

BIBLICAL FAMILY MODERN WORLD: Your House, Your Choice

Joshua 24:14-15

OPENING:

Good morning! Thanks for joining us today. I want to invite you to grab your bibles and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 4. We are going to be in verses 25-32 this morning.

NEXT40 UPDATE:

I just wanted to give you guys an update on our Next40 Initiatives. Phase 1 is now under way – The Playground replacement and expansion should be completed in the next few weeks! Safety measures in Kids Wing will be beginning soon along with the renovation of the Kids Worship Space.

By way of update regarding finances of the Next40 Initiatives, you have given, to date, \$389,162. Because of your generosity, and because it is looking like phase 1 is coming in under budget, we are now beginning to pursue a portion of Phase 2. We are in the process of gathering bids for a half court extension on the outside of our Student Center. We plan to construct a 50-foot by 50-foot court equipped with striping and a nice goal for our students to play on. We are hoping to be able to start the construction process on that very soon.

By way of reminder, we are still collecting gifts for the completion of the other projects in the Next40 initiative. Reconfiguring audio, video, and lighting along with some remodeling of our Student Center (formally called Southside). We would also like to increase our safety measures by adding cameras throughout the campus. And our big dream is the construction of a sports court on the South side of our property. For more information and to give to this initiative, you can visit trinitytx.org/next40.

If you have additional questions, please let us know by visiting with us. These are exciting days in the life of our church!

INTRODUCTION:

We are approaching the end our teaching series called “A Biblical Family in a Modern Word.” I hope this has been a blessing to you as it has been to me. We’ve been studying the biblical principles of marriage and family. Topics have included God’s design for marriage, building godly homes, differing roles of

husband and wife, raising godly kids, money matters, intimacy, and communication. Today’s message is entitled, “Your house, your choice.”

So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn with me to the Old Testament. We are going to be in the book of Joshua. If you are new to Bible study, and it’s okay if you are because we are all new at some point, Joshua is the 6th book in the Bible. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and then Joshua. We are going to study chapter 24 and key in on verses 14 and 15.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Don’t care anymore.

It has been somewhat humorous being with my parents in the stage of life they are in. Both of my parents are retired. My mom just turned 74 and my dad 76. The thing I’ve noticed is the older they get, the less they care about what other people think of them. Can anyone else relate?

It’s especially the case for my dad. You never have to wonder what’s on his mind. He talks really loudly, even in restaurants. He’ll share his political opinions wherever and doesn’t care what anyone else thinks.

One time we were playing a baseball game. He’s going to hate me for this because I know he’s watching. But when my boys were playing in the championship game of a tournament, my parents came to watch. Now, what you need to know about my parents is that they are fiercely supportive of their kids and grandkids. As far as my mom is concerned, our kids are the best athletes in the world and should be in the Olympics. And my dad freely shares with the umpires where they can improve. So much so that I’ve had to ask him to simmer down. He says it’s not his fault because the part of his brain that cares is broken. It doesn’t work anymore.

You know, there comes an age where you get to say whatever you want. And in many cases, what you have to say is of interest to others. You’ve earned a right to say what you want. You’ve been around long enough to know things that the we don’t know. You have experiences that we have yet to experience.

I make mention of that to begin this morning because in our passage of study, Joshua is somewhere between 100 and 110 years old. While I’m not sure the exact age you get to say whatever you want, I’d say 100+ is there. Joshua calls a meeting with everyone at a place called Shechem. And he gives what is a

farewell address. He doesn't care what anyone thinks, and he says what's on his mind and heart.

And what Joshua says is so powerful, many have etched his words and displayed them in their homes. *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* Parents, families, in order to be a biblical family in our modern world, we have to realize it is our house, and therefore our choice.

This morning we are going to look at the faithfulness of Joshua and see that his faithfulness was rooted in his character, the choices he made, and the conviction by which he lived. That will serve as our outline this morning and the example for us to follow as we seek to be biblically aligned families.

MESSAGE:

Let's begin by looking at the fact that faithfulness is rooted in...

1) Character.

When it comes to Joshua, we see a man of great character. His life was marked by service to and faith in God. And that had a profound impact on his family. So, who was Joshua and what led him to be a man of great character?

Joshua was born in Egypt while the Israelites were enslaved there. History tells us that the Jews were slaves for about 400 years. As God was preparing them to be led out of slavery, a baby was born, named Moses. Moses was placed in a basket and sent floating the Nile River to avoid being killed. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and grew up as a prince in the palace.

When Moses was about 80 years old, God called him to go back to Pharaoh and demand that he let the Jews go. Pharaoh refused and God sent a series of Plagues on Egypt. The Jews were finally released after Pharaoh lost his son in the final plague. Moses led them out of Egypt and into the wilderness in what is known as the Exodus. By my estimation, Joshua was between 30 and 40 years old when the Exodus occurred.

