

Make A Choice

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[0:00] Well, we turn to the scriptures and we're reading of that great redemption that God worked for his people of old. Joshua chapter 24 is where we're reading and we'll read the first 27 verses.

This is the word of God that is forever settled in heaven. Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem.

He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel and they presented themselves before God. Joshua said to all the people, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says.

Long ago, your forefathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the river and worshipped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the river and led him through Canaan and gave him many descendants.

I gave him Isaac and to Isaac. I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau. But Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.

[1:10] Then I sent Moses and Aaron and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there. And I brought you out. When I brought your fathers out of Egypt, you came to the sea and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea.

But they cried to the Lord for help. And he put darkness between you and the Egyptians. He brought the sea over them and covered them.

You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the desert for a long time. I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan.

They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you and you took possession of their land. When Balak, son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam, son of Beor, to put a curse on you.

But I would not listen to Balaam. So he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand. Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho.

[2:20] The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

But I gave them into your hands. I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you, also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow.

So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build, and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.

Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the river and in Egypt and serve the Lord.

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living.

[3:24] But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Then the people answered, far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods.

It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt from that land of slavery and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.

And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord because he is our God.

Joshua said to the people, you are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins.

If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you after he has been good to you. But the people said to Joshua, no, we will serve the Lord.

[4 : 27] Then Joshua said, you are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord. Yes, we are witnesses, they replied.

Now then, said Joshua, throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel. And the people said to Joshua, we will serve the Lord our God and obey him.

On that day, Joshua made a covenant for the people. And there at Shechem, he drew up for them decrees and laws. And Joshua recorded these things in the book of the law of God.

Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the Lord. See, he said to all the people, this stone will be a witness against us.

It has heard all the words the Lord has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God. Some of us drag our feet when it comes to making decisions, making choices.

[5 : 36] We're reluctant choosers. We're always waiting for something better to come along or we just don't know. It can be a good thing when January 1st comes along and you're feeling a little heavy and you're seeing those infomercials and the abdo-minizer is promising so much.

Well, you don't buy that. Maybe something better will come along. And that's a good thing. When it comes to choosing your meal at the restaurant, you wait until everyone else is gone.

You wait until your husband is picked in case you might want what he picked. And then the waitress is standing there and everyone and you're still hemming and hawing coming up with a decision.

That's not bad. It's kind of annoying, but that's all. But sometimes we do need to be pushed to make a decision to really choose something.

It seems to be almost one of the faults of our generation or my generation is that instead of getting on with things, we're always hemming and hawing and not making decisions, wondering what the Lord's will is for us.

[6 : 52] As Kevin DeYoung wrote a book, Just Do Something. And that's a word that we need sometimes. Sometimes we do need pushed into those decisions. We need to choose.

Sometimes being slow to decide isn't a big deal. Who cares whether you have the chicken or the beef? That doesn't matter. But sometimes you do have to choose.

The woman says to her boyfriend, you either ask me to marry you or we are done. You have to make a choice.

We can't stay in this sort of in between. We have to go forward or we go backward. Either way, we're not staying here. And so you have to choose. That's where Joshua is.

He's now in his last days. And I think last days put some perspective on things. You want what the most important thing to be the most important thing. And here is Joshua.

[7:49] And you can't help but notice, even as it was read, that there is a little bit of confrontation in Joshua's spirit here. He wants Israel to be serious, to choose the Lord or to just be done with it.

He's down to his last days. And that's his message to Israel. And that's God's message to us. Choose. Make a heart commitment.

Choose. And maybe some of you really need to hear that. Because you're wavering between God and yourself.

God and sin. God and the world. And you're wondering which way you should go. Coming to Jesus or leaving him behind.

You're in this in-between. Maybe he's woke you up. And you're awake. And you're alive to now the possibility that I need to come to Jesus. And yet you're dragging your feet.

