seems to be an excellent confession.
        1. Would we not all desire to hear these words from every person that we teach the gospel? We will serve the Lord for He is our God!
        2. We almost expect the story of Joshua’s final speech to end here.
        3. One would think that Joshua would rise up and state how wonderful it was that the people had made this important decision.
        4. But that is not at all what happens!
        5. In a moment we will look at the response of Joshua.
  3. Applications:
     1. Joshua’s final words are a beautiful reminder of what God requires of His people.
     2. Our confession to serve God must be proved through our faith! (James 1:21-22: Hear God’s word and ***DO*** it!)
     3. Just because the people declared that they would serve the Lord because He was their God did not mean anything – Not enough to claim you know or believe in Him – Remember the demons! (James 2:19)
  4. God requires more than words from His people! *(James 2:14-26)*

#### Joshua’s Rebuttal (Joshua 24:19-20)

* 1. Rather than pat the children of Israel on the back for their great confession, Joshua tells the people that they are not able to serve the Lord!
  2. Why would Joshua tell the people to serve the Lord but then tell them that they cannot serve the Lord?
     1. Joshua explains: “For He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.”
     2. There were two important reasons why Joshua says that the people cannot serve the Lord.
  3. God is holy.
     1. What does this characteristic of God have to do with the argument?
     2. Joshua is telling the people that this is a serious choice.
  4. God is jealous.
     1. Joshua is further telling the people that they cannot serve other gods and serve the Lord.
     2. Joshua is telling the people that God finds such service unacceptable.
     3. Joshua says that they cannot serve the Lord because the people are unwilling to make the life changes necessary to serve the Lord!
  5. Applications:
     1. We cannot be flippant with our decision to serve the Lord.
     2. God is holy and he expects His people to be holy – I Peter 1:14-16
     3. God is jealous and requires separation from the world so that our lives are different, not the same as the wicked – Romans 12:1-2
     4. Some people, religious people, have such a grand delusion thinking that God accepts their worship and service while they are following other gods (worldliness: wealth, entertainment, politics, fame, power, and immorality)
        1. If we are still doing what we want to do, serving our gods of comfort, wealth, ease, success, might, and lusts, then God’s wrath is against us.
  6. God is a jealous God and will not share our hearts with the other gods we allow into our hearts!

#### A Monument to God (Joshua 24:21-28)

* 1. The people of Israel respond that they really will serve the Lord.
  2. So Joshua holds the people’s feet to the fire.
     1. “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him.”
     2. Joshua says that they had made the choice themselves and what to do with that choice: “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord, the God of Israel.”
     3. Joshua made a covenant with the people, giving them statutes and rules.
     4. Joshua wrote down the covenant in the book of the law of God.
  3. Joshua took a large stone and set it up under the tree that was by the sanctuary of the Lord to be a reminder of the covenant that they made with the Lord.
     1. Joshua says, “Remember your promise to God” then dismisses the people.
  4. Applications:
     1. Remember your promise to God!
     2. God has placed in our lives some important monuments that we often take for granted and ignore.
        1. Unfortunately, this is the nature of monuments.
        2. Either we properly respect the monument and recall with passion what was intended for us to remember; Or, we pass by the monument every day and pay no attention to it.
     3. Consider two monuments in our lives:
     4. Baptism:
        1. Just as Joshua set up a stone as a reminder of the decision they had made to follow the Lord, so baptism is the moment at which we are declaring our decision to serve God.
        2. Baptism is our appeal to God for forgiveness and a clear conscience (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21).
        3. Baptism is when we were raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4) with our sins forgiven (Colossians 2:11-13), sharing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-4)!
        4. Baptism is a moment that defines our new life in Christ and we should never forget the moment our sins were washed away (II Peter 1:9).
     5. The Lord’s Supper:
        1. Jesus told us to partake of the elements in remembrance of Him.
        2. We are told that the Lord’s Supper proclaims the Lord’s death until He comes (I Corinthians 11:26).
        3. It reminds us of God’s love – so immeasurable that God sent His son to die so that we could be reconciled (John 3:16; Eph. 2:13-16) and live!
  5. Wherever we are in this dark world of sin, let us remember our dedication to God and walk as children of God, blameless & above reproach! (Philippians 2:15-16)

## Conclusion

1. The world around Christians is full of sin, with differing priorities – Always has been!
2. The choice to serve God or other gods has always been before mankind.
   1. The choice was before God’s people in times past. (Rev. 2:4: Ephesus; 3:15: Laodicea)
   2. The choice is before God’s people today.
3. No matter what others are doing, let us, like Joshua, say, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!”
4. If you are not a Christian, you need to be! Repent and be baptized!
5. If a Christian in error, repent (correct) & be renewed!
6. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!