Joshua lived all the events. He knew life before God led them out of Egypt. He witnessed the plagues. He knew what life was like while God was directing and providing for them. He witnessed the first Passover, the parting of the Red Sea, the Ten Commandments, and the construction of the Tabernacle. Joshua had a lifetime of experiencing the faithfulness of God.

That continued as a pattern in his life. About a year after the Exodus, Moses led the people to the edge of the Promised Land. The people elected to send 12 spies into the land to scope everything out. Joshua was one of those spies.

After 40 days, the spies came back. They talked about how awesome it was. But 10 of the spies talked about the difficulties and dangers. But 2 of the spies were like, "Listen, God said it's ours, He's on our side, let's go!" Well, Joshua and Caleb were those two. When the other spies doubted God, Joshua and Caleb had faith in God. Well, the people sided with the 10. As a result, they wandered in the wilderness for another 38 to 39 years.

In that time, Joshua was named as Moses' assistant. When Moses died at age 120, Joshua became the respected leader of the Israelites.

Just a few days following Moses' death, he began leading the people into the Promised Land. They marched around the walls of Jericho 7 times and then blew a trumpet. Remember what happened? The walls came tumbling down. Joshua was a great leader. He defeated 31 kings and 6 nations. And he led the Jews to take hold of that which God had promised them.

My point is that Joshua had history with God. A history that sustained him, fortified him, encouraged him, and affirmed him time and time again. **See, faithfulness to God comes from history with God.**

When Joshua begins his speech in verse 1 of chapter 24, he begins with going over the history of God's people. I encourage you to spend this week in Joshua 24. Joshua does is speak on behalf of God. And in the speech, God uses the phrases, "I gave, I sent, I plagued, I brought, I destroyed, and I delivered," 16 times. God, through Joshua, is reminding His people of the history they've had with Him. And that is to serve as a springboard for their continued trust in Him.

What does all this have to do with a Biblical family in a modern world? Well, I believe what we learn from Joshua's example is the importance of leading our families in such a way that we build a history with God. If faithfulness to God comes from history with God, what kind of history does our family have?

One of the observations I've made about our culture is that we tend to give up too quickly. We have microwave faith. It's gotta happen quick. We tend to think if we haven't seen God move powerfully in a while, I guess He's not working.

But think about Joshua for a second. He spent the first 30-40 years of his life as a slave in Egypt. 30-40 years of seeming nothingness from God. But God was at work and Joshua was trusting God's timing.

Fast forward to when Joshua was leading the people into the Promised Land. Don't you think he had doubts about his ability? These are big cities, large armies, and accomplished kings. Can I do it? But then he thought, no big deal, this is just another Red Sea moment. I remember God's faithfulness then; He'll be faithful now. The power of this kind of faith passed down is immeasurable. And the question is, what are we doing to build history with God in our family?

When our kids leave our nest and encounter the trials of this world, will they say, "No big deal. God was faithful then, He'll be faithful now. God provided then, He'll provide now." When faced with challenges, we need to raise up a generation that says, "No big deal. This is just another Red Sea moment." But you see, that kind of faith only comes with having the history of seeing God's faithfulness toward us.

Parents, teach your children, your family, what it means to serve The Lord. It's your house, so it's your choice. Engage in the Lord's work. Make sure they are in church, participating in ministries and events church provides. Model it. Talk about God's faithfulness often. These are all ways we build a history with God.

So, we see the godly character of Joshua. Secondly, let's look at the...

2) Choice.

When Joshua comes to the peak of his speech, he talks about a choice that must be made. A choice that confronts us today. Verse 14 and the first part of verse 15 he says, *"**14**Now therefore fear the Lord and **serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness**. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. **15**And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, **choose** this day whom you will serve, **whether** the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, **or** the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell."*

The choice that Joshua presents is to fear The Lord, to respect Him, or serve other gods. If you choose to serve God, do so in sincerity and in faithfulness. In other words, the sincerity of our devotion to God must be singularly focused. To serve God means that we do not serve other gods, lower case "g."

He makes mention of three regions where the worship of other gods came to be: beyond the river, Egypt, and the gods of the Amorites. Beyond the River would refer to the gods in the Babylonian culture. They worshiped fertility gods and zodiac gods. The reference to Egypt referred to the many false gods the Egyptians worshiped, like the sun, moon, and animal gods. And then, in verse 15, the gods of the Amorites. The Amorites worshiped the gods of intellect, pleasure, possessions, and sexual deviancy. Joshua is saying you can't worship those gods and The Lord God at the same time.

Now, what I find interesting about Joshua's statement is his assumption. He says, "If you don't want to serve The Lord God, then serve the other gods." Do you see his assumption? This choice is not whether you will serve Almighty God or not, but rather the choice is which god you will serve.

His point is that every person has a God. That's true today, isn't it? Whether we want to admit it or not, we all serve a God. It is the supreme passion by which we operate our lives. That's who God is to us. Joshua's wants that to be The Lord God Almighty, the God of The Bible. But if He's not, then we serve another god.

