

Subject: *The Choice Every Man Must Make*

Scripture: *Joshua 24:13-15*

Have you ever thought how Joshua must have felt when Moses died and he took over as Israel's leader? These may have been the biggest shoes any man ever tried to fill. But by the grace of God Joshua led Israel and he led his own family as a godly father. Joshua was a man who made a difference in his generation. He was a soldier, a statesman, and he was a spokesman and servant of God. He called the people to meet at Shechem, a city with a rich history. This was the place where God first told Abraham that his descendants would inherit the Promised Land (Gen. 12). This was the place where Joshua built an altar and wrote God's law on stones (Josh. 8). Here at this place Joshua had something very important to say.

1. Joshua's CHALLENGE

There is a sense of urgency here. Joshua issues a powerful challenge to all the men.

- A call to reverence – Fear the LORD (vs. 14)
- A call to reality – Serve Him in sincerity and truth
- A call to repentance – Put away the gods which your fathers served
- A call to responsibility – Choose you this day whom you will serve

Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters." Jesus said it's not hard to serve two masters; it is impossible. You can serve two employers, but you can't serve two masters.

The challenge was clear. Would these men serve false gods or the one true God? That has always been the challenge men face. Who are we living for, God, someone else, or something else. An idol is anything you love more than God, trust more than God, or serve more than God. An idol is anything you put ahead of God or in the place of God.

2. Joshua's CHOICE

Five things can be said about his decision.

- It was a personal choice (as for me) - What an awesome decision. He didn't hesitate, stammer or stutter. He spoke with conviction and clarity. This was not the first time Joshua had to make a tough decision. He made the right decision when he and Caleb were sent as spies and came back to give a report. He said, "Let's go. We will defeat those giants by God's help."
- It was a family choice (and my house) – He didn't put it up for vote or take a poll to see which way his family was leaning. One man wrote the IRS and confessed he had lied on his tax return. "You know where it says 'head of household,' I signed my name." God doesn't want a man to be the dictator, but he does expect a man to be the leader and to lead by love and by example. We need more men who will stand up and speak up and lead their families. Joshua led by example.
- It was a firm choice (we will) – Joshua didn't say, "We will serve the Lord if nothing interferes," or "We will serve until somebody hurts our feelings," or "We will serve when it's convenient." We'll never serve God very long if we only serve out of convenience. We need to serve out of conviction and commitment.

- It was a practical choice (serve) – The issue was serving the Lord. That is still the issue today. God wants men and families that will serve Him. When Moses spoke to Pharaoh in the Book of Exodus that was the issue. Time and time again Moses said: “God says to let my people go that they may serve me.” Peter Lord said, “What we really believe, we practice. All the rest is just religious talk.”
- It was a wise choice (the LORD) – I’ve lived a pretty long time and I’ve never heard a person say, “Serving the Lord was the biggest mistake I ever made.” But I have heard people say, “I wished I had served the Lord when I had the chance.”

We are free to choose, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our choice. A few years ago the Michelin Tire Company had a very effective commercial with the tag line, “Michelin, because so much is riding on your tires.” So much is riding on the choice of every man today. The future of every family is riding on your choice. The future of this church is riding on your choice. Your eternal future is riding on your choice.

What if you don’t make a choice? You must make a choice. You can’t be neutral. Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me.” To delay is to make the wrong choice. To choose anything other than the will of God is a bad choice.