[8:52] We saw this last week. So maybe he's woken you up. And you're out of Egypt. But you're not through the Red Sea. You need to either go forward or go back.

But you can't stay where you are. If you're going to choose the world, then get on with it. If you're going to choose Christ, then get on with it.

Quit loitering around the door. Quit loitering around the door. So you want Jesus.

Then quit loitering around the door. And get in. Make the choice. Do something. Others of us need to hear this again.

Because prone to wander. Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. It's not salvation here. That's the question.

[9:48] It's the divided heart. Psalm 86:11. Give me an undivided heart. We have a divided heart.

A lukewarm heart. One person put it like this. One hand in his side. And one hand in a pot of gold. One hand in his side.

One hand in a pot of gold. One hand on the idol. One hand to heaven. And so you're going along. You're driving to heaven. But you are stopping along at every single rest stop. At every single restaurant.

At every little tic-tac-y touristy trap place. And the question is. Do you want to get there or not? Are you serious?

About living heavenward? Or not? And that's the point. Choose. Choose where your loyalty lies. Choose what is important.

[10:44] Choose who your God is. Choose what you're going to live for. Or. That's Joshua's last appeal. And with Joshua. We don't. And what I'm saying. Don't take any of it to think.

Oh, it's not. Take it or leave it. They're two equal choices. It's not like Joshua was saying. I don't care which one you choose. No.

He's going to tell us all about God. He's going to tell us all about what God did for Israel. And the point is. Is he is going to press home. That they need to make the same kind of commitment. Because what you see in this history.

Is God's great and ultimate commitment to them. And now they need to respond in kind. But whatever they do. They need to make a choice.

They need to say. Where's my heart? So he's going to give them this history. He's going to confront them with what the Lord has done.

[11:41] And it's. It's a history of his loving kindness. It's a history of his covenant faithfulness. It's a history of his commitment to them.

His mercy. His love. And as we go along. I want you to think of how he has loved you. Because you have your own history.

If you're a Christian. You have your own history. Of his love for you. And it's just as real. And it's just as historical.

It's just as factual. As this history. And you're going to see some of the same features. I'm sure in yours. As in theirs. So here's Joshua. He's going to. Speaking for the Lord.

He's going to give them this history. And that's the first half of this chapter. He brings them to. Shechem. Shechem. And. Shechem.

[12:38] The air. Shechem is full of history. For Israel. It was in Shechem. It's sort of like us. Going to Gettysburg.

I've never been to Gettysburg. But everyone says. You go there. It's like the air is full of history. You're not going to be surprised. If. If. Robert E. Lee. Walks out of the trees.

Or if. You hear the sound of Pickett's charge. Happening. The air is full of history. And that's what Shechem would have been like. To the Israelites. Because. It was here in Shechem. It was under this big oak tree.

And it's interesting. Where are they meeting at? Where do they put that stone? And you see it at the end of. Verse 26 and 27 there. It's under this tree.

It's like this tree is still there. That Abraham. Sat under. He sat under this tree. And the Lord made a promise. And he said. I am going to give you this land.

[13:37] I am going to make you. And your people great. Remember Abraham. It's just Abraham and Sarah at this point. And the Lord has this. This magnificent and wonderful promise.

Abraham. I am going to give you. Make you a great nation. I am going to. Give you this land. And so it's here. So here they are. Years later. And the promises all come true.

They started out with just Abraham. And now they are millions. They started out not owning any of the land. And now. It's in their possession. And here.

In this context. Joshua says. Now you need to choose. What you are going to do with God. Here we are. He has kept his commitments. He has kept his promise to you.

What are you going to do? So then he begins this history. This recitation of God's love. And I want you to know the six things. As we go along. First.

[14:36] How surprising this love is. It's a surprising love. Because who did he choose? He chose Abraham. Abraham.

And Abraham. You have to think. Where he was. He was across the river. And was he a God-fearing person? Was he this virtuous God-fearer?

