

**JOSHUA 24**  
**CHOOSING, COMMITTING, SERVING!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 24 as we finish up this amazing book on victorious Christian living!

If you remember from our last study, Joshua gathered the leaders in Israel and admonished them to continue in the faith.

He told them in Joshua 23:11-16, **“Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the Lord your God. Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations - these that remain among you - and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. When you have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you.”**

Joshua is warning the leaders in Israel that he is going to die and thus, they need to continue following the Lord, not depart from His ways. There are those blessings in following the Lord and the cursing for not following the Lord, but it is up to them who they will serve!

Make no mistake about it, Joshua was admonishing the leaders, the priests to help the people grow in the Lord and not get sidetracked!

But, the problem for Joshua is the people were already getting complacent in their walk with the Lord.

Maybe they were tired of fighting and just wanted to give peace a chance even if it was with the enemies of their faith!

Thus, Joshua, as he speaks to the nation, is going to admonish them to follow the Lord whole-heartedly so that they will not fall into idolatry, they will not turn from the Lord! And folk's, this is also a warning to us as we shall see.

Let me share this speech with you, it was one of the greatest speeches ever given from a man who had a way with words, Winston Churchill. We are told,

Winston Churchill, one of the greatest orators of the 20th century, was interestingly enough, like Demosthenes and other great orators before him, born with a speech impediment which he worked on until it no longer hindered him. One would never guess this from hearing Churchill's strong and reassuring voice, a voice that would buoy up Britain during some of her darkest hours.

During the Battle of France, Allied Forces became cut off from troops south of the German penetration and perilously trapped at the Dunkirk bridgehead. On May 26, a wholesale evacuation of these troops, dubbed "Operation Dynamo," began.

The evacuation was an amazing effort-the RAF kept the Luftwaffe at bay while thousands of ships, from military destroyers to small fishing boats, were used to ferry 338,000 French and British troops to safety, far more than anyone had thought possible.

On June 4, Churchill spoke before the House of Commons, giving a report which celebrated the “miraculous deliverance” at Dunkirk, while also seeking to temper a too rosy of view of what was on the whole a “colossal military disaster.”

I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty’s Government-every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation.

The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength. Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail.

We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

- <http://bit.ly/2lTyDwc>

That is what Joshua is doing here but it is not just a physical battle that he is admonishing them to fight, it is a spiritual battle as well. You see, whoever they choose to serve will be manifested in their lives.

If it is the true and living God, they will see the victories and their life will reflect what they believe!

If it is the god's that the pagan's were worshiping, then that too will be reflected in their lives and they will see defeat and, in the end, captivity!

Some pretty powerful lessons for us to glean from this chapter.

I have called this study – ***CHOOSING, COMMITTING, SERVING!*** You must choose this day who you will serve. You must commit your life to the Lord. And as you do you will serve Him all the days of your life!

I have broken this chapter down into four main points. They are as follows,

***PREPARATION FOR COMMITMENT: REMEMBERING WHAT GOD HAS DONE  
– JOSHUA 24:1-13***

***CONFRONTATION WITH COMMITMENT: MAKING THE CHOICE TO SERVE –  
JOSHUA 24:14-18***

***AUTHENTICATION OF COMMITMENT: COUNTING THE COST – JOSHUA  
24:19-24***

***CONFIRMATION OF THE COMMITMENT: MARKING THE COVENANT –  
JOSHUA 24:25-33***

So, with that as our background, let's begin reading in Joshua chapter 24, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word and we finish up this amazing book of Joshua.

## **JOSHUA 24**

### **VERSES 1-13**

Now we not only see the leaders of Israel and the priests gathered to hear Joshua, but we see Joshua gather the tribes of Israel together in Shechem, in the heart of the land.

And we see Joshua recant their history, how God kept His Word to them by bringing them into the land of Canaan. How God drove out the enemies before them.

And keep in mind that some 600 years earlier, in this very valley, the Valley of Shechem, God promised to their father, Abraham, that this was going to be their land!

Not only that, but it was in this valley that the priests spoke the cursing's and the blessings.

It was here that a copy of the Law, the book of Deuteronomy was written on a stone for all to see.

Now some may argue that with all the people gathered together how could they all hear without sound equipment.

Keep in mind that this is where the tribes gathered for the blessings and the cursing's and not just the leaders, and this area does form a kind of natural amphitheater that has great acoustic properties.

So, I do believe all the people of Israel could hear Joshua's farewell address!