Now, someone might say, "I'm atheist. I don't believe in God." There's no such thing as an atheist because to that person, the supreme passion of their life might be money, or fame, the pleasures of the world, or even their own intelligence. Everyone has an authority by which they operate, what drives the choices and decisions we make. And whatever that is, it is our god.

Now, fast forward to us today. We make choices everyday as to which God we serve. Who or what we allow to shape our family? Who do we align our lives to? Who shapes our views of what family is to be, of what a wife is to be, what a husband is to be? What drives our family? Is it the pursuit of the things of this world or is it the pursuit of the things of God?

If we seek to be a Biblical family, we must allow The Lord God, and Him only, to shape that within us. It's a choice that confronts us all. And to not make a choice is to make a choice. The challenge to us is to, "**choose this day whom you will serve.**" It's your house, so it's your choice.

So, we've looked at the character, the faithfulness of Joshua, and then the choice. Thirdly, let's look at the...

3) Conviction.

What I think I love most about this passage is the conviction by which Joshua spoke. Look again, at verse 15. *15And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond 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.***” Do you hear the conviction in Joshua’s voice? The resolve?

There are two parts to Joshua’s conviction. First it is personal. He describes his personal decision. You all must determine which God you will serve, but regardless of what you and others decide, as for me, I’m gonna serve The Lord. See, before it is for his family, it is first for him. Conviction is built upon a personal decision.

Moms and dads, what convictions do you have? What choices have you made based upon the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Because before you can pass that along to your kids and grandkids, it first has to be personal for you.

Having a personal conviction is important because it is what keeps us from being swayed by other opinions and ideals. Someone without conviction is easily led away and is indecisive. But if we have strong biblical convictions, when the rest of society goes in one direction, we stand firm in godly directions. That was the case for Joshua. His conviction was personal.

But not only is Joshua’s conviction personal, but it is also corporate. It is also for his family. “As for me AND my house.” In other words, as the leader of my home, I’m going to speak for all of us. We are going to serve The Lord.

Here’s what we learn here. Our personal, spiritual convictions should affect every other relationship in our lives. It is God’s desire that we, as parents, be personally committed to Him with all our heart and then pass that onto our children that they may continue with the same convictions.

Our culture has abandoned moral absolutes. But it’s your house, your choice. Don’t you do it. Culture has reconfigured and is redefining the family, but it’s your house, your choice. Don’t succumb it. Our culture is pursuing what is right in their own eyes, but it’s your house, your choice. Don’t sacrifice your convictions. Be resolved, convicted, committed to God’s ways for your family. That’s what Joshua did.

Now, while Joshua made this commitment and did so on behalf of his family, there’s really no way he had of guaranteeing his family would follow suit. Remember, he’s 100+ years old. His kids are grown as are his grandkids. They are at a point that they have to make their own decision. Joshua can’t make it for them. Right? So, what are we to make of this?

Well, what I see in this is Joshua leveraging his influence for the sake of his family. You know, we all have influence. The question is how we use our influence. And what we learn from Joshua is that it’s never too late to leverage the influence you have for impact on future generations. And it’s never too early, either.

ILLUSTRATION: Parent Connect

Last Sunday we had a great turn out for our first Parent Connect. An event that we have created to come alongside parents and to equip you in raising godly kids. We desire that to be intentional, practical and helpful.

Last Sunday we had a guest speaker come and share with us about influence. He mentioned that, as parents, we have opportunity to influence. And while the ways in which we influence changes as our kids get older, we can still position ourselves to influence next generations.

And truth be told we are influencing our children one way or another. Our kids know full well what is of most importance to us. The question is what are we communicating to them as being important.

I came across this post from a friend of mine, Shane Pruitt [show graphic]. As many of you know, I get to coach my boys in competitive basketball and baseball. This graphic stung when I first read it. “As a parent to athletes: I have to constantly remind myself, if I get more excited about my child making a 3-pointer, scoring a goal, or landing on a team – that I do about them telling their friends about Jesus or serving in the church... It’s time to readjust my priorities.”

Joshua was a man of great character because of his history with God. We are all presented with a choice. And if we are going to influence next generations with the gospel, we must be a people of conviction.

CONCLUSION

I'm going to ask Micah and the band come up and lead us in a time of response. We want to give people an opportunity to come to Christ or to come for prayer.

If you are here today and you have never trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior, I want to invite you to do that today. The Bible teaches that we all have sinned and that has brought about a separation between us and God. But God loved us, even in our sin, that He provided a solution to our sin problem. That solution is His son, Jesus.

Jesus came from heaven, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross for our sin. Jesus took your place and mine on the cross. And the Bible says that by faith in Him, we can be saved. That is forgiven of our sin. When our sin is forgiven we have a right relationship with God restored. Doesn't mean you'll be perfect. But you can be forgiven and saved today.

If you would like to visit with someone about that, or maybe you have questions about your salvation, we would love to visit with you as well.

Maybe you just have another prayer need that you would like for us to pray for, you come as well.

We are going to stand and sing, but let's all respond to the prompting of the Lord on our hearts [Pray].