



August 23, 2026
Whom Will You Serve?
Joshua 24:12-28



1. Sermon Outline:

- a. Joshua Challenged Israel to Renew Their Covenant With God.
 - i. Joshua confronted Israel with a stark choice.
 - ii. The people chose the Lord!
 - iii. Joshua memorialized that generation's covenant commitment.
- b. Whom Will YOU Serve?
 - i. God has done immeasurably wonderful things for you in Christ.
 - ii. What is your heart inclined toward?
 - iii. Are you fully committed to serving the Lord?

2. Sunday – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:

- a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

3. Monday:

- a. As we conclude this series on Joshua, we come to the literary climax of the book and what is arguably the capstone of Joshua's long career. Before we delve into the focal passage, take time to read the entire 24th chapter of Joshua.
 - i. What would you say were the three main parts of the chapter?
 - ii. Who are the main characters doing the talking in each part?
- b. Unlike Joshua's farewell address in chapter 23 that was considered last week, where are we told that this meeting of the tribes of Israel was held?
 - i. Why would this location have been important to an Israelite who knew the nation's history?
 - 1. What is recorded happening there in Genesis 12:6-7?
 - 2. What is recorded happening there in Genesis 33:18-20?
 - 3. What is recorded happening there in Genesis 35:2-5?
 - 4. Shechem is located between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. What important event took place there as the Israelites began the conquest of the Promised Land (see Joshua 8:30-35)?

- ii. Who is talking in verses 2b-13?
 - 1. What is He telling the tribes of Israel?
 - 2. As He recounts the history, who is given all of the credit for all of the success?
 - 3. What does the repeated use of the “I – you” terminology say about how the speaker felt about His people?
- iii. If you had been an Israelite listening to God recount your history, how would you have felt? What history should we always remember that is even more important (see Romans 5:6-8 & John 3:16)?

4. *Tuesday:*

- a. Read the focal passage, Joshua 24:12-28, meditating especially on verses 12-15.
- b. What does God say that He did to give the people the Promised Land?
 - i. What do Exodus 23:28, Deuteronomy 7:20, and Exodus 10:12-14 suggest might be meant by the “hornets” mentioned in verse 12?
 - ii. What do Deuteronomy 1:44, Psalm 118:12, and Isaiah 7:18 suggest about the possible meaning?
 - iii. What do Deuteronomy 2:25, Joshua 2:11, 5:1, and 9:24 suggest about another possible meaning?
 - iv. Which of these three would have been hardest for God to do?
 - v. In summary, what does verse 13 tell us about the defeat of Canaan? Despite the Israelites having fought the wars, who gets the credit? In what way are we in a similar situation?
- c. Joshua resumes talking in verse 14.
 - i. What does the “now” that starts verse 14 signify?
 - 1. Why is a grateful heart that recognizes all that God has done for us a necessary place from which to make a commitment?
 - 2. What happens when we start taking blessings for granted, or worse, taking credit ourselves?
 - ii. What two imperatives does Joshua give the people in verse 14?
 - 1. Compare the first sentence of verse 14 with Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:12, 10:20, & 1 Samuel 12:24. Why do “fear” and “serve” go hand in hand?
 - 2. What is surprising about the imperative in the second sentence? What does this suggest about what had been going on secretly in the Israelites’ camp? Where does it say the gods came from (consider Ezekiel 20:6-8)? What new source of gods does Joshua identify?
 - 3. What was Joshua doing by forcing the people to make a choice? How does this compare to what Jesus taught in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13?
 - iii. What was Joshua’s decision? Looking back over his life, would anything else have been possible?

5. *Wednesday:*

- a. Read Joshua 24:12-28 again, this time meditating on verses 16-24.
- b. How would you paraphrase the beginning of the people's response in verse 16 in modern terms?
 - i. What rationale did they give for the decision they were making (verses 17-18a)? What does this say about the effectiveness of God's message in verses 2b-13?
 - ii. What was the decision? In what way should it really be viewed as two decisions? How do they show that their decision is related to that made by Joshua?
- c. How is Joshua's response to the people's decision unexpected and surprising? If you were sharing your faith with a friend and they responded similarly to the Israelites, would you ever say to them what Joshua says in verse 19? What two characteristics of the Lord does Joshua give as a reason for this response?
 - i. What does it mean that "He is a holy God" (consider 1 Samuel 2:2, Psalm 89:6-8, and Isaiah 40:25)?
 - ii. What does it mean that "He is a jealous God" (consider Exodus 20:5, 34:14, & Nahum 1:2-3)?
 - iii. The last phrase of verse 19 should not be understood as Joshua saying God is not a God of forgiveness. How does Numbers 15:30 clarify what Joshua is telling the people? How does Joshua's warning (verse 20) play out in Israel's future?
- d. Despite Joshua's warning, how do the people respond (verse 21)?
 - i. What did they agree they would do (verses 21-22)?
 - ii. What did Joshua tell them they had to do in verse 23?