And I do think it was important for Joshua, as he goes over their history, to take them way back to father Abraham. Keep in mind that Abraham lived on the other side of the Euphrates River, in the area of Mesopotamia.

And most Jews would die if they heard of their father Abraham referred to in this manner, but he was an idol-worshiping gentile before God called him.

And Abraham crossed over (That is what the word "Hebrew" means) the River Euphrates and surrendered his life unto God by faith.

To Abraham was born Isaac and unto Isaac was born Jacob, who took his family down to Egypt because of the famine in the land.

But God was not going to leave them down in Egypt; He had a plan for them. He would bring them into the land He promised them!

As Joshua recounts God's faithfulness to the children of Israel I want you to see God's hand upon them and His sovereignty working together.

In verse 3 we see the words "**I took.**"

In verse 4 "**I gave.**"

In verse 5 "**I sent.**"

In verses 6-8 "**I brought.**"

In verse 10 "**I would not listen.**"

In verse 11 "**I delivered.**"

In verse 12 "**I sent.**"

And in verse 13 "**I have given.**"

In fact, the personal pronoun "**I**" in speaking of God is used some seventeen times in these verses!

You see, God works according to His plan, His purpose and He does work through us. Thus, in knowing that, man should fear the Lord for He is in control, He is **LORD** over all! That is what Joshua was telling the children of Israel!

And what Joshua was doing was reminding them that their very existence was the result of God's hand upon their lives! This is all a work of God and for the children of Israel, they just needed to walk by faith and see the salvation that God would bring to the situations that they faced!

It is as Psalm 44:1-3 reminds us, and it could be that the Psalmist is recanting what Joshua is saying here. We are told, **“We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us, The deeds You did in their days, In days of old: You drove out the nations with Your hand, But them You planted; You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out. For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them.”**

Now let’s play this out. If God has made all these promises to the children of Israel and they have come to pass, then isn’t He worth committing our lives to Him? Of course it is because He has what is best for our lives!

Remember what God has done in the past is helpful to us in the present situations that we are facing.

But sometimes our memory is not too good. Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

A couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things. During a checkup, the doctor tells them that they’re physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember.

Later that night, while watching TV, the old man gets up from his chair. “Want anything while I’m in the kitchen?” he asks.

“Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?”

“Sure.”

“Don’t you think you should write it down so you can remember it?” she asks.

“No, I can remember it.”



“Well, I’d like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so as not to forget it?”

He says, “I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries.”

“I’d also like whipped cream. I’m certain you’ll forget that, write it down?” she asks.

Irritated, he says, “I don’t need to write it down, I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream - I got it, for goodness sake!”

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment.

“Where’s my toast?”

- Source Unknown

That is why we need to setup memorial stones or things to help us remember about the past; what God has done in our lives. I am not saying we live in the past, but we learn from it, we are encouraged by it as we see the hand of God upon our lives!

This is so important and that is what Joshua is doing here. Helping them remember all that God has done in their lives to help them commit themselves to the Lord and not walk away from Him!

Back in Joshua 4:4-8 we are told, **“Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; and Joshua said to them: ‘Cross over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, “What do these stones mean to you?” Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.’ And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the Lord had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.”**

In a sense, that is what Joshua is doing here, setting up these memorial stones for them to remember all that God has done for them and thus, they need to commit their lives to Him!

And keep in mind when these memorial stones were setup in Joshua chapter 4, they had just entered the land.

That is all that they had; the enemies were still in the land. They had not had one victory yet in the land of Canaan!

And yet, these stones were to remind them that God was faithful in what He promised them.

Thus, Jericho fell. Then Ai, after the children of Israel were defeated the first time because of sin in the camp.

And each time that they saw these stones they were reminded of who was fighting for them, who was on their side!

Keep in mind that there were some seven long years of battles, of war and yet, God is faithful, and I think that kept them going. And maybe some thirteen years of each tribe dealing with the enemy, the resistance, that remained in the land.

And they were to pass this on to their children, what those stones represented, the faithfulness of God.

They were to tell others of the faithfulness of God when they asked about those memorial stones!

And now Joshua wants them to remember that God is faithful!

Keep in mind that this section is dealing with, ***PREPARATION FOR COMMITMENT: REMEMBERING WHAT GOD HAS DONE!***

And here is the lesson for us.

If you are truly going to commit yourself to the Lord, which I think we all desire to be faithful in this area, then remembering all that God has done in our life will help us commit ourselves to the Lord, even during the darkest of days!

