

Subject: A Father's Best Decision

Scripture: Joshua 24:1-15

Joshua called the people to meet at Shechem. This was a city with a rich history. It was at Shechem that God first told Abraham that his descendents would inherit Canaan (Gen. 12).

I remember a conversation with a fine man in our church who said, "Pastor, a man just can't have a bad day." Well of course we all have a bad day now and then. What he meant was that so many people depend on a man that he needs to be faithful and responsible all the time. The Michelin Tire company ran a commercial years ago that showed a family driving in all kinds of weather conditions and then it ended it like this: "Michelin...because so much is riding on your tires." So much is riding on the men in this church.

At the beginning of this book we read that when Moses died, God chose a man named Joshua to lead His people. How would like to follow a man like Moses? Those were some big shoes to fill, but God told Joshua to obey His Word and depend on His presence and power.

Joshua 1:8-9⁸ *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*⁹ *Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

Joshua was a faithful leader and God used him to lead the people, defeat their enemies, and claim their promised land. Near the end of his life this is what Joshua said:

Joshua 23:14-15¹⁴ *And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*¹⁵ *Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.*

Joshua reminded the people that God had been faithful to His Word. He told them that just as God had kept His promises, He would also follow through on His warnings. Then in the final chapter (Joshua 24) reminded them of God's blessings, gave them a challenge to serve God, and told them what he was going to do. Let's look again at two verses in our text:

Joshua 24:14-15¹⁴ *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.*¹⁵ *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: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

Joshua was a great leader of God's people, but he was also a great leader in his own family. Today I want us to think about Joshua in his role as a father. He made the best decision a father can ever make for himself and his family. Let's break that down a take a look at Joshua's decision.

1. A personal decision

Joshua went on record before the people, “As for ME...” He couldn’t make a decision for other men, but he could make a decision for himself. Joshua didn’t stammer or stutter. He spoke up with courage and conviction. Every man makes choices, and his choices have consequences. Every man is free to choose, but he is not free to choose the consequences of his choices. That’s why every man should ask God for wisdom to make good decisions.

2. A family decision

Joshua spoke on behalf of his family, “As for me AND MY HOUSE...” He didn’t take a poll or put it up for a vote. The Bible teaches the principle of leadership in the home. Parents are to lead their children, and husbands are to lead their wives. A father is not to be a dictator or a king, but he is to be a leader.

3. A firm decision

Joshua was determined, “we WILL serve...” This was not an easy decision. It is always difficult to serve the Lord. Jesus said if we follow Him we will suffer persecution and the world will hate us. Joshua didn’t say we will serve the Lord so long as nothing interferes or until somebody hurts our feelings. We will never serve God very well or very long if we only serve Him out of convenience.

4. A practical decision

Joshua made a practical choice, “we will SERVE...” That involves more than words or even worship. It involves daily living. Joshua challenged the people in 24:15, “choose you this day whom you will serve.”

5. A wise decision

Joshua said, “we will serve THE LORD...” He is the only one who is worthy. He is our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sustainer. He is the best Master. A wise man will choose to serve the Lord because he knows the Lord. This is why we need to worship before we serve. We need to get our focus on God, who He is and what He does. That’s what compels us to serve Him.

Do you remember Job? Here’s what God said about him:

Job 1:8 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* Satan thought Job served God only because of what God did for him. But he found out that Job served God because God was worthy. Job kept on serving God even when his circumstances changed because he knew that God had not changed. He was still the same. Job said: “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21).

6. A lifelong decision

Joshua had made this decision early in his life and he wasn't about to change now. About 55 years earlier Moses sent 12 spies (scouts) into the Promised Land. They searched out the land forty days and came back. Ten of the 12 spies said the giants and the walled cities could not be defeated. But Joshua and Caleb had a different attitude and said, "With God's help we can do it." Joshua served the Lord for a lifetime and he wasn't about to quit.

7. A sincere decision

Joshua was fully committed and he expected nothing less from the people. They would have to put away their false gods (vs. 14, 23). Jesus said: "No man can serve two masters."