

Joshua 24

Joshua assembles the tribes of Israel and takes them through their history bringing them up to date with the present situation. The key verse in this chapter is verse 15. Joshua challenges the people that they must make a choice regarding their lifestyle and worship. The words to this day are very powerful,

‘Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord’.

Having delivered the challenge, the people respond that they are committed to serving the Lord. Joshua wants them to be sure and challenges them again. But they are very clear they must and they will serve the Lord. The chapter ends with the burial of Joseph's bones. Joseph knew that his final resting place was not Egypt and it is only now when God's people have established themselves in the land that the burial of his bones can take place with confidence.

As we look at this final chapter of the book of Joshua, there are some key lessons that we must learn.

- **We must learn the lessons of history.**

What God has done in our past, He is able to do again. His faithfulness and his promises are there not just for a season of our lives, but for the whole of our lives. We are part of what God is doing throughout the generations, although we are individual and unique, what happens with us must fit into God's master plan. His plan is with His people at the time of Joshua, it was the plan to bring them into the Promised Land, for us it is to bring us all to heaven where we will be the bride of Christ for eternity.

- **We also need to learn that temptations and pressures, other religions and other God's will always be hovering to take our attention but we must tenaciously resist all overtures to all other God's.**

Until we get to heaven, the devil will continually attempt to relegate Almighty Saviour God Jesus to a second or third place. We must give Him first place. Joshua makes the point that it is not just his decision to make but the decision of his household who will serve the Lord. We obviously respect that people make their own decisions but the decision of a good leader does have impact upon others. Several times in scripture we see how a household believe in the Lord. The conversion of Lydia resulted in the whole house believing in Christ. The decision of the Philippian jailer to follow Christ saw again his whole household turning to the Lord. Of course we know that this does not always happen but we want to pray that the choices we make as leaders of family, Church and ministry exalt and encourage others to follow the Lord as we do.

Joshua's influence was powerful; he led not just by words but by his active example. Perhaps chapter 1 gives us the best clue to how he was able to maintain a godly lifestyle which influences all those around him. He did meditate on God's law day and night, he was obedient to God, he did remember that God was with him all the time and his life was to fulfil God's agenda and not his own agenda.

Joshua was conscious that his God was almighty Jehovah creator, he was aware that God was a holy God, he was aware that God was a jealous God. When we make a commitment to serve God, God is very grieved when we flirt with other gods and allow other issues to dictate to us. Joshua exalts that any other God should be thrown away. This indicates a decisive and rigorous action when dealing with anything that seeks to replace God in our lives. The people are reminded that God is a miracle working God; He is a God who protects us when all our resources are totally inadequate. He is also a God who is serious and He will judge, so we must never be frivolous and trivial. Joshua made a covenant and there is a ceremony where there intensions are declared publically.

Points to consider:

- Consider your history with God and recall key moments where he has worked and also where you have made agreements with Him.
- Reflect on your agenda in life and ministry at this time, is it God's agenda or is it your own?
- How serious are you in following the Lord at this time? It is easy to think you are more committed than is actually the truth.
- Are your decisions making an impact on your family and those you serve?
- Are you an example that inspires devotion to God or do people just hear words and see no evidence of your sincerity?
- Joshua finished the race of life in a good place, we also read the Apostle Paul finished his race well, are we heading for a 'well done good and faithful servant?'