No. That's not when God found him. That's not where God found him. He wasn't a virtuous pagan. Seeking God. He. Like his father. Terah. And his brother. Nahor. Were.

Idolaters. Worshiping other gods. Beyond. The river. And there was nothing. In Abraham. To attract him. From our context.

From our view. Vantage point. It might as well. Been a dart throw. At the board. But from the Lord's perspective. He chose Abraham. He picked him out. There's nothing.

[15:32] In Abraham. To get God. To choose him. Listen to John Calvin. At this point. He says. Abraham. Did not emerge. From profound ignorance. And the abyss of error.

By his own virtue. But he was drawn out. By the hand of God. For it is not said. That he sought God. Of his own accord. But that he was taken by God.

And transported elsewhere. So there's Abraham. And he's mired in the mud. He's mired in a sin. Guilty. And undone. And God reaches out his hand.

To Abraham. And draws him forth. Out of the mud. And calls him to belong to himself. And says. Now I'm going to show you. Where we're going to go. And with surprising love.

If you can. If you think that you can calculate. Grace. And say that adds up. That figures. Of course.

[16:34] Them. Then you've. Made the mistake. You've missed. What grace is. You either. Don't see. How amazing grace is.

Or you don't see. How guilty that person is. That God is. Saving. It was a surprising love. Now second. It was gradual love. Gradual love.

Well what happened. You can see in verse 3. He says. I gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac. Gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac.

Now how long did Abraham wait for Isaac? It was 25 years. Before. I gave him many descendants. And then that blossomed. In one. Person. Isaac.

And then we have. Well then. Then to Isaac. I gave Jacob. And Esau. And so now. Here we are. I didn't do the math. But you could do it. It's 50. 60 years at this point.

[17:30] And the promise. Has now blossomed. To Isaac. Jacob. And Esau. And Esau. Is not. Included. So we're really. To two.

Now you don't live long. In the kingdom of God. Before you begin to experience. God's. Gradual. Pace. From our perspective.

We're. We're. Missed. We're shadows. We're fleeting. And. And. So for us. God's time scale. Is so gradual. So I gave him many descendants.

I gave him Esau. God is not. In a hurry. From our perspective. He's not in a hurry. We're in a hurry. We want to go. Go. Go. We want things to happen. We want to see things happen next week.

We're surprised when they don't happen next week. And that's. We want the kingdom of God to come. We want the promises fulfilled. We want the answer. The prayers answered. We want to see God's kingdom grow right now.

[18:30] But brothers and sisters. God is. Always faithful. But he is not necessarily in a hurry. He is not in a hurry. From our perspective.

And so we need to. When God is taking. A long time. And you can fill in the blank of that thing that you're waiting for. And you can fill in the blank of you're saying.

Wow. This is taking a long time. In those moments. As hard as it may be. We need to focus on God. And not be looking at our stopwatches.

Watches. Fasten your eyes on the Lord's faithfulness. Not on his speed. Because he will. Be faithful.

He's not necessarily in a hurry. And that's what you see. So fasten your eyes on him. Not on his speed. So you see his gradual love. And it's unfolding.

[19:26] It's unfolding slowly. Number three. You see it's mystifying love. Mystifying love. God. We sing that song. God truly does plant his footsteps in the sea.

The thing that we all want to do is. Judge God. Judge the Lord by feeble sense. What am I seeing right now? What is apparent on the surface of things? And then decide that's what.

That's what things should be. Or that's what things aren't. But God truly plants his footsteps in the sea. Deep and unfathomable minds. Of never failing skill.

He draws out his bright designs. Have you ever thought of that song? And what we're saying? The Lord goes down into the deep, deep, deep, dark places.

And that's where he finds his jewels. And that's where he brings them out. Beyond our sight. Beyond our understanding. And that's what we see here.

[20:28] He goes deep into the mystery. Look at what he says in verse 4. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau. But Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.