As I look back, I can see how God brought me to saving faith – ***MEMORIAL STONES!***

As I look back, I can see how God opened doors of ministry for me; Bible studies, infant and toddler ministries, children's ministries, assistant pastor, small group leader and-so-on, He was preparing me for what was ahead and as I look back – ***MEMORIAL STONES!***

As I look back, I can see how God had called me to be a pastor in Wisconsin and then He brought it to pass – ***MEMORIAL STONES!***

As I look back, I can see how God has worked in and through this church over the last twenty-four years, how He has provided for us and sustained us – ***MEMORIAL STONES!***

And I can go on and on and I am sure, as you look back over your life, you can see that what God has done in your life in the past is great comfort and encouragement for what you are facing today! Again, ***MEMORIAL STONES!***

Maybe you have not done that in some time and maybe it is time for you to look back upon your life so you can see those ***MEMORIAL STONES!*** Because, as you do it will strengthen your faith and it will help you to commit yourself to all the Lord is doing in your life!

In other words, God did everything, therefore, He is a God who is worth committing our lives to!

***PREPARATION FOR COMMITMENT: REMEMBERING WHAT GOD HAS DONE!***

#### VERSES 14-18

Here we see our second point, ***CONFRONTATION WITH COMMITMENT: MAKING THE CHOICE TO SERVE!***

And in these verses, we see the challenge that Joshua makes to the nation, ***WHO WILL THEY SERVE?***

Make no mistake about it, everyone is guided by something; we all serve someone or something.

I don't know if you remember when Bob Dylan tried Jesus out, it just didn't work for him, I guess, but he wrote some amazing Christians songs during this period of time in his life.

And one of the songs he sung, he was right on when he wrote, “But you’re gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed. You’re gonna have to serve somebody. Well, it may be the devil, or it may be the Lord. But you’re gonna have to serve somebody.”

You see, the reality is this. There are really only two choices you have in who you will serve. If you reject the Lord, then you will serve the Devil!

“Not me! I serve myself; I don’t serve the Devil!”

Let me put it like this. Who do you think is influencing your life? It is the Devil and his demons!

But, if you are serving the Lord, then continue on, keep moving forward. Because we all are going to have to serve somebody, may it be the Lord!

Now, for the children of Israel, look at how sad this is. Listen again to what Joshua said in Joshua 24:14, “**Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!**”

They had already fallen into idolatry. They had in their possession the gods that their fathers served on the other side of the Euphrates River, in Mesopotamia. They also had the gods that they served down in Egypt. Joshua had not even died yet and they had already begun their decline.

Thus, Joshua admonishes them to ***SERVE THE LORD!***

And not just serve the Lord but he was encouraging them to serve the Lord in sincerity - without hypocrisy.

Either serve the Lord with your whole heart or serve the gods of the other nations with your whole heart, make a choice!

You see, it is not a question of “*if*” but “*who*.” Who are you going to serve?

We all worship something or someone, as I have said.

That is the point that Jesus makes in Matthew 6:24 when He says “**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.**”

Joshua knew whom he would serve, *THE LORD!*

I like the way that Redpath summed this up for us regarding our sincerity and what that should be about. This is what he wrote,

The best test of sincerity is not always the open hostility of foes, for this often braces up the energies of combat, while at the same time it makes the path of duty clear. Still less is it at the hour of triumph over our foes, then there is no temptation to rebel. The real test of our faithfulness to God is in most cases is our power to continue steadfastly in one course of conduct when the excitement of conflict is removed, and the enemies with which we have to contend are the insidious allurements of ease or custom amid the common place duties of life.

- Redpath

Think about how this all plays out.

Joshua told them to remember what God has done for them as he recounts their history!

As you looked back you could not deny all that God had done for them.

And now that God has done all that for them, the logical conclusion is that they should serve Him, make a commitment to Him! It really is the only rational thing to do.

The problem, many times, is that we are not logical, and we are not rational in our thinking of God! And that leads us away from Him!

Remember in Paul's letter to the Romans, how he spent 11 chapters telling the Romans all that God had for them, all that He has done for them.

And then, after those 11 chapters, Paul opens up Romans chapter 12 by saying this, "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**"

That is what Joshua is saying here. Look at all that God has done for you, now you need to give your life to Him and follow Him, serve Him, commit your life to Him!

Interestingly enough, the word "**reasonable**" in Romans 12:1 is the Greek word, LOGIKOS, (log-ik-os') and we get our English word "logical" from this Greek word.