6. **Thursday:**

- a. Depending upon the translation being used, the word serve (served, serving) occurs about 13 times in the focal passage. Why do you think such emphasis is placed on what we today might call "works"?
- b. Today we will consider briefly four aspects of what it means to serve Christ:
 - i. According to Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 12:3, Philippians 2:9-11, John 20:28, & Hebrews 13:15 a starting point in serving Christ is to affirm that He is _____.
 - ii. According to Matthew 28:20, John 14:23, & Luke 11:28 serving Christ means _____ what He _____. This would especially include _____ (John 13:34-35, Matthew 22:39, Galatians 5:13-14, & Ephesians 4:2).
 - iii. According to John 13:15, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 2:5-8, & Ephesians 5:1-2 serving Christ means our life should _____ His.
 - iv. And finally, one we really don't like to think about. According to Matthew 10:38, 16:24, Philippians 1:29, 3:10, and 1 Peter 4:13, if we are serving Christ, we should expect to share in His _____.

7. **Friday:**

- a. To serve God, the Israelites had to get rid of their other gods. While we seldom consider that we worship other gods, Martin Luther famously said that anything we rely on or trust in is, in some sense, a “god.”
- b. Today we will present several such ‘gods’ that may be present in our lives or those of others in our church community and briefly describe a few of their manifestations*. In your group, or individually, discuss how this “god” is evident in Christian circles and what can be done to overcome it.
 - i. The ideology of materialism: all our needs can be met by material means; things can provide happiness.
 - ii. The god of convenience: omnipresence and omni-availability satisfy our desires; buying on credit; narcissism.
 - iii. The god “Me”: you don’t just need something, you deserve it; ego-stroking is most important; favorite hymn is “I Gotta Be Me”
 - iv. The god of nationalism: pride in one’s country feeds an attitude of superiority; imperialism justified as conversion to a Christian culture; patriotism that demands loyalty at the price of Christian morality.

8. **Saturday:**

- a. Read Joshua 24:1-13. God used a dozen verses to remind the Israelites of the many great things He had done for them. Take time to make a list of a dozen things He has done for you. How often have you thanked him for each?
 - b. Read Joshua 24:14-24. How does your experience becoming a Christian compare? Did anyone warn you that being a Christian would be costly, or was it just presented as a “get out of jail free” card?
 - c. Finally, read Joshua 24:25-28. As a Christian, have you ever made a “covenant” with the Lord (i.e., promised that you would do something)? How successful were you?
9. **Application:** The obvious application from this chapter is that we need to be serious about serving our Lord, but a more obvious one appears if we look ahead only a few verses in our Bibles. In Joshua 24:31 we’re told the people served the Lord “throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him.” Although presented as a positive statement, the obvious implication is that then something changed. Skipping ahead just a few more verses to Judges 2:10-12, the change is confirmed – “the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals.” Making commitments is easy when life is easy, but they are also easily forgotten – which is perhaps why the Church always seems to grow the most when persecuted. Additionally, this fall occurred when “another generation grew up.” We should seriously ask ourselves if we might be allowing (or experiencing) the same thing. Are we taking the teaching of the next generation of Christians as seriously as we should?
10. **Pray:** A fourth country we don’t often consider when praying for unreached people groups might be Korea. With over 50,000 Protestant churches, including some of the largest in the world, South Korea has become one of the largest missionary sending countries. But Korea is divided, and the North is exactly the opposite, being one of the most oppressive countries in the world. Pray that North Korean believers will persevere and that their brothers and sisters in the South will find innovative ways to share the Gospel with the North.

*Robert L. Hubbard Jr. suggests these “gods in *The NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 2009