Esau got his land right away. He got his kingdom right away. You can read about it in Genesis. He had his sons and they became rulers.

They got their land right away. He sold his birthright for us for stew. And he ended up with the land first. He got his good things right away.

But God, in love and wisdom, in unfathomable minds, he sends his people down to Egypt. No land for them.

No land for 400 years. John Bunyan had it so right when he told the story of passion and patience. Two boys.

[21:33] Passion got all of his good things right away. And patience was forced to wait. The worldling gets his pleasures. Right here.

Right now. The things that he enjoys, he gets. To some degree, right now, he has his good things in this life. And the children of God are forced to wait. Esau gets his land and Israel goes into slavery.

They get the whip. They get the sword. There's no story of Pharaoh going in and killing Esau's boys.

Little boys. The children are enslaved. And this is one of the hardest things for us to take. It's hard. It's hard for me. When life is hard, I am like Asaph.

And I say, why? Why? Why do they get their good things and I am still longing?

[22:32] Why do they go ahead? They get ahead. And I just get more bills. And difficulty. Well, the scriptures don't gloss over that mystery.

The scripture doesn't act like it's there. But it acknowledges it. And it says, you know what? This is part of the Lord's way. This is the way he works. So we don't know the why sometimes.

But we do know who is writing the story. And the story doesn't end in the difficulty. And that's where we need to make sure that we don't stop our story in the difficulty. Because Israel doesn't stay in Egypt.

They come out of Egypt. And so we, in the same way, we go through our loss and our pain. We don't know when we're going to come out on the other side. But the Lord is writing our story.

And he is bringing about. And he will bring us to the other side of the pain and the difficulty. So Israel's story doesn't end in Egypt. And they're just passing through.

[23:32] And actually, that's next. God's saving love. God's saving love. Saving faithfulness. Because he promised to Abraham, I'm giving you a great people.

I am giving you that land. And if he promised, he's going to have to find a way to get that people out of the hand of Pharaoh. And into that land. And his promise is, they're going to have this land.

And now there's people in that land. Well, they're going to have to be taken care of. So this is the saving faithfulness. The saving love. What happened in Egypt? In the land of slavery.

In the land of difficulty. In the house of bondage. They begin to multiply. And that's beautiful. Because we want to say, we can't be fruitful in difficult circumstances.

But by God's grace, you know what? We are fruitful in circumstances like that. So they grew. They grew from 70 that went down to Egypt. And to this great throng.

[24 : 30] A million or so people. And they cried out. And God saved them. And you can see what he says. And just as you read it. As we had it read. You just noticed all the eyes.

The Lord is saying, I did this. I did this. I did this. So I sent Moses and Aaron. I afflicted the Egyptians. I brought your fathers out of Egypt. You came to the sea. And the Egyptians pursued you.

And you saw with your own eyes what I did to them. And it goes on and on. I did this. I did that. And you saw with your own eyes what I did to them. I brought you out.

And I covered them with water. And I saved you. And that's our God. He saves his people.

He saves us from sin. He saves us from Satan. He saves us from one day. Even death itself. He saved us with a mighty hand.

[25 : 29] And our salvation is ongoing. It began at the cross. When all the devils were rushing Jesus to that cross to die. And it ended up being their destruction.

And not his. And his death ruined them. And he put them to open shame. At the cross. So salvation belongs to the Lord. And so we say, not unto us.

Not unto us. But to your name be the glory. Because we're the ones that need saved. And he's the one that saves us. And so it's his power. It's not ours. And so no one can boast.

And so we say, where does our help come from? Our help comes from the Lord. The maker of heaven and earth. We need help. He's our helper.

We need saved. He is our savior. So God opens the sea. And he makes a way right through the mighty waters. And he brings them through.

[26 : 26] And he rescues his people. So it's saving love. And then next it's protecting love. And now we get to that story about Balaam. And he is going to curse Israel.