So, the idea here is that as we give our life to the Lord, it is just a logical worship of God! All that God has done for us, remember, those first 11 chapters of Romans, just make it logical, reasonable to serve the Lord completely and as we do, we are worshiping Him with our lives!

And for us, total commitment to the Lord is the only thing that truly makes sense if God is who He says He is, and He is!

And think about this. Joshua was able to challenge them by saying, "**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.**"

He is challenging them to follow the Lord! But, if you don't think that is right, then don't!

And this challenge is not to go home and think about it, but to choose today who you will serve!

Why did Joshua put it like that?

Because they were already aware of all that God had done for them and now it was time to make a decision. Too often people just make excuses but Joshua challenges them to decide now who they will serve!

Who gave him the right to do that?

His life was a living testimony of someone who surrendered his life to the Lord and lived what he said he believed!

And to drive home the point, he tells them that his faith is not based on what they do or don't do. His faith was in the Lord in spite of the fact that theirs may not be, that they may serve other gods or these false gods!

That is a man who is not being led astray by the crowds of people, but he is wholeheartedly following the Lord in spite the pressure not to.

He knew the Lord and He saw how God was working in his life all these years, so it was just logical, it was just rational to follow the Lord!

How about you? Are you being led astray by the crowds of people or are you wholeheartedly following the Lord?

If you are following the Lord, then you, like Joshua, have the right to testify of your faith. And as you listen to what some historical figures of time past have said, they are powerful, and the same can be said of what we say for the Lord!



Let me share a few with you.

- “Give me liberty or give me death,” Patrick Henry thundered in the days of the American Revolution.
- “We have nothing to fear but fear itself,” said Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the dark days of the Great Depression.
- “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country,” said John F. Kennedy in his first inaugural address.
- “One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind,” were the words of Neil Armstrong, the first man to put his foot on the surface of the moon.
- “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,” Joshua declared on the plains of Shechem.

And here is the challenge for each of us! Are you going to show your family, your friends, your coworkers, even strangers, that you are going to serve the Lord no matter what?

You need to!

You see, I don’t care what this person or that person is doing.

I don’t care what activity is going on here or there.

Our desire, our passion is to serve the Lord.

People will follow your example, what are you showing them?

May we be like Joshua, “**As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**”

In hearing all that Joshua had to say, the people responded to Joshua, “... **‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. And the Lord drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.’**”

Now keep in mind that they were already into idolatry, they were serving other gods. But maybe now they are making a commitment to the Lord. Time will tell if it was a true commitment or not!

The problem, at times, is that it can be just an emotional response and once the emotion is gone, so is the commitment! People make all kinds of promises and yet their heart is not really in it. You see, God wants us to not only hear His Word but to obey it and to get rid of those idols in our lives that are hindering our relationship with the Lord. Not just an emotional response but one that truly comes from the heart!

So, we see here, this second point, ***CONFRONTATION WITH COMMITMENT: MAKING THE CHOICE TO SERVE!***

And in seeing their response, that they were going to serve the Lord, you would think Joshua would be excited and they would all go home with joy in their hearts. But that is not what happens here.

And that brings us to our third point, ***AUTHENTICATION OF COMMITMENT: COUNTING THE COST!***

VERSES 19-24

In other words, Joshua is saying to them, ***“You can’t serve the Lord like you are doing right now! You can’t serve the Lord half-heartedly. You can’t serve the Lord and the gods of this world too! You have to choose one or the other, but you can’t serve two masters”***

And Joshua wants them to understand what they are agreeing to. He tells them, **“... ‘You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. 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 24:19-20.

What I find interesting here is that it almost seems like Joshua is trying to discourage them from following the Lord, and I guess he is!

Now that is shocking to us but think about it. If you have one foot in the Lord and one foot in the world, where are you going? Nowhere and probably, if you do go anywhere, it will be back into the world. And there are consequences to those actions of moving away from the Lord.

And Joshua wants them to understand that before they make their decision. Don’t make this an emotional decision, make a logical decision and then live accordingly!

In other words, if they can’t serve the Lord fully then don’t bother!

They needed to count the cost and decided if they were willing to be fully committed to the Lord because that is what He desires!

And I think the same is true for us. We must count the cost of becoming a Christian. Too often the Gospel message is presented something like this, ***“You need Jesus and if you come to Him your life will be perfect. You will not have any problems anymore!”***

First of all, that is not the Gospel message.

The Gospel is simple. You are a sinner and your sins have separated you from God. There is nothing you can do about that on your own. Being good is not an option because your goodness does not outweigh your badness, it doesn't work like that. You see, God demands perfection and thus, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God!