He's going to put a curse upon them. And it simply says, I didn't listen to Balaam. And so he blessed you again and again. He tried to curse you again and again.

But I didn't listen. And so he blessed you again and again. That's his love for us. The devil tries to work us well. To work us evil. And his craft and his power are great.

Armed with cruel hate on earth is not his equal. We cannot stand against him all by ourselves. But you know what?

The devils can't curse us. And man can't curse us and snatch us out of his hand. Because God will not listen. He only has blessing for his people.

[27 : 29] So he blesses them. Blesses us instead. I love in our confession in chapter 21. It's the chapter on Christian freedom.

And it says, of all the things that we're free from. It says we're free from the evil world. So we're not a part of this evil world anymore. That we have to listen and obey it.

We're free from the bondage to Satan. Sin's domination. And then it says, and the hurtfulness of afflictions. The hurtfulness of afflictions is something that we're free from.

It's not saying that we don't hurt in afflictions. It's not saying that. It's saying that our afflictions ultimately cannot work us hurt. They cannot work us destruction.

God says you are free from the hurtfulness of afflictions. He so protects us. He protects us so thoroughly that even our pain must do us good.

[28 : 30] And so that's what God did. He protected them in the desert. He protected them from Balaam. He protected them from Pharaoh's armies. As he protected you.

As he protected you. Sixth. He provided for them. Verse 7 says you lived in the desert a long time. And that's just a passing phrase. But that's it was close to 40 years in the desert.

No water. No food. But the Lord provided for them. There was water from the rock. There was manna on the ground. There was quail. There was all of this food in the desert for a long time.

And then out of the desert they came. And when they came to the Jordan. They the Jordan. Now they're getting ready to enter the land. And then it says the Lord sent this hornet had gone up before them it says.

Now I don't think he's talking literal hornets. I mean he very good. But I don't think that's what he's talking about. I think what he's talking about is terrifying fear. Terrifying fear entered into the people's hearts in Canaan.

[29:39] You remember how again and again it said in Joshua. Their hearts melted. And an army with hearts melted. They don't fight. They don't fight well. When I was about 12.

I was helping my cousin clean out some of my grandpa's backyard. And we were throwing chunks of wood. Chopped wood into a pile. And there was this bird house there.

It was a marlin house. You know what those look like. And there it was on the ground. It needed to be put up again. And my cousin is chucking wood. And he chucked a piece of wood.

A log. Into that bird house. And smashed it. And out came a whole swarm. Of bees. And instead of going for him.

They all went for me. And so. There they are. They're coming at me. Did I put up my dukes? And give it a good fight?

[30:43] No. I ran. Like. A maniac. And I was taking off my clothes as I was running. You know why? Because they had gotten into my clothes.

You get it? God sent the hornet. He sent the heart of fear.

And terror. Inability to stand. How do you stand up against a swarm of bees? How do you stand against a swarm of hornets? You can't fight them. All you can do is run.

So God sent the hornet ahead of them. And so they didn't meet strong warriors. They met hearts with melted hearts. And he brought them into the land.

And it says he gave them. And that's really what we're talking about here. This is how the Lord provided for them. He had to clean out the land. And so he cleans out the land. And he brings in the people. And now the houses are there.

[31:40] And the land is there. And the vineyards are there. There's just. The people are. Now destroyed. And all they have to do is enjoy it. And that was God's love for them.

So in grace he chose their father. He chose them. And in patient gradual love. He unfolded his perfect love for them in time.

Took 400 years. But his plans were ripening. And then in. With powerful love he saved them. And in love he protected them.

And all along the way. Like a shepherd. He provided for them. And God says that's what I've done for you.

Haven't you seen that in your story? Have you seen the connections between you and them? And. How he's protected you again and again.

[32:41] How he saved you. And so that you can read the Psalms. And you can read. The whole Testament. And every time it says the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever. You can say.

Yes that's true. I've experienced it. It's not just what I've heard with my ears. I've seen it in my life. I've seen his faithfulness. I've seen it in my life. And Israel now here.

Has it all laid out before them. And I think it was good for them to hear their history again. To see what God did for them. We need to have that. That's why we do the Lord's Supper. That's one. One thing that we do.

We need to have that rehearsed again before us. And you see. This practice done in the Psalms. And in other parts of the Old Testament. Where the people are all gathered.

And they're in worship. And they do the whole history again. There's Psalms where it's like the whole story is laid out. And this is one of those places.

[33:36] And it was good for them. And I think it's good for us too. And this is just where I want to make a suggestion. And I strongly want to suggest this.

Because I think it will be helpful. We were just interviewing someone a few weeks ago. About membership. And he said it was really good for him to write out his testimony.

And he said everyone should do this again. And I think he's right. As we grow. As we mature in the Christian faith.

As we go further along. God's grace doesn't stop. When we were baptized. And our understanding of what God was doing then. Doesn't stop either.

We get a better understanding of what was going on. And we see more of ourselves as we get older. As God opens our eyes more. And so we see more of his grace. And then we go on and on. And just like in John 1.

[34:35] John puts it like this. Grace upon grace. That's what our lives become. So it's this ongoing story of his love.

We see more of our past. We understand more. And then he keeps on adding this grace. And this is where I want to make this suggestion. I want to suggest that you sit down. You know with a notebook and a pen or computer.

And begin jotting down your own history. Like Joshua did here. And so go back to your birth. Go back to as long as you can remember.

And say look at how the Lord was blessing me. Look at what the Lord was doing for me there. And write it down. And write down this personal history. I did this this week.

Nothing thorough. Not for anyone else's eyes. But just to write this down. And it was so good. To go back. Okay 30 years. 20 years. 10 years.

[35:40] How has the Lord been faithful. The last few years. Right up until now. And you write it down. And there it is on your notebook. Talk about thankfulness.

Talk about a heart that's ready to commit to the Lord. He did all of this for me. So what do I owe him?

Look at his commitment to me. What can I do but be committed to him in return? And that's what Joshua finally gets down to. That's what the Lord has done for you.

And so what should your response be? Verse 14. Now fear the Lord. And serve him with all faithfulness. He says fear him. Reverence him. Hold him in high regard.

Esteem him. Lord be thou my vision. In everything. And so he's number one. He's big. Everything else is small. And then serve him with all faithfulness.

[36:47] That means exclusiveness. We're talking faithfulness like a marriage faithfulness. And the way that you're faithful to your spouse is she's the only one. He's the only one. So serve him with all faithfulness.

With total commitment. So get rid of all those other gods. That's Joshua's word. Somehow or other. They had been bringing these gods along apparently. Joshua says get rid of them.

And serve the Lord alone. So what God do you need to throw away? What idol are you carrying around? And then look again at your history.

And ask. Did that idol do any of those things? Or was it the Lord? So we. We pray.

Give me an undivided heart. And then he says if that's not what you want to do. If that's undesirable to you. Then go ahead.

[37:54] And choose those gods. Choose them. You can't serve God in money. You can't love God in this world at the same time.

You can't have yourself on the throne. And God on the throne. It only seats one. And so choose which one it's going to be.

Who are you going to serve? You have to serve somebody. That's Bob Dylan's famous 1980 song.

And how it stirred up people. When he said you have to serve somebody. Doesn't matter what you are. A banker. Whatever you are. You have to serve somebody.

And so somebody or something is going to be your God. And that's Joshua. And so you need to choose. Who's your master going to be? And then he says.

[38:57] Again this is not him just saying. Take it or leave it. He's saying. But as for me and my house. We will serve the Lord. Again. Regardless of what you do.

Regardless of the choice that you make. Joshua is saying. That's not who I am. That's not what I am choosing. And as far as it depends on me. That's what my family is. That's not what we're about.