Truly a hopeless situation ***BUT GOD!***

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 2:4-9, **“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

In other words, Jesus came and paid in full the penalty for our sins. He took our sins and He gave to us His righteousness so that when God the Father looks at us, He sees no sin in our lives. Yes, practically we sin, but in a positional sense, Jesus paid for every one of our sins!

Thus, repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life and you will be saved!

But understand the cost when you give your life to the Lord. You will be living in rebellion to the world's standards, what the world thinks is right, and they will not like it. The light of Christ you shine on their darkness they will try to put out!

But what does it mean to count the cost? Let me share this with you. And this is so important for us to understand because in the days we are living in, the world is trying to conform us into its image and Jesus is trying to transform our lives!

We are told,

In Luke 14, Jesus lays out the terms of discipleship. There were great crowds following Him. Everyone loved the miracles, healing, and free food. Jesus was cool, the talk of the town, and the latest fad. But He knew their hearts. He knew they desired the benefits of what He did rather than an understanding of who He was. They loved His gifts, not the life He was calling them to. So He explained what it takes to be one of His followers:

***“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple”*** (Luke 14:26-33).

Jesus said a lot in those simple illustrations. He quickly put an end to the idea that He offered some kind of welfare program. Although the gift of eternal life is free to anyone who asks (John 3:16), the asking requires a transfer of ownership (Luke 9:23; Galatians 5:24). “Counting the cost” means recognizing and agreeing to some terms first. In following Christ, we cannot simply follow our own inclinations. We cannot follow Him and the world’s way at the same time (Matthew 7:13-14). Following Him may mean we lose relationships, dreams, material things, or even our lives.

Those who are following Jesus simply for what they can get won’t stick around when the going gets tough. When God’s way conflicts with our way, we will feel betrayed by the shallow, me-first faith we have bought into. If we have not counted the cost of being His child, we will turn away at the threat of sacrifice and find something else to gratify our selfish desires (cf. Mark 4:5, 16-17). In Jesus’ earthly ministry, there came a time when the free food stopped and public opinion turned ugly. The cheering crowds became jeering crowds. And Jesus knew ahead of time that would happen.

Jesus ended His description of the cost of discipleship with a breathtaking statement: “Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). “Renouncing” may mean we give up something physically, but more often it means we let go emotionally so that what we possess no longer possesses us. When we become one of His, we cannot continue to belong to this world (1 John 2:15-17). We must make a choice, for we cannot serve both God and Mammon (Matthew 6:24). The rich young ruler, when confronted with that choice, turned his back on Jesus (Luke 18:18-25).

Suppose you learned that you had been given an all-expense-paid condo on a beach in Tahiti, complete with airfare, a car, food, and a maid. You could brag about your new lifestyle, plan for it, and dream about it. But until you pack up and leave your current home, the new life is never really yours. You cannot live in Tahiti and your current hometown at the same time.

Many people approach Christianity the same way. They love the idea of eternal life, escaping hell, and having Jesus at their beck and call. But they are not willing to leave the life they now live. Their desires, lifestyle, and sinful habits are too precious to them. Their lives may exhibit a token change - starting to attend church or giving up a major sin - but they want to retain ownership of everything else. Jesus is speaking in Luke 14 to those with that mindset.

We cannot earn salvation by lifestyle change or any other good deed (Ephesians 2:8-9). But when we choose to follow Christ, we are releasing control of our lives. When Jesus is in control, pure living results (1 John 3:4-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17). In Jesus' parable of the sower, it was only the soil that allowed the seed to put down roots and bear fruit that was called "good." If we are going to be disciples of Christ, we must first count the cost of following Him.

- <http://bit.ly/2mf9Frd>

But what if we tell someone about the cost of being a disciple of Jesus and they reject Him?

Here's the thing. No true seeker of Jesus Christ will be repelled when we speak of the cost of following Jesus, that is just the way it is.

And, as we have seen, God tells us that the only logical way to live our faith is with total commitment to Him!

And after Joshua told them this, they said, “... **‘No, but we will serve the LORD!’**”

Joshua 24:21.

And we think that is great, but Joshua is not done, not yet. He tells them, “... **‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him.’**”

Joshua 24:22.

Okay, they made this commitment to God and now they are witnesses against themselves if they don’t live accordingly!

And they said they will serve the Lord and Joshua tells them to put away the false gods from their lives and serve the Lord wholeheartedly! If you say you are going to live for the Lord, then do it!

And they responded by saying, “... **‘The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey.’**”

And what we see here is that third point, ***AUTHENTICATION OF COMMITMENT: COUNTING THE COST!***

Which leads us to our last point, ***CONFIRMATION OF THE COMMITMENT: MARKING THE COVENANT!***

### **VERSES 25-33**

Notice the progression that we have seen.

Joshua reminded them of how God brought forth the Jewish people and has established them in the land of Canaan. He was faithful and what God had promised them He brought to pass.



Joshua did this to remind them of all that God had done for them and the only logical thing to do was to serve the God who loved them and cared for them!

And then Joshua told them that they have to choose this day who they will serve. No matter what they did it was not going to stop Joshua from serving the Lord, but they also needed to make a decision.

And yes, they agreed to serve the Lord, but I don't think they understood the cost because they still were serving the foreign gods, these idols. So Joshua challenged them to put these things away if their commitment to the Lord was sincere! And they agreed to putting away these foreign gods and serve the Lord wholeheartedly!

And now, in this conclusion you might say, we see Joshua establishing this covenant that they said they would keep.

You see, Joshua again wants them to understand the commitment they made to the Lord. And evidence of that commitment was for them to get rid of their idols.

And this large stone that was set up was a stone of witness, a testimony to the covenant that the children of Israel made with the Lord.

Interestingly enough, archeologists excavating this site in Shechem have uncovered a great limestone pillar, which may be the remembrance stone that Joshua set up!

**The *CONFIRMATION OF THE COMMITMENT: MARKING THE COVENANT!***

I want to share a few things here regarding these last several verses here in Joshua and then I will sum up our study in this amazing book of Joshua!

Here we see the end of the life of Joshua. He faithfully served the Lord and he died at the age of 110 years old.

And notice his legacy, **“Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.”** Joshua 24:31.

His godly influence was effectively communicated to and through the whole nation! And Joshua is buried in the land of his inheritance, the land that God promised to give the children of Israel and now they are dwelling in because they were willing to walk by faith and not by sight!

We are also told that they brought the bones of Joseph from Egypt, carried them those forty years in the wilderness and now they are burying them in Shechem.

I am not sure who was in charge of the bones or the mummified body of Joseph all those years, but kudos to them! They didn't lose him or forget him, or even misplace him all those forty years of wandering in the wilderness, during those twenty years of battles as they are taking the Promise Land!

Not bad at all!

Joseph died in Egypt, in bondage, but he believed by faith that God was going to bring them into the Promised Land, the land of Canaan, and He did!

And with the death of Joshua and now Eleazar, many feel that Phinehas completed these last six verses of Joshua.

But we now see another chapter closing and the next generation is going to carry on the work of God.

But tragically, as we will see as we get to the book of Judges, how quickly people can turn from the Lord because what was known of God was not passed on to future generations, because compromise and complacency drew them away from God!

May we learn that lesson!

You see, we need to love the Lord and to love the Lord is to fear him. We are not to let compromise or complacency draw us away. We are to pass on the things of God to future generations!

Now what do I mean by the fear of the Lord? Simply. We are to respect, to reverence the Lord. It doesn't mean that we tremble in fear of Him unless we don't know Him and then we should fear Him and the coming judgment.

The solution to that is to come to know Him and have that reverential fear of God. You see, He is our loving God.

We are told in Psalm 111:10, **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”**

Now besides having a reverence to the Lord, we are told in Proverbs 8:13 that **“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.”**

You see, the fear of the Lord works in us and then works through us, in the things we do and the things we say!

We are being transformed into His image. We are to hate the things He hates and love the things He loves.

As you love the **LORD** more and more, you will find that you manifest the things that are in His heart, to hate evil and-so-on.

That is what we are to do and that is what we are to pass on to the next generation!

We began this in-depth study of Joshua over a year ago and what a journey it has been. I hope you have been blessed.

And I guess, if there was one word to sum up living that victorious Christian life, that would be - ***OBEDIENCE!***

We will see that victory when we are obedient to what the Lord is telling us and thus, we must obey moment by moment, day by day!

Jesus said, “**If you love Me keep My commandments.**” John 14:15. It is not a suggestion, it truly is a command, that if we love the Lord, we will show Him that we love Him by obeying Him!

I guess you can say that the secret to victory is obedience; and the secret of obedience is loving God.

And I will close with these words from Joshua and may these be words we not only say, but we live. He said, “**. . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**”

***CHOOSING, COMMITTING, SERVING!***