And so he says. Now you choose. And then there's this next part. Where they're like. Yes. Yes. We can do it. We'll do it. Yes. Yes. Yes. And Joshua says.

It's almost like. Joshua is saying. Be real for a minute. I don't want your mere words. Don't just be saying something to get me off your back.

Or don't be. Oh here we are. We're all excited. We're at the thrill of the moment. We're at the big Christian conference and concert or whatever. And now it's all emotion in. And yeah. We'll do it. And Joshua says.

[39:54] Think about it. Before you get all excited and just say something. Don't enter into this lightly. Look at verse 19. Because you're not able to serve the Lord.

He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion. Now. We need to listen to Joshua's words in the full context of the Old Testament.

He is not saying there's no forgiveness with God. It's not an absolute statement. And he's not absolutely saying. You can't serve. Or you're not able to serve the Lord. Now there's some sense that they're not.

But he is still saying. Yes it's possible. And we can say it's possible by God's grace. But the real. The gist. The point. I think the weight of this is. Joshua is saying.

Don't just say yes I'll serve the Lord. When you don't mean it. Don't think that God is just going to be satisfied with your words.

[40:54] Because he's a jealous God. You just can't say I'll do it. And then go on with your life. Because God is a jealous God. He won't play second fiddle.

He'll hold you accountable for what you said. And he doesn't want your words. He wants your heart. He's playing for keeps. Now.

If you're lost. You do need to choose who you're going to serve. You need to choose who you're going to serve.

But listen to Joshua's words. Because you need to consider all the ramifications. You need to consider every aspect of your choice. He says. God's not going to forgive your rebellion. We're not.

Gods are not all created equal. There's one God that judges. There's one God that holds men accountable. For the choices they make. Allah won't hold you accountable if you don't serve him.

[42 : 01] But the Lord will. He'll not forgive your rebellion. You choose idols. You're choosing your death. You choose God light. Hot tub.

Religion. God. Not all in. He's saying you're choosing your own disaster. What have we seen in Joshua? That God is this powerful.

Loving. Saving. Sympathetic. Savior. He's always saying don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged. Let's go. And he's encouraging the people.

And he's giving them the land. And he's loving them. And he's saving them. And he's protecting them. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished. Go look at Achan.

He's buried. Look at the cities of Jericho. And Ai. And all the other cities. They're in rubble. The wicked are destroyed.

[43 : 02] And so. The book of Joshua takes you up to this very point. Here's your God. Here's God. Savior. And here's the other options. So. Is it going to be God? Or is it going to be something else? Who's going to have your heart?

Joshua says you need to choose. Well let's pray. Our Lord we do say prone to wander.

Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Lord we're always tearing down idols. And then putting them right back up.

Will you forgive us? And we do pray that you would give us an undivided heart. A heart that's 100% loving and committed and faithful to you.

[43 : 58] So plow up. The deep parts of our heart. Unmask our idols. Give us love for you and hatred for those false gods.

And Lord we see that. The false God that's behind so many of those false gods is me. Is what I want.

Is what I can do. Is my pride. So please. Holy Spirit come and take us. To the cross. Give us clear sights.

And may our self love. And selfishness. And self-centeredness. Die. As we look upon Jesus. And what he endured for us.

So make the gospel to seal our hearts. To you. And for those who are. Lost. If they're blind and asleep. And dead in their sin.

[44 : 58] With no signs of life or awareness. Please wake them up. And if they're. Somehow starting to see the light. Their hearts. Are wavering.

I pray Lord Jesus. Bring them home. Take them by the hand. And draw them in. To your kingdom. We pray for salvation.

And we pray for mercy. Thank you that you are a God. Of sovereign grace. And sovereign love. So we trust in that. This week. Please forgive us of our sins. And help us to walk. In steadfastness.

In Jesus name I do pray